



O.F.F. NEWS



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

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Jan/Feb 2006

FROM 2005 TO 2006

The Society's 50th Anniversary Year has now passed and best wishes for the new year are extended to all. Before we move on to 2006, however, some brief final comments on 2005 will be made. Following the culmination of our celebrations at the 'best ever' Annual Dinner, the Anniversary Picnic in Oatley Park on 7th December was also a very enjoyable and highly successful event.

Regrettably, there were some less enjoyable events in December. A very vigorous and competent campaign by the Oatley community against the Coles supermarket proposal for Mulga Road was apparently not successful in halting this environmentally and socially detrimental development. Nevertheless, some innovative protest actions are still proceeding. Members not already involved in these and who may wish to participate should contact Anne Wagstaff on 9580 7919 or at wagstaf@bigpond.net.au.

FIRST 2006 MEETING

The first monthly meeting in 2006 will be the Annual General Meeting, followed by slides and a light supper, on 6th February. See details overleaf.

DEVELOPMENTS IN CLIMATE CHANGE

A Climate Institute has been established in Sydney with a \$10 million grant from an Australian philanthropic group to persuade governments and the community of the need for urgent action. From 1st March, Dr Corin Millais will be the CEO, and former NSW Premier Bob Carr has agreed to chair the Advisory Council. Dr Millais is currently CEO of the European Wind Energy Association which is the largest renewable energy organisation in the world.

A related development is a recently published report 'Climate Change and Company Values' by AMP Capital Investors, Baker & McKenzie, and Total Environment Centre. It may be downloaded from www.ampcapital.com.au/advisers/sri/papers.asp.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Have you paid your annual subscriptions for 2006 ? If not, please post your cheque to P.O. Box 52, Mortdale 2223, or pay Carolyn at the AGM on 6th February. The subscription is now \$25 per person or family (living at the same address).

RON READ

We were extremely sorry to hear of the death of one of our members, Ron Read, on 11th January. Ron and Muriel were frequent participants at Society events and Ron's well informed contributions to discussions at meetings were particularly appreciated. Our deepest sympathies are extended to Muriel and the family.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS: JANUARY 14-21

After the 92% humidity in Sydney just prior to leaving, it was amazing to arrive at Smiggin Holes to the wonderful dry air and coolness. Heaven - the luxury of being able to wear a jacket ! For those of us who have visited regularly each year it was like coming home - a sense of belonging and peacefulness. The Snowy Mountains never fail to work their magic.

In all, 15 O.F.F. members (staying for varying lengths of time) enjoyed the beauty of the area and one another's company. The pre-dinner happy hours and after dinner get-togethers were most pleasant. Thank you to those who provided digital TV presentations and slides. We were pleased to welcome a new member to our group, and also a visitor.

The time-honoured tradition of not doing a long walk on the first day was broken. Because of the unfavourable weather forecast we felt we should 'make hay whilst the sun shone'. However, we then experienced first-hand (to the detriment of some of us) why warnings of dramatic weather changes are given here, even in summer. The more intrepid walkers braved the rain and mist while others enjoyed a drive or curling up with a book.

On the first day a number of us tackled the Summit Road, some managing to reach the top of Kosciuszko and others getting only as far as Seaman's Hut. Walks on other days included Rainbow Lake, the Blue Lake, Bob's Ridge from Dead Horse Gap, Mount Stillwell, and the Lakes Walks Circuit.

Despite a couple of days of uncertain weather a great time was had by all. A comment from one member who had not been to the area for about five years was that the break let them 'see it all again with fresh eyes'. Perhaps this is an incentive for others to do the trip in 2007 ? (Thanks to Robin Dickson for this report).

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

February 6 (Monday) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 7.45pm. Reports on O.F.F.'s activities during the past year and election of office bearers and committee for 2006. Members are invited to comment on the activities, management and direction of the Society. The AGM will be as brief as possible and **followed by members' slides and a light supper.** If you have some appropriate slides, for example of interesting places or Society activities, please bring them along. Also, **please bring a plate of food** to contribute to the supper.

February 27 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. 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. The lecture 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 at the University of NSW, and former Chairperson of the Scientific Committee for the NSW Threatened Species and Conservation Act.

March 4 (Saturday) FIELD DAY, Royal National Park spotlighting. An evening walk along the southern end of Lady Carrington Drive. Leader: Debbie Andrew. Details in next O.F.F. News.

FINANCIAL REPORT OF OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC. FOR YEAR ENDED 31.12.05 Carolyn Cotter, Hon. Treasurer (J.Watters Consultant)

Receipts & Payments

Credit Balance as at 01.01.05 \$11,297.60

Receipts:

M'ship subscriptions	4099.00	
Donations	50.00	
Donations for 50 th	234.20	
Anniversary Dinner	3435.00	
Anniv. Dinner – raffle	566.00	
Sales – Plants/books	128.00	
– Stalls etc	621.35	
– OFF mugs	742.00	
– OFF History	80.00	
HCC Grant – OFF History	1000.00	
KMC Community Grant	940.00	
Interest	<u>58.63</u>	<u>11,954.18</u>
		\$23,251.78

Payments:

Subscription to NCC	159.00
Donations (see Note)	800.00
OFF News – printing	193.20
– postage	538.50
– stationery	37.00
Office of Fair Trading	41.00
Uniting Church don. for hall	260.00
Printing programs	196.00
PO Box rental	56.00
Mug purchases	990.00
Anniversary dinner	3322.65
Musicians	300.00

Payments (cont'd)

GIO – Liability Insurance	722.01	
Administration	52.25	
Transfer to Cash Mgmt Acc't	7000.00	
DIPNR – Grant Balance	2749.46	
OFF History costs	566.95	
Digital voice recorder	775.00	\$18,759.02
<u>Credit Balance as at 31.12.05</u>		\$4,492.76
Add balance of Cash Mgmt Account		<u>7,112.17</u>
		\$11,604.93
Less grant balance owing to KMC		<u>1000.00</u>
		\$10,604.93

Note: Donations (\$100 to each group): Total Envmt. Centre, Aust. Bush Heritage, Birds Aust., Ku-ring-gai Bats, WIRES, Wilderness Soc., Environmental Defenders Office, Gene Ethics Network - Total \$800.00

Abbreviations: NCC – Nature Conservation Council, HCC– Hurstville City Council, KMC– Kogarah Municipal Council, DIPNR– Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources.

The Society's funds at 31.12.05 were **\$10,604.93** including **\$2,011.00** in President's Fund for donations to other environmental bodies. The surplus on the 50th Anniversary was \$612.55. Balance of OFF History Grant was \$513.05. Profit on sale of mugs was \$217.00. The **operating funds were \$8,593.93**, which is in line with the Society's policy of adequate reserves.



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February/March 2006

REGISTRATION, RISK & INSURANCE

All members, including those who normally receive O.F.F. news by email, will receive the next issue by ordinary mail, together with the 2006 program of activities, and information about the new registration procedures. **Please read this information and respond accordingly.** In particular, please send in your new registration form as soon as possible, even if you have previously completed a risk waiver form. These new procedures are due to insurance requirements, and we regret any resulting inconvenience.

NOTES ON AGM, 7th FEBRUARY

An impressive item at the Annual General Meeting was Secretary Faye Coughlan's comprehensive report on the Society's Anniversary Year activities. President Jan Douglas thanked the Committee and others for their support throughout the year, and paid special tributes to retiring Treasurer, Carolyn Cotter, and retiring Publicity Officer, Margaret Schonell. Jan was re-elected President for 2006, Faye was re-elected Secretary and **Lesley Wylie was elected the new Treasurer.** All the other 2005 Committee members were re-elected. Full details of this year's Committee and Office-bearers are in the 2006 Program of Activities.

NEXT MEETING, 27th FEBRUARY

On 27th February 1956, **exactly 50 years** before our next monthly meeting, a fledgling Oatley Flora & Fauna Society was stimulated by a presentation from the acclaimed botanist, Thistle Yolette Harris (married name, Thistle Stead). Our next meeting will therefore feature a **Thistle Y. Harris Memorial Lecture** to be given by **Professor Paul Adam**, Head of Biological & Earth Sciences, University of NSW, former Chair of the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee, and Board Director of The National Trust. He will discuss, with special reference to threatened species, the decline in government support for 'off-park' conservation, despite continuing public support.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2006 SUB ?

If not, please post your cheque for \$25 (per person or family) to P.O. Box 52, Mortdale 2223, or pay Lesley Wylie at the meeting on 27th February.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA

Sunday, 5th March

This year Clean Up Australia Day is on **Sunday 5th March.** The area we will be working on is at the bottom of **Poulton Park** at the head of Oatley Bay. Unfortunately this is RUBBISH CENTRAL and really needs a clean up. The meeting point is the reserve at the corner of Morshead Drive and Kyle Parade (at the start of the Yara-nura Boardwalk). We will be there from 9am till 12 noon so do your community a favour and come along for **as little or as long as you can spare.** Bring boots, gloves etc for the mangrove area.

(Julian Sheen, Co-ordinator)

LIME KILN BAY AND BUNDABERG RUM

Congratulations to the Lime Kiln Bay Bushcare Group for obtaining a Bundaberg Rum Grant of \$4920 for bank stabilisation and plantings. Bundaberg Rum, in providing such grants, has become a major business supporter of the Landcare Australia scheme. (from Hurstville Bushcare Volunteer Network Newsletter, *The Bundaluk*).

PLEASE RESPOND TO SENATE INQUIRY

A Senate Committee of Inquiry has invited written submissions by **Wednesday, 1st March**, on the 'funding and resources available' to meet the objectives of Australia's national parks and other conservation reserves. It is particularly concerned with the **values, objectives and costs** of such areas. Unfortunately, the publicising of the Inquiry has been limited and few conservation groups seem aware of it. There is a possibility that submissions from opponents of national parks (adjoining land owners, developers, shooters etc) could outweigh submissions from conservationists. This would provide justification for a **reduction** in taxpayers' expenditure on conservation rather than the **increase** we would like to see. A submission by O.F.F. Committee is now being prepared but there is a **need for many more submissions** from individuals and other conservation groups on the **benefits of national parks.** These could refer, for example, to their cultural, aesthetic, spiritual, ethical, scientific, educational, tourist and/or potential resource values, and their importance for maintaining biodiversity to meet uncertain needs of the future. Details of the submission procedure, terms of reference etc may be obtained from Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra 2600, tel 6277 5818, or email ecita.sen@aph.gov.au

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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 27 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. This will feature the **Thistle Y. Harris Memorial Lecture** to be given by **Professor Paul Adam** entitled 'Saving the NSW floral heritage: good intentions meet reality'. Other information overleaf (page 1).

March 4 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Royal National Park spotlighting. An easy evening walk along Lady Carrington Drive. Meet at southern entrance to Lady Carrington Drive at **8.15 pm**. This is about 0.5 km north of the upper causeway along Sir Bertram Stevens Drive. Some members may wish to bring a picnic tea to have at the upper causeway picnic area before 8.15pm. You will need to bring a torch and, if you have them, binoculars. A jumper is suggested if the weather is cool. The walk will be cancelled if there is heavy rain at the time but if in doubt you may call the leader, **Debbie Andrew**, on her mobile, 0427 330 657. Her home number is 9570 2695.

March 27 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. This will include a presentation by **Dr Kathy Stewart** of Sydney University about an environmental education project at Oatley involving our Society. Other features of the meeting will be detailed in the next issue of O.F.F. News.

NO DESALINATION PLANT, BUT... ?

Protests by environmentalists throughout the Sydney area, including O.F.F. and some of its members, undoubtedly contributed to the recent decision by the NSW Government to abandon its proposed Kurnell Desalination Plant (see Nov-Dec O.F.F. News). However, as **Sydney's water problems remain**, a Parliamentary Inquiry on 'sustainable' solutions invited public comments up to February 17. A response to this was prepared by Lesley Cox on behalf of O.F.F. and endorsed by the Committee. It stressed the need for **recycling and other environmentally favourable measures**, and a copy will be placed on our website at www.off.oatleypark.com.

Although this is all claimed to be good news for the environment, some of us doubt there could be any **truly sustainable** solutions if the present drought is maintained by **global warming** (as alleged by many scientists) and Sydney's population **continues to grow**.

SOME DEFINITELY GOOD NEWS

- **Mitsubishi** has decided to stop sourcing woodchips from **old growth forests**,
- Cattle can no longer be grazed in **Victoria's alpine parks** (they have been excluded from Kosciuszko National Park for decades, with very beneficial results for conservation),
- **Toyota** has announced that its new **Prius** car generates up to 90% less harmful emissions than any similar sized car. The company is also actively advocating the **extensive planting of trees** to help reduce the rate of global warming.
(from a recent issue of 'The Colong Bulletin')

SALES OF SPECIAL PLANTS

Interesting selections of native and exotic plants are now on sale at the **Royal Botanic Gardens** on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 11.30 am to 1.30 pm. Phone 9231 8182 for details.

Wollemi Pines, of course, are not yet on sale at the Royal Botanic Gardens but are expected to be available from **Forests NSW Nurseries in April**.

VERY BRIEFLY

Climate Change & Biodiversity Seminar. Eminent Oxford Professor Norman Myers, Thursday, 9 March 6pm-8pm, Level 60, 1 Farrer Place Sydney, Cost: \$10, Details/Registration: Tisha 9262 6989 (EDO Office).

The Mulga Road Tree Project (Oatley Coles Protests). Contact Sharyn Cullis, philipanderson@iprimus.com.au, or Anne Wagstaff, wagstaf@bigpond.net.au, tel 9580 7919 for details of meetings and current developments.

New reference book: *Field Guide to Flora, Fauna and Heritage Features of the South Coast of NSW*. Cost: \$30, Forests NSW Batemans Bay Office, tel 4472 6211.

NOTABLE QUOTES

"The earth itself is what ultimately controls economic activity because it is the source of the material upon which economic activity works...Ecological fallout from economic development is in no way an 'externality'... it is a positive depletion of real wealth, of human and natural capital." from a speech by Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, 2005 (speech reported in full in Newsletter No 66, Sustainable Population, Australia inc.)



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March/April 2006

NEW REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

With this issue of O.F.F News, all members should receive the 2006 Program of Activities, and also information on the new registration procedures. Please read this information and send in your new form as soon as possible, **even if you have previously completed a risk waiver form.** The new procedures are due to insurance requirements and we regret any resulting inconvenience.

TWO SPEAKERS AT NEXT MEETING

At the next monthly meeting on 27th March (see over) **Dr Kathy Stewart** of the University of Sydney will give a brief account of her environmental education project at Oatley in which our Society has agreed to participate. This will be followed by a slideshow entitled 'Travels in South west China, Eastern Tibet and Northern Thailand' by **Peter Vaughan**. It will feature fascinating items such as the Stone Forest, Songzanglin Monastery, Jade Dragon Mountain, ethnic hill tribes and a Dongba ancient music concert. Peter is President of the Southern Sydney branch of the National Parks Association and is also a part-time professional tour leader. Any members interested in joining his tours (e.g. to Tibet, China etc.) should be able to discuss these with him after the meeting.

'BEING GREEN' AT NEXT MEETING

A limited number of copies of the **Society's 50 years of history** will be available at the next meeting. Titled 'Being Green' and written by Alan Fairley it may be bought at the back desk for the **cost price of \$10.**

BIG TURNOUT FOR SPOTLIGHTING

A total of **41 people, including 9 children**, took part in an enjoyable spotlighting trip in the Royal National Park on 4th March. Trip leader Debbie Andrew (who is also a wildlife officer with NPWS) reported: "We had a nice night, although possums were a bit scarce. The owl we heard was either a **Masked Owl** (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) or **Sooty Owl** (*T. tenebricosa*) and I am intending to go out again to see if we can draw it in. The possum near the end of Bola Creek was a **Mountain Brushtail** (*Trichosurus caninus*) with a young on its back." Other animals were spotted in the waters of Bola Creek, including a juvenile **Water Dragon** (*Physignathus lesueurii*), and a large **Sydney Freshwater Crayfish**, (*Eustacus spinifer*).

BIG CLEAN UP AT RUBBISH CENTRAL

Clean Up Australia Day 2006 was marked with a flourish at lower Poulton Park on 5th March. Oatley Flora and Fauna with friends made a huge difference to the bushland and mangroves of the area at the top of Oatley Bay. A total of 31 volunteers came to the clean-up; this included 6 children. Over a morning full of effort, sweat and mud they pulled out **about 40 bags of rubbish!** Well done to all those who took part. Your morning's work really made an improvement to the local environment. (Julian Sheen, Co-ordinator).

OATLEY PARK BUSHFIRE

A bushfire occurred in the NE corner of Oatley Park on Sunday 12th February. It spread over both sides of the gully running down to Lime Kiln Bay, burning out about **7 hectares of native shrubs** such as Bacon and Eggs (*Pultenaea* spp) and Hop Bush (*Dodonaea* spp). (from *The Bundaluk*, Hurstville Bushcare newsletter)

WOLLI CREEK: NEW THREATS

The NSW Government announced six years ago that the very significant bushland remnant in the Wollli Creek Valley would be **protected in a regional park** managed by NPWS. At a public meeting two years ago residents were assured that the transfer of the park area to NPWS was proceeding without problems. Recently, however, the residents were advised of **changes to the boundaries** that will leave large areas of bushland outside the park. This is evidently to allow amplification of the M5 expressway and tunnel system to cope with the huge increases in freight movements expected from the expansion of Port Botany.

The Wollli Creek Preservation Society is holding an important meeting about these issues at **7pm on Tuesday, 4th April** at the Canterbury-Earlwood Caring Association Hall, 15 Clark Street, Earlwood. As the Wollli Creek bushland is one of our field areas, O.F.F. members are urged to attend this meeting if possible. (More information: www.wollicreek.org.au or phone Peter Stevens on 9554 3176).

FINAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Is your 2006 subscription overdue? Please note that, according to the Constitution, **members hip ceases if payment is not made by 31st March.**

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

March 27 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Short presentation on 'The Oatley Project' by Dr Kathy Stewart, Sydney University, followed by a slideshow entitled 'Travels in South West China, Eastern Tibet and Northern Thailand' by Peter Vaughan (see p. 1).

April 1 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Illawarra Escarpment and Mt. Kembla Ring. Meet at the Kembla Lookout at 10.30 am. Access from Southern Freeway. Exit west along Five Islands Road (Unanderra), north on Princes Highway for one block then west for about 9 km along Cordeaux Road through Mt Kembla village to Kembla Lookout (dominated by an electricity pylon). The walk is about 5 km commencing with a steep descent through beautiful rainforest then easy level walking on a fire trail to historic Windy Gully Cemetery. After that we will proceed along Cordeaux Road back to Kembla Lookout. Fine views from fire trail and Cordeaux Road over the Wollongong plain and Lake Illawarra. Bring morning tea and lunch. Hat, sturdy shoes and long socks are advisable as there are leeches in the rainforest. Leader: Graham Austin 9579 2375.

April 24 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Speaker: Tony Saunders on 'Bird habitat fragmentation' (details in next issue of O.F.F. News).

THISTLE MEMORIAL LECTURE

As anticipated (see Feb/Mar O.F.F. News) the Thistle Y. Harris memorial lecture on February 27th was a notable event. The highlight was an inspiring account by **Professor Paul Adam** of conservation progress and problems in NSW since Dr Harris' motivating presentation to the Society exactly 50 years before. We were delighted, also, to be addressed by **Fiona Murray**, a great niece of Dr Harris and an Oatley resident. She told us of her childhood recollections and how her father was influenced by his remarkable aunt.

In introducing Professor Adam, **Alan Fairley** outlined other interesting aspects of Dr Harris' life, such as:

- She wrote many books, the best known being the classic reference *Wildflowers of Australia*. It was first published in 1938 and reprinted 13 times.
- Following the death of her husband, David Stead (who was also a well-known scientist and conservationist), she established **Wirrimbirra Sanctuary** near Bargo as a memorial to him.
- In 1985, the University of Wollongong conferred on her an **Honorary Doctorate of Science**.

SUSTAINABILITY FORUM

Professor Deo Prasad will be the main speaker at a public forum, *Implementing Sustainability requires Cultural Change*, at 3.30pm Saturday, 8th April. It has been arranged by Sustainable Population Australia at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney. Further details from Gordon on 9528 6091 or at www.population.org.au.

INCREASED AIRCRAFT NOISE

A recent issue of Lugarno Progress Association's newsletter has reported large increases in the number of aircraft flights and noise over this part of Sydney since July 2005. The increases have been attributed to **lobby groups urging greater use of the east-west runway**, and data to support the claims are apparently on www.airservicesaustralia.com.au. To counteract this lobbying, complaints of noise may be made, with details of dates and times, by phoning 1300 302 204.

WORLD'S LARGEST CRAYFISH IN PERIL

By far the largest crayfish in the world is the **Giant Freshwater Crayfish** (*Astacopsis gouldi*) found only in a few small streams near Wynyard in Tasmania. Specimens weighing 4.5 kg and 1 metre in length have been officially recorded, and there are unofficial records of specimens exceeding 6 kg. It was listed as endangered some years ago and is now in peril due to **illegal fishing, habitat and catchment disturbance**. Draft recovery and habitat management plans have been prepared but their implementation has been delayed by objections from the timber industry.

NOTABLE QUOTES

"Man is part of the natural environment. He lives in it; it sustains him both materially and spiritually. He needs the peace and serenity bushland provides. He cannot fulfill his potential without knowing it intimately...he is of it." (part of Thistle Y. Harris' speech on receiving her Honorary Doctorate)



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OUR IMPACTS ON BIRDS

The Society's **next monthly meeting** on 24th April (see over) will feature a talk by **Dr Tony Saunders** on 'Bird Habitat Fragmentation'. Tony has expertise in many aspects of bird ecology and is particularly well known for his work on '**birdscaping' gardens and parks**. He is a consultant on bird survey techniques and habitat management to Landcare, Bushcare, Greening Australia, Birds Australia and a number of local councils. He has also been a consultant to the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, and has lectured at universities and community colleges. We look forward to a very interesting and informative meeting.

MT KEMBLA FIELD TRIP

11 walkers, all O.F.F. members, participated in the Mt Kemplla Ring walk on 1st April. In his report, the leader, Graham Austin, writes 'The track was steep and eroded but we kept to a snail's pace and enjoyed the many **features of the rainforest** pointed out by Alan Fairley.' Graham also refers to 'surviving the leeches and stinging trees of the rainforest' and other highlights of the trip, including:

- The Windy Gully cemetery containing a memorial and headstones recording a **nearby mine disaster in 1902** in which 96 lives were lost.
- Finding sealed mine entrances (the disaster sites ?) with interesting 19th century stonework.
- Buying apples from the MacNamara orchard.

In summing up, he described the walk as 'a good day out...made more enjoyable...due to the knowledge gained from fellow walkers and the good natured banter amongst us...' His full report will be placed on our website at: www.off.oatleypark.com

YOUR VIEW ON SUNDAY FIELD DAYS ?

It has been suggested that some of the Society's field days should be held on Sundays instead of Saturdays. If you would like to comment on this, or express objections, please contact Janet, our Field Officer, on 9579 2375 or at auscrld@optusnet.com.au

PERHAPS YOU FORGOT ?

Some members are not sure if they've paid their subscriptions for 2006. If this applies to you please call Lesley on 9570 9198 or Robin on 9580 5663.

50th ANNIVERSARY MUGS

Members will be able to buy extra O.F.F. Anniversary mugs at the next meeting from Lesley Cox or David Koffel. Lesley is happy to deliver them at other times if you live in the Oatley area. Call her on 9579 3782.

COASTAL DEVELOPMENT OUTRAGE

The NSW Government's recent release of Draft Regional Strategies for the Lower Hunter, Far North Coast and South Coast has caused outrage in community and environment groups, and in local councils. This follows last year's 'planning reforms' that effectively dismantled most elements of environmental protection in the previous legislation (see June/July 2005 issue of O.F.F. News). The strategies are obviously designed to assist developers as much as possible, with no real obligations to consider community views and areas of conservation, heritage or cultural significance. Letters of protest are being prepared by most conservation groups but individuals are also urged to write letters of protest to the Premier and the Minister for Planning (Mr Sartor).

MACCA AND THE BLAKES

Listeners to 'Sunday with Macca' on ABC Radio may have heard compere Ian McNamara (Macca) interviewing O.F.F. members John and Grace Blake in Canberra on 2nd April. John is a retired surveyor and was in Canberra for the opening of 'Surveyors Park' and unveiling of a commemorative plaque at the original campsite of Surveyor Charles Scrivener. This was the man who actually chose the location of the nation's future capital city in 1908.

Interestingly, when he is not travelling, Ian McNamara lives in the Oatley area, and is a past O.F.F. member.

VOLUNTEERS FOR OATLEY PROJECT ?

Are there any more volunteers for Dr Kathy Stewart's environmental educational project, following her presentation at the last monthly meeting ? Please note that volunteers will be able to put as much or as little time into the project as they wish. There are no obligations or commitments to be available at any particular times or dates. Further information on the project should be available at the next meeting on 24th April, or may be obtained from Kathy on 8567 3750, or at k.stewart@edfac.usyd.edu.au

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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

April 24 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Tony Saunders will give a presentation entitled **Bird habitat fragmentation.**

April 29 (Saturday) FIELD DAY SPIT BRIDGE TO MANLY FERRY, through part of Sydney Harbour National Park - 11 to 12 kms medium grade walk along one of the most scenic bushland harbour walking tracks in the world. Bushland through a large section of Sydney Harbour National park affords a mixture of dense growth, magnificent cliff and dramatic harbour views, many native plant types, aboriginal carvings, and possibly water dragons close up. **Walk starts 9.30 am at last bus stop south of the Spit Bridge.** Train from Oatley at 8.04 am - alight Town Hall, then join 169 bus departing 8.57 am from Stand D in York Street outside Queen Victoria Building. Bring lunch, drinks, sturdy shoes and protection from sun. **Leader: Cliff Crane,** tel 9580 3269 or 0401 875 391 (mobile, on walk day).

May 22nd (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Tim Berryman will speak on **native grasses.**

'GREENHOUSE MAFIA' NAMED

Many Australians have been concerned by the Australian Government's policies on greenhouse gas emissions and global warming. These policies have resulted in the Government's refusal to ratify the United Nations' **Kyoto Protocol**, and in various other actions to defuse or obscure the issues. Such actions include the formation of an 'Asia - Pacific Partnership on Climatic Change' which is claimed to be an alternative to the Kyoto Protocol but involves no commitments at all to reduce carbon emissions.

Another Government action to obscure the issues is the enthusiastic promotion of 'geosequestration'. This is a largely untested complex of processes for extracting carbon from emissions and then stabilising and storing it underground. Scientists who have examined geosequestration in detail do not believe it could be effective or economically viable.

The latest cause for concern, as revealed in recent media reports, is the alleged **suppression of public statements** by CSIRO scientists about global warming because the statements conflict with the Government's viewpoint. A subsequent investigation by some Canberra journalists and academics has concluded that Government policies on global warming have been determined for years by a small group of energy industry lobbyists, apparently proud to be known as the 'greenhouse mafia'. The actual members of this group **have been named in the latest issue (No. 46) of *The Australia Institute News*** which lists the 'main culprits' for the present Government policies on global warming. Copies of this publication may be obtained by calling 6125 1270 or emailing mail@tai.org.au

It is notable that 8 of the 12 people in the above list are directly associated with the mining industry.

HURSTVILLE'S INFRASTRUCTURE PLUS

Hurstville City Council's 'Infrastructure Plus' proposal was discussed at the Society's Committee meeting on 3rd April. The proposal is part of the 2006/9 Management Plan and Budget and involves increases in Council rates to cover an 'extra \$36 million' to be spent on **roads, footpaths, kerbs and gutters, parks, sportfields and community facilities.** Committee members were deeply concerned that the Council's information and arguments to justify the expenditure **failed to recognise the natural environment** as an important asset of the area. It was resolved that the Society write to Council expressing this concern.

VERY BRIEFLY

Marrickville Council's Cooks River Walks: April 29, 2pm-4.30pm., Communities and their impact April 30, 9am-12noon, How people are making a difference. Details and bookings: 9335 2222.

Hurstville City Council's Eco-living Workshops - Energy: May 6, 2pm-4pm, AFL Clubhouse (behind Penhurst Library). Bookings essential. 9330 6260.

International Day for Biological Diversity: May 22.

World Environment Day: June 5.

New book on waste and recycling: *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish*, by Gay Hawkins. \$34.95 from Gleebooks, tel 9660 2333.

NOTABLE QUOTES

" And it seemed to his small understanding, if the man in the frock made him one of the flock, it must mean something very like branding....."

(from A. B. Paterson's 'A Bush Christening' in presentations by Cliff Crane at Kogarah on 29th March, and Oatley, 6th April)



O.F.F. NEWS



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May/June 2006

DROUGHT-PROOF NATIVE LAWNS ?

Tim Berryman, an expert on **native grasses**, has a Master of Applied Science degree and extensive professional experience in environmental management and planning, land restoration and community development. We are fortunate in having him as the speaker at our next **monthly meeting on 22nd May** (see over). He will tell us about many of the surprising and poorly appreciated features of native grasses that make them so interesting and useful. If you want to find out what species might be suitable for your needs, where to get the seed, and anything else about native grasses, make sure you come to this meeting.

NOT ALL BOOM AND GLOOM

With Australia's **record budget surplus** and currently vaunted wealth, one might expect a boom in measures to improve the environment and conserve biodiversity. Sadly, many of us **perceive the reverse** - environment and conservation seem to have lost their political and social significance. But there is a **spark of hope** in a recent poll by Roy Morgan International. It found that 89% of Australians agree "if we don't act now we'll never control our environmental problems". This high percentage makes **Australians more environmentally aware** than people in most other countries, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand and U.S.A. (from *Mambara, Autumn 2006*, Sydney CMA Newsletter)

OATLEY PARK THIS MONTH

Alan Fairley has listed some plants in Oatley Park that should be flowering conspicuously 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.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are advised that a special resolution will be put to a Special General Meeting at 7.45pm, immediately before the monthly general meeting on 26th June. The resolution will propose amendments to the objects of the Society, as detailed on the separate sheet with this issue of O.F.F. News

NOT MANLY TO SPIT !

"Saturday 29 April dawned grey with some drizzle, but again the promise of rain was unfulfilled, happily for 14 O.F.F. members who trained and bussed (?) to the Spit Bridge start point for a really enjoyable medium grade 11 – 12 km walk around and above the shorelines of Middle and North harbours in totally fine and pleasant walking conditions." After these apt opening words and summary, leader Cliff Crane's report describes the highlights of the walk, including:

- magnificent views of Sydney Harbour with its National Park and myriad of sailing and other craft,
- site of attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh during his visit in 1868,
- Clontarf, Reef and Forty Baskets beaches,
- Aboriginal carvings, scrubland, and various forest types including pockets of subtropical rainforest,
- two sunbaking water dragons,
- historic cliff-built huts at Crater Cove,
- coffee and shopping on Manly wharf, and then the Manly ferry back to Circular Quay.

Cliff's **full report** on this excellent field day, with photos, will be on our website at off.oatleypark.com

CITIZENS' CLIMATE CAMPAIGN

A campaign has been initiated by members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society **to put climate change on the political agenda**. It will get people all over Australia to send a loud message **every month** to politicians either by email or letter. **O.F.F. members are invited to participate in this scheme simply by emailing 'Yes !' to climatez@bigpond.net.au**. You will then be emailed each month with contact details of politicians and a suggested aspect of climate change to bring to their attention. Further information may be obtained from Robin at mosman@hermes.net.au

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

May 22nd (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Tim Berryman will speak on **native grasses**.

May 27th (Saturday) FIELD DAY. UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS. Neates Glen car park, Evans Lookout, Govetts Leap, Braeside Walk. 7-8 km round trip. Magnificent views from the cliff rim track over the deep Grose Valley. Many steps on a well made track. Meet at Neates Glen car park at 10.45 am. If travelling **by car**: allow about 2 hours from Oatley along the M4 & Great Western Highway. Turn right just before Blackheath on to Evans Lookout Road. Drive 2.9 km to Neates Glen car park on right. If travelling **by train**, catch 8.18 am train from Central, arriving 10.34 at Blackheath where train will be met by Graham Austin. Bring water, morning tea, lunch, sturdy shoes. Leader: Janet Austin, phone 9579 2375 or 0402 434 576 (M).

June 26th (Monday) SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING. 7.45 pm. See page 1 (overleaf) and enclosed notice.

June 26th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 8pm approx. Roewen Wishart will speak on **Australian Bush Heritage Fund**.

DON'T SELL THE SNOWY !

In December 2005 the NSW Government announced it will **privatise their share of Snowy Hydro Limited** (previously known as Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Authority). Soon after that the Federal and Victorian Governments decided to sell their shares, and it is understood that full privatisation becomes effective next month (June). Conservationists and many others concerned about this are organising **protest rallies** in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra on **Tuesday 6th June**. The Sydney rally will be held at 12.30 pm at the Archibald Fountain, Hyde Park. Further details may be obtained from Sylvia Hale MLC on 9230 3030 or Acacia Rose on 0402 298 821

INVASIVE SPECIES CD ROM

Weeds and feral animals are now regarded as one of the three major threats to biodiversity conservation in Australia, the other two being global warming and land clearing. The Invasive Species Council (ISC), a non-government, not-for-profit organisation, is currently concerned about the **number of new potential weeds and feral animals being deliberately introduced** to Australia each year with government permission. These are mainly for horticultural and agricultural purposes. The ISC has recently issued a CD ROM explaining the problem and some proposed measures to improve the situation. **O.F.F. has several copies of this CD ROM which will be available for loan to members at the next monthly meeting.** For more information on the work of ISC and how to participate in its activities see www.invasives.org.au

RESTORATION OF NEVERFAIL BAY

A **community consultation** meeting was arranged by Kogarah Council on 2nd May to discuss a proposal to restore part of the **Neverfail Bay shoreline**. It was held at Oatley RSL Club and attended by about 50 residents including a number of O.F.F. members. The Council has planned **another meeting for June or July** when a more detailed 'Concept Plan' will be put on display, with an invitation for public comments.

VERY BRIEFLY

Health Policy and Sustainability: Seminar, May 23, 5.30pm Auditorium, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown. Details: Diana Freeman 9351 2818

Exhibition of Henry Gold's wilderness photographs May 23 to June 4, Bondi Pavillion Gallery. Details: tel 9299 7341 or see www.colongwilderness.org.au

NPA Slideshow 'The Antarctic Peninsula': May 24, 8pm Sutherland Multi Purpose Centre 123 Flora St , Admission free, all welcome.

Royal Herbarium, R.B.G. Sydney: May 26, 2-3pm, tour of collection and talk about the book 'Herbarium' by author Ashley Hay (O.F.F. speaker last year). Admission free, **bookings essential:** 9250 1988.

World Environment Day: June 5.

World Ocean Day: June 8.

NOTABLE QUOTES

'Anyone who believes that exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist' by Kenneth E. Boulding, (disenchanted) Professor of Economics, awarded Nobel Prize in 2002.

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

TIME TO CHANGE THE RULES?

NOTICE OF SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING - 7:45 PM, 26 JUNE 2006

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc.'s Rules include (in Rule 2) a list of objects of the Association – what we are all about. The rule states:

2 OBJECTS

The objects of the Association shall be:

- a) to stimulate interest in Australian flora and fauna;
- b) to foster an understanding of the need to conserve the natural environment and resources; and
- c) to cooperate with other societies in protecting the environment.

Your Committee, prompted by Vice President Alan Fairley, has reviewed the objects and proposes that they should be modified so that they:

- include the idea of *acting* to protect the environment, not just *stimulating interest* and *fostering understanding*,
- stress action at the local level, while
- including our commitment to environmental concerns beyond the local area.

The proposal is to amend Rule 2 so that it will read as follows:

2 OBJECTS

The objects of the Association shall be:

- a) to stimulate interest in Australian flora and fauna;
- b) to act to protect and foster an interest in the natural environment, particularly at the local level;
- c) to foster an understanding of the need to conserve the natural environment and resources; and
- d) to cooperate with other groups to achieve these objectives at local, state, national and international levels.

This proposal will be put to members as a special resolution at a special general meeting of the Society. For the motion to be passed, a quorum must be present at the meeting (that is, at least twenty members present in person), and at least three-quarters of the members who are present must vote in favour. There is no proxy voting.

Members must be sent a notice of the special general meeting, with at least 21 days notice, and the notice must give details of the special resolution. Accordingly, the May/June 2006 edition of OFF News and this page give notice of the meeting and the resolution.

If you have any questions about the proposal, please raise them at the general meeting on 22nd May 2006, or phone one of the Committee members (our numbers are on the back of the Program). Remember, the special general meeting will be held immediately before the 26th **June 2006** general meeting.



O.F.F. NEWS



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June/July 2006

You have forgotten to return
your new 2006 registration form.
Please fill in, sign and send to
P.O. Box 52 MORTDALE 2223
197/06

Issue: 2006/6

BUYING BACK OUR HERITAGE

Every year the Society donates part of our funds to other conservation groups that act to protect the environment. In recent years one of these groups has been the **Australian Bush Heritage Fund**, a non-profit organisation that buys land to protect threatened plant and animal communities. At the present time it owns and manages over 600,000 hectares in 23 reserves throughout Australia. It has thousands of financial supporters and its practical work is assisted by many volunteers. The Development Manager of the Fund, **Roewen Wishart**, will be the speaker at our next monthly meeting on Monday, June 26th (see over). He will detail the Fund's activities and explain their invaluable contributions to the conservation of our flora and fauna.

COINCIDENTAL CHANGES ?

Some cynical conservationists believe the PM's change of mind about the Snowy Hydro sale was not only to score political points but also to **minimise political damage** from the combination of **Snowy Hydro** protests and **nuclear energy** protests. The same cynics also refer to the 'coincidence' of the PM's discovery of 'greenhouse-friendly' nuclear energy at the same time as an impending change in U.S. greenhouse policy. The U.S. Government and media for many years have insisted that climate change is **just an arguable theory**. However, on 29th March, Time Magazine's cover story signalled a **major attitudinal shift**. It declared dramatically 'Earth is at the tipping point.... suddenly and unexpectedly the crisis is upon us.' Other mainstream U.S. media followed with similar messages, accusing the oil and coal industries of huge 'con jobs' and 'distorted research'. Perhaps George Bush, John Howard, and some of their ilk are now starting to realise that the laws of science cannot be repealed or subverted by politics and propaganda ?

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR FORM ?

Some members have not yet returned their completed registration forms. If you are one of these members, or have lost your form, please call **Robin Dickson** urgently on 9580 5663 so the Society's registration requirements can be finalised.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

As advised in the May/June O.F.F. News, a resolution proposing amendments to the Society's objects will be put to a Special General Meeting immediately before the next monthly meeting.

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS FIELD DAY

It was a clear but cold morning on 27th May when 10 walkers met at the Neates Glen Car Park. After mostly level walking we arrived at Evans Lookout for morning tea and spectacular views across the sandstone cliffs of the rugged Grose Valley. The walk continued down to Hayward Gully, then up along the cliff rim at a leisurely pace through dry eucalypt scrub, stopping at various vantage points before dropping steeply to the head of Govetts Leap Falls. Most walkers climbed the numerous steps to Govetts Leap Lookout, with more splendid views of Pulpit Rock, Mt. Hay, and Lockley Pylon - then back to Govetts Leap Brook for lunch. We then walked up the Braeside Track beside the pretty bubbling brook with its numerous cascades, ferny banks and lovely grey gums to the old dam (formerly a water supply for the steam trains). Then it was just a slog up the road to the walk's start. Another great OFF walk! (report by leader, Janet Austin)

ANOTHER OATLEY TREE LOSS

Another significant tree has gone from Oatley. This time it was a large stately smooth-barked gum growing in the gardens on the edge of Oatley Parade straight ahead as you came from the railway underpass towards Oatley shops. Officers of Kogarah Council deemed it dangerous as "cockatoos had weakened the branches" and branches were growing too close to RailCorp overhead powerlines. O.F.F. did its very best to protect the tree. We wrote letters to the Council and had an on-site meeting with Council officers. Its plight was also publicised in the *Leader*. We suggested a number of alternatives but Council was determined to remove the tree. Their apparently excessive concern about public liability, their kowtowing to RailCorp on this matter, and their unwillingness to seek alternatives, all suggest a lack of commitment to the environment when faced with difficult decisions. (report by Alan Fairley)

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

June 26th (Monday) SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING. 7.45 pm (see page 1 overleaf).

June 26th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 8 pm (approx) Roewen Wishart will speak on the **Australian Bush Heritage Fund** (see page 1 overleaf).

July 1st (Saturday) FIELD DAY. **Sydney Harbour - Balmain and Rozelle.** Part of the new Inner Harbour Track. Views, historic homes and interesting urban regeneration. A highlight will be an inspection of the wonderful old Callan Park hospital, the largest public works project of 19th century Australia. Bring lunch for picnic overlooking Iron Cove. Distance: 7 km (with opportunity to go a further 4km if you want to). Mostly easy street walking. Meet at 9.15am in front of Wharf 5 Circular Quay for ferry to Birchgrove (9.38am ferry). Leader will be on 8.28am train from Mortdale. Return by bus from Victoria Road to City. Leader: Alan Fairley, tel 9570 8332.

July 24th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45pm. Simon Annabel will speak on 'Keeping the Georges River Healthy'.

GREAT NEW BOOK ON THE ROYAL

O.F.F. members, Drs Bob and Ann Young, have now had their book '**Understanding the Scenery**' published (see O.F.F. News, Nov/Dec 2005, p.3). It may be purchased for just \$25 at the Royal National Park's Visitors' Centre and at many major bookshops. It is very well written and packed with fascinating information about the **geology, landforms, soils** and their dependent ecosystems and scenery throughout the Royal National Park. Thoroughly recommended!

QUEST FOR THE QUASSIA

The **American Quassia** (*Quassia amara*) is a tree with extremely bitter bark which is used commercially as a medicine, beverage, cooking ingredient and non-toxic pest repellent. Quassia 'chips' are imported and sold by some Australian nurseries for harmlessly repelling animals such as **possums and wallabies**. It is not widely known, however, that four closely related species of Quassia, with quite similar qualities, are native **Australian rainforest plants**. One of these, *Quassia sp. aff. bidwilli*, is a nationally endangered species and the few known specimens occur mainly along Moonee Creek near Coffs Harbour. To prevent its extinction, an enterprising program of weed control by WetlandCare Australia has recently commenced. This program is part of a **Threatened Species Recovery Plan** prepared by NPWS.

RESTORATION OF NEVERFAIL BAY

Kogarah Council's Concept Plan for the restoration of Neverfail Bay (see last issue of O.F.F. News) has been put on display at Oatley Library. It will be presented and discussed by Council officers at a second public meeting on **Wednesday, 21st June** at Oatley RSL Club.

WATER DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING

Kogarah Council's **Draft Water Management Policy** will be on public exhibition at the Customer Service Centre until 29th June. It sets out requirements for **builders, renovators and householders** to cope with the endemic problems of 'droughts and flooding rain' without damaging the environment. Site drainage, domestic recycling and reuse, rainwater tanks, swimming pools and water quality control are amongst the items covered. The policy is in four parts, each of which may be downloaded in a PDF file from: www.kogarah.nsw.gov.au (go to 'on exhibition').

VERY BRIEFLY

Poulton Park 1999 Plan of Management: Public comments invited for review and update by Kogarah Council. Original plan available to **30 June**. Details: Judith Howes 9330 9451 or Gary Eastman 9330 9473.

NAIDOC week (National Aboriginal & Islander Days of Celebration): 2-8 July 2006. Various activities by Hurstville City Council. Details: tel 9330 6092.

Lime Kiln Bay Guided Walk: Thursday, July 4. 10am - 12.30pm followed by BBQ. NPWS Aboriginal guides. NAIDOC activity (Hurstville Council). Free, booking **essential**, tel 9330 6092.

Waste Generation and Resource Efficiency: Report by Productivity Commission. Public comments invited to July 7. Details: www.pc.gov.au/inquiry/waste.

NOTABLE QUOTES

'...the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment. We cannot run a first world economy in a third world environment.' by Professor Graham Harris in *Greenhouse Living No.8, 2001*.



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HELPING THE GEORGES RIVER

Simon Annabel, Riverkeeper, is the speaker at our next **monthly meeting on 24 July** (see over).

OFF MEMBERS AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

The Society has always had a strong commitment to environmental education. In recent weeks this has been put into practice at local schools. Three members, Robin Dickson, Alan Fairley and Melina Amerasinghe, assisted with field work being done by a class from Peakhurst Public School at Salt Pan Creek. This was part of a broader environmental technology program conducted by Dr Kathy Stewart of Sydney University.

As part of a program funded by a grant to OFF from Kogarah Council, Oatley Public School had lessons by Sharyn Cullis (on animals and their habitats), Alan Fairley (on native plants and their names), Fred Bell (on bush tucker), and Matt Allison (on bush regeneration, including a planting session). Feedback from all these activities has been very positive.

WATTLE DAY: AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER ?

Recognition of the many wattle species (750+) as a distinctive feature of the Australian flora and an inspiring focus for spring festivities was evident in the Australian colonies well before Federation. By 1910, branches of a 'Wattle Day League' were active in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, and held simultaneous festivities each year on 1st September lavishly decorated with bunches and sprigs of wattle, and marked by the planting of wattle trees in schools, parks, etc. Although the day was not officially gazetted, the festivities intensified during World War I when wattle sprigs were widely used as a symbol of national patriotism. In 1916, however, Wattle Day festivities for NSW were put forward to 1st August. This was because the main period of flowering in NSW is June to August and the demand for bunches and sprigs became so great that it could not be met on 1st September. After WW I, interest in Wattle Day gradually declined but 1st August remained a day of celebration in NSW up to 1991. In 1992, 1st September was officially proclaimed National Wattle Day. This followed much argument and debate after initial proposals in the Bicentenary year, and a final agreement by all State Premiers.

BALMAIN FORESHORES FIELD DAY

On Saturday, 1st July, despite some early confusion over train and ferry times, the group of 36 eventually came together for morning tea beside Birchgrove Park. A more perfect day weather-wise could not have been ordered and Inner Sydney Harbour was sparkling. The eclectic mix of architectural styles along Balmain's streets was most interesting, as were the Dawn Fraser Pool, the views to Cockatoo Island and Hunters Hill, and the new walkways and apartment developments (or over-developments) on former industrial sites. Lunch was on a delightful headland overlooking Iron Cove. This was followed by an inspection of the former Callan Park Hospital, with its impressive sandstone buildings dating from 1880s and the ha ha walls, which allowed inmates to look out to the greenery without feeling confined by high walls. In all, a very pleasant winter activity, with pleasant company, in what was for many a new area to discover. See photos of the walk on our website off.oatleypark.com. (Alan Fairley, walk leader)

OATLEY PARK THIS MONTH

In mid winter the wattles are putting on a good show. Gosford Wattle (*Acacia prominens*) has abundant yellow flower heads and is found on the exit road near the oval. Queensland Silver Wattle (*A. podalyriifolia*), although not a local native, is making a brilliant show near the picnic area. The widespread Sydney Golden Wattle (*A. longifolia*) may be identified by its flower spikes (not balls). Myrtle-leaf Wattle (*A. myrtifolia*) is a low wattle scattered throughout the park.

Other flowers you might see include those of Broad-leaf Geebung (yellow flowers), *Leucopogon ericoides* (tiny white flowers), Rusty Petals (clusters of brownish flowers), Grey Grevillea (grey spider flowers), Bitter Pea (yellow pea flowers with red centre) and the yellow pea flowers of *Pultenaea stipularis* and *Pultenaea daphnoides*.

NOTABLE QUOTES

"O.F.F. News is O.K. It doesn't have any advertisements". Joan Bell (editor's wife).

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(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

July 24th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Simon Annabel will speak on **Keeping the Georges River healthy.** Simon is the Riverkeeper for the Georges River. Find out what a Riverkeeper does, and what is currently happening to the area's most important natural resource.

July 29th (Saturday) FIELD DAY. DRAWING ROOM ROCKS (NEAR BERRY) AND BEYOND. A short steep walk up the Illawarra Escarpment at Woodhill with some level sections at the top before we reach the intriguing rock formations that are our first destination. We can admire the splendid views here while we have morning tea. For the more adventurous of us, there is then a little-known and slightly overgrown side track to explore. This will take us down, across and up to the main Barren Grounds Nature Reserve where we can follow one of the main tracks there until we reach the "End of the Track". Distance of the first section is 4-5 km. Total distance about 6-7 km. Meet at 9.45 am at Apex Park - on the Sydney side of Berry just over the bridge before town, about 2 hours drive from Oatley. Bring water, morning tea and lunch. Hat and strong walking shoes are advisable. Note that there are no toilets after Apex Park. Leader: Graham Lalchere, tel 9580 3107 or 0427 870 240 (on the day). Those without cars may be able to arrange a lift at the July meeting.

August 28th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Denis Gojak - Joadja shale oil mining site.

NEVERFAIL BAY PROTECTION

Some OFF members attended two public meetings to discuss restoration work along the shoreline of Neverfail Bay, Oatley. Kogarah Council intends to :

- rebuild the embankment to prevent flooding and protect coastal saltbush;
- develop a walkway with signboards indicating the natural and human history of the area;
- remove unsightly old oyster barges from the bay and perhaps use one on shore as an historic feature;
- reconstruct the storm water pipes which enter the bay;
- erect bollards to prevent cars from entering the new area.

Work will affect only the bay margin. Negotiations with Railcorp may result in railway land on the slope and the important wetland becoming public land. The Society will be following progress with interest.

ANNUAL DINNER 2006

Our 50th Anniversary Dinner last year at Roslyn Gardens was so enjoyable that we have decided to make a return visit – slightly scaled down, of course. The 2006 Dinner will be held on **Friday, October 20** at 7.00pm, at a cost of \$30 per person for pre-dinner savouries, a two course meal and tea/coffee.

Robin Dickson will be taking names and accepting payment at both the August and September monthly meetings or can be contacted on 9580 5663.

OATLEY TRAFFIC FLOW

Kogarah Council has invited discussion about making Oatley Avenue one-way traffic and creating angled parking near IGA and the hotel. OFF has expressed concern that this may impact on Oatley Memorial Gardens and require the removal of some trees.

VERY BRIEFLY

Jack Beale Memorial Lecture: July 25, 6pm Clancy Auditorium, University of NSW. 'Wicked Problems, Clumsy Solutions: diagnoses and prescriptions for environmental ills' (Global Environmental Problems) by Professor Steve Raynor, University of Oxford. Bookings: 9385 5728 or BealeRSVP@unsw.edu.au

National Schools Tree Day: July 28.

National Tree Day: July 30. Local sites include Hurstville Grove and Riverwood. Details: your local council, or www.planetark.org/campaignspage.cfm/newsid/3/story.htm.

Peter Olde's grevillea garden: August 13. Rare opportunity to visit this magnificent garden at Oakdale. Details: Jan Douglas at July meeting or phone 9533 2187 by 1 August.

Sustainability information: August 26. St. George Councils (Hurstville, Kogarah & Rockdale) are holding Sustainability Festivities at the Kogarah Spring Festival in the courtyard at Kogarah Council, 2 Belgrave Street. Topics include: hybrid cars, water and energy saving, composting and worm farms; plants to attract native birds to gardens; native animals, children's activities. More information: Alexandra Vandine on 9330 9510.



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GOJAK ON JOADJA

At our next monthly meeting on 28th August (see over), the speaker will be Denis Gojak from the Bankstown Heritage Group. His topic will be 'Joadja Shale Oil Mining Site'.

During the late 1800s Joadja was the largest town in the Southern Highlands, and its kerosene shale mines were the most important source of oil for lighting and heating in the Colony of NSW. It is now a ghost town containing the remains of many old stone buildings and workings with World Heritage listing. The fascinating history (and geography) of this area, as presented by Denis, will ensure a meeting you should not miss !

LETTER FROM THE WHEELERS

Some of our more senior members will remember Eric and Margaret Wheeler who joined O.F.F. in 1959 and were active members until moving to Grafton in 1971. Eric was President from 1963 to 1965. They have recently written a very nice letter to the Society with nostalgic recollections and 27 photographs of past events and personalities. The full letter and a selection of the photographs will be placed on our website at www.off.oatleypark.com

BUSH HERITAGE WORKING BEES

Following a stimulating talk at the June monthly meeting by Roewen Wishart, a number of members expressed interest in the Australian Bush Heritage Fund's working bees. These provide opportunities for inexpensive holidays at interesting places with like-minded people and, at the same time, enable direct participation in very effective and important conservation measures. The places and dates for forthcoming working bees are:

- Nardoo Hills Reserve, Vic; Sept 16-17, Oct 7-9
- Cravens Peak Reserve, Qld; Sept 26 - Oct 6
- Tarcutta Hills Reserve, NSW; Oct 7-15
- Liffey River Reserve, Tas; Nov 4-6.

Information on any of the above may be obtained from Joelle Metcalf on volunteers@bushheritage.asn.au or (03) 8610 9102. A paper on ABHF volunteering may also be obtained from Julian Sheen on 9594 4888 or jandasheen@optusnet.com.au.

ILLAWARRA ESCARPMENT FIELD DAY

Our field day of July 29th was marked by glorious weather and 11 enthusiastic walkers. As planned, the group reached the intriguing 'Drawing Room Rocks' with its splendid views, and then continued on to the Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. Some interesting bird sightings and other observations were made here, as described in the full report by trip leader, Graham Lalchere. This will be placed on our website with a selection of photos (see www.off.oatleypark.com).

FOXES IN HURSTVILLE

Despite recently reported increases in local fox sightings, the only action by Hurstville Council, according to 'The Leader', will be to record the sightings on a database. The Society has therefore written letters to both 'The Leader' and Council requesting additional measures such as locating and fumigating dens, baiting with 1080 poison, and trapping. These measures have been used effectively by Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby, and other urban councils, apparently without problems.

RECYCLING CORKS

As Rotary Clubs have stopped collecting corks some members are apparently under the impression that they are no longer needed for recycling. However, Lesley Winters has advised us that the Guides of NSW are still enthusiastically collecting corks and want to continue receiving them. Lesley or John Winters or Joan Bell are all happy to receive corks from members at meetings, and will pass them on to the Guides.

ANNUAL DINNER 2006

The 2006 O.F.F. Annual Dinner will be held at Roslyn Gardens on Friday, October 20 at 7.00pm. This was the venue for our 50th Anniversary Dinner last year and it was so enjoyable we have decided to make a return visit - slightly scaled down, of course. The cost will be \$30 per person for pre-dinner savouries, a two course meal and tea/coffee.

Robin Dickson will be taking names and accepting payment at both the August and September monthly meetings. She may also be contacted on 9580 5663.

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 28th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Denis Gojak will speak about the **Joadja shale oil mining site.**

September 2nd (Saturday) FIELD DAY. BONNET BAY - THE GLEN & KOOLANGARRA RESERVES. Meet at Bonnet Bay Reserve, lower end of Washington Drive, 9.30 am. We will have morning tea at this reserve (which has toilets) before starting the bushwalk. The track is about 6 km and rated 'moderate'. Bring lunch and water, wear suitable bushwalking clothing with boots or strong shoes, and hat.

Leader: Heather Mackey, tel 9528 7071 or 0418 473 735 (M)

September 25th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Gary Schoer will give a presentation entitled 'Chile and Chillier Antarctica via Patagonia'.

PROTEST AGAINST BIOBANKING

The latest Government/developer/economic weapon to combat the constraints of conservation is biobanking. Essentially, this allows natural areas of conservation significance to be destroyed if they can be offset by the protection of 'similar' areas of land elsewhere. The scheme was released for public comment last year (see www.dec.nsw.gov.au/threatspec/biobankbill.htm), and a bill to put it into effect will be considered when the NSW Parliament resumes at the end of August this year. In general, conservationists are strongly opposed to the scheme, particularly as acceptable methods of selecting and assessing offsets are not yet available. Most groups have expressed their objections to the Minister (The Hon. R.J. Debus, Level 36, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney 2000) and they are now asking individuals to do the same as a matter of urgency.

WILDFLOWER TOURS WITH ALAN

O.F.F. Vice President and well-known native plant authority, Alan Fairley, will lead two guided wildflower tours for National Parks and Wildlife Service in the coming Spring months. Both tours will be in Royal National Park starting at Audley Causeway. The first will be on Sunday 17th September, 9.30am to 12.30pm, and focus on the expected brilliant wildflower display of the coastal heathlands. The second will be on Tuesday 10th October, 9.30am to 12.30pm, in the eucalypt woodlands. The cost for each tour will be \$20 per person and all participants are required to book in advance through the National Parks and Wildlife Service Discovery Co-ordinator on 9542 0649, or at the Royal National Park Visitors Centre on 9542 0666.

VERY BRIEFLY

St George Councils' Sustainability Festivities:

August 26. Courtyard, 2 Belgrave Street, Kogarah. Features include: hybrid cars, plants to attract native birds, water and energy saving, children's activities. More information: Alexandra Vandine on 9330 9510.

Guided Walks, Joseph Banks Reserve, Kareela:

August 27, 10am-4pm, large range of native plants in both natural and planted areas. Expert information, ideas and sales. Australian Plants Society, 9528 9262.

Peak Oil & Permaculture: August 29, 6.30pm NSW Parliament House Theatre. Acclaimed speakers David Holmgren & Richard Heinberg. Bookings: 9230 2603 or dominika.rajewski@parliament.nsw.gov.au

David Suzuki: 'Putting the World Back Together':

September 4, Enmore Theatre, Newtown. Doors open 6pm, Suzuki speaks 8.10pm; for Anvil Hill Campaign. Details, bookings: www.anvilhill.org.au/ or Christine on 6547 8011 or christine.phelps@reset.net.au

Fifth National Wilderness Conference: Sept 8-10, Main Campus, Uni of Technology, Sydney. Speakers include Premier Iemma and leading conservationists such as Bob Brown, John Sinclair and Keith Muir. Cost for individuals: \$90 (\$60 Concession). Details & registration forms: Colong Foundation, 9299 7341.

DID YOU KNOW ?

After the city of Hiroshima was destroyed by the U.S. atomic bomb in August 1945, the first plants to rise from the radioactive ashes were apparently Australian Acacias. In recognition of this an Acacia Appreciation Club was formed by the citizens of Hiroshima. The club has recently arranged exchanges of friendship messages with Australian schoolchildren and plant enthusiasts.



O.F.F. NEWS



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CHILE AND CHILLIER

Would you like to experience a marvellous trip from the Atacama Desert to Patagonia, and then on to the Antarctic Peninsula on a Russian ship? Gary and Bronlyn Schoer will take us on this trip in their presentation at our next monthly meeting (details overleaf). Gary refers to Antarctica as 'an awesome and terrifying example of what the white continent can do to put humans in their place'. He also says that no one can see it without becoming a 'lifetime advocate for it to be a world park'. As active community group members, Gary is Secretary of the Southern Sydney Branch of National Parks Association and Bronlyn is President of Zonta, a women's service group. We look forward to their visit on 25th September and are very pleased to have them as our guest speakers.

BONNET BAY FIELD DAY

On 2nd September, 14 members and one visitor completed the Bonnet Bay walk in perfect weather conditions. The climb up the hill at the start was well worth the effort, with great views of the Woronora River and high level bridge leading to Menai. Lots of Spring flowers were in bloom and there was a very pleasant lunch stop on the boardwalk in The Glen Bushland Reserve. Proceeding on, we looked at an Aboriginal midden and ceremonial cave, and then the well-known Blackhand Cave, finishing the 6 km walk at Grant Place. (Report by Heather Mackey, leader)

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2007 ?

Think about joining us for a week at Smiggin Holes in January 2007 ! Details in the next O.F.F. News.

CELEBRATE 50 YEARS BY CREATING HABITAT !

Come along to Yawolloh Reserve on Saturday 7th October to plant out a grassy area with shrubs and ground covers. This is a joint activity with Hurstville Council to celebrate O.F.F.'s 50th Anniversary last year, and it's a practical way to improve our local environment. You can also see the locally rare samphire (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*) growing nearby. Bring a trowel, gloves and sun protection, and wear closed shoes. Meet at 9.30 am at lower end of Pamela Ave, Peakhurst, just across the foot-bridge from Oatley Park. Inquiries: Matt Allison 0408 605 923.

ANNUAL DINNER 2006

DON'T FORGET TO BOOK

Friday 20th October, 7pm

Roslyn Gardens, 764 Forest Road Peakhurst

\$30 per person for pre-dinner savouries, a two course meal and tea/coffee. Bookings to be finalised by Wednesday 11th October. Robin Dickson will be taking bookings and payments at the next meeting, or can be contacted on 9580 5663.

FIGURE 8 POOLS: 'WONDERFUL WALK'

This is the apt description of our next field day by Vice President Julian Sheen. He says 'If you haven't seen these beautiful coastal rock pools then you have missed out - till now! If you have seen them - then you will want to go again...and again! Your next chance, as detailed overleaf, will be on Saturday 30th September.

GLOBAL WARMING DISCUSSION

Sustainable Population Australia is hosting an open public forum on global warming and ecologically sustainable development at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street Sydney at 3.15 pm on Saturday, 14th October. Ian McGregor, an acknowledged expert on these topics, will be the main speaker with a presentation entitled 'Power, Precautionary Principle and Planetary Fever', and audience participation in the discussion will be encouraged. For further information, call Gordon on 9528 6091 or email nsw@population.org.au

OATLEY PARK IN SPRING

Many wildflower species are in bloom in Oatley Park during the September-November period, including:

- Eggs and Bacon (*Dillwynia retorta*)
 - Wedding Bush (*Ricinocarpus pinifolia*)
 - Shiny Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia nitida*)
 - Blue Dampiera (*Dampiera stricta*)
 - Fuchsia Heath (*Epacris longiflora*)
 - Rough Wax-flower (*Philotheca scabra*)
 - Green Spider Flower (*Grevillea mucronulata*)
 - Pink Spider Flower (*G. sericea*)
 - Red Bean (*Kennedia rubicunda*)
 - Small-leaf Daisy (*Olearia microphylla*).
- (thanks to Alan Fairley for this list)

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 25th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Gary Schoer will give a presentation entitled 'Chile and Chillier - Antarctica via Patagonia'.

September 30th (Saturday) FIELD DAY. FIGURE 8 POOL, ROYAL NATIONAL PARK. Meet at Garawarra Farmhouse car park which is off the Garie Beach Road. Turn right almost immediately after turning left off the main Sir Bertram Stevens Drive through the Royal National Park from Sydney. Go along the dirt track to the car park area. We will meet at 9.30 am for morning tea and a 10 am departure. We go down the hill to Burning Palms then along the rocky shore to the shelf where the pools are. We will then return to the track and come up the hill via the Werrong lookout and the fire trail back to the car park.

It's a good walk with magnificent coastal scenery. There is some tricky rock clambering - but well worth it. Bring lunch, water, hat and stout walking shoes. Leaders: Annette and Julian Sheen 9594 4888.

October 23rd (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Debbie Andrew will speak on 'Ecology of the Tiger Quoll - a threatened species'.

STATE PLAN FOR WHOM ?

A draft of the NSW Government's latest 'State Plan' may be viewed at www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan. The final version should be influenced by the outcomes of 'community forums' at 25 locations throughout NSW. One of these forums was held at the Hurstville Entertainment Centre on 5th September, and one of the community representatives 'randomly invited' to attend was myself. To obtain the views of O.F.F. members I circulated by email a list of 29 'priority areas' from the draft plan. This resulted in a number of helpful responses for which I express my thanks.

The forum was in two sessions each of which was attended by several Government ministers (including the Premier at one session), senior bureaucrats, and 30 to 40 community representatives. In the session I attended, so many different issues were discussed that a consensus on priorities did not seem possible, and was not sought. Nevertheless, summaries of 'major issues raised' and 'major challenges' were later posted on the website. These included the need to improve public transport, schools, health care, relationships with local government, Georges River water quality, and the affordability of housing. No one would deny these needs, but how and why they were selected as the major issues, and their relevance for a State Plan are matters for speculation. (report by Fred Bell)

O.F.F. OBJECTS CHANGED

The proposal to modify the objects of the Society, as set out in an attachment to the May/June issue of O.F.F. News, was passed at the Special General meeting of 26th June.

VERY BRIEFLY

Wildflower Walk, Bardwell Park: September 24, 9am-12 noon, Wollie Creek Preservation Society. Free. Bookings: 9554 3176 or info@wolliecreek.org.au.

World Habitat Day: October 3

Bringing Birds into Backyards Workshop: October 3, Tuesday, 7-9 pm, Maiden Theatre, Royal Botanic Gardens. Cost \$5 per person. Bookings: 0407 002 921

Yawolloh Reserve planting: October 7, Saturday, 9.30 am, end of Pamela Ave, Peakhurst (see p.1).

Wildflower tour with Alan Fairley: October 10, Tuesday, 9.30am to 12.30pm, Royal National Park eucalypt woodlands (see last issue of O.F.F. News). Cost \$20 per person. Bookings in advance essential, NPWS Discovery Program: 9542 0649 or 9542 0666.

National Water Week: October 15-21.

Rainforest birds tour with Steve Anyon-Smith: October 29, Sunday morning, Royal National Park. Cost \$30 per person. Further details and bookings, NPWS Discovery Program: 9542 0649 or 9542 0666

DID YOU KNOW ?

Australians consumed 550 million litres of bottled water last year and the rate is rising. According to author Emily Arnold, the processing, and transportation of bottled water, and disposal of its containers 'involves burning massive quantities of fossil fuels.....in contrast to tap water which is distributed through an energy efficient infrastructure'. (from Blue Mountains Conservation Society Newsletter *Hut News*, No. 229 Sept 2006)



O.F.F. NEWS



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October/November 2006

THREATENED TIGER QUOLL

O.F.F. member, **Debbie Andrew**, has carried out the first comprehensive field studies of Australia's **largest marsupial predator**, the threatened Tiger Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*). This is the topic of her recently completed Master's thesis and she will speak about it at our next monthly meeting on **23rd October** (see details overleaf). As a Wildlife Officer with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Debbie has conducted fauna surveys and contributed to reserve establishment programs throughout NSW over many years. She should now be regarded as the authority on the **rarely seen but ecologically important** Tiger Quoll. We are very fortunate to have her as a member of the Society, and as the speaker at our next meeting.

EXCITING ADVENTURES IN THE ROYAL

On Saturday 30th September, 25 members met at Garawarra Farm in the Royal National Park to walk to the Figure of 8 Pools. The day was cloudy and cool and in descending towards Burning Palms we noted the fresh breeze and white capped sea. At the southern end of Burning Palms beach we paused on a grassy knoll for refreshments. Then we headed around the rocky shore and encountered high seas breaking ahead at the point. Eight sensibles returned to the grassy knoll while 17 intrepids faced the waves. We continued on but around the point was a major and very recent rock fall blocking the way. We persevered, scrambling nimbly (some of us) over the huge boulders, displaced soil and tree stumps. Alas, after all this, the Figure 8 Pools were awash beneath the breakers. They were clearly visible from the higher rocks but you couldn't walk out to them. Next time ... The return to the beach meant again rounding the point. This time several intrepids got a comprehensive soaking from the sea. Still, we all enjoyed a lunch and then headed up by way of Palm Jungle and Werrong Lookout; the views were terrific. After that the firetrail was followed 3 km back to the Farm and everyone agreed it had been a pretty good day (Julian Sheen).

DON'T FORGET

**O.F.F. ANNUAL DINNER THIS FRIDAY
20th October**

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2007

The Snowy mountains never fail to work their magic - it is wonderful to arrive at **Smiggins Chalet** and experience the dry cool air after Sydney's January heat and humidity.

Dates: Saturday, 13th Jan. to Saturday, 20th Jan.

Cost: \$49 per person per night, double or share

\$73 per person per night, single

\$26 per child per night (6-18 years).

Accommodation is in self-contained apartments and there is a very pleasant large common lounge room for pre-dinner happy hours and after dinner get together activities.

If you haven't been for some years it is a great place to come back to, and if you have never been why not join us in 2007 ?

For more information and booking contact **Robin Dickson** on **9580 5663**.

NEXT FIELD DAY: UPPER HACKING

The next field day on **28th October** will be slightly different to that shown in the 2006 Program. The track we intended to take from Helensburgh station was closed after the bushfires in the 1990s and we will now start our walk at Garawarra Farm (as for the previous field day). This time we will go westward down The Burgh Track into the **rainforest along the valley of the Upper Hacking River**. Lunch will be at the northern end of Red Cedar Flats picnic area on Lady Wakehurst Drive, and participants may arrange to join or leave the group there if they do not wish to do the full walk. See overleaf for further details.

WALK AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING

Members who have seen Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth' or who are concerned about the now irrefutable facts of global warming should, if possible, join the 'Walk Against Warming' on **Saturday, 4th November**. This big event, co-ordinated by the Nature Conservation Council and supported by virtually all environmental groups, will commence at **11am in Martin Place, Sydney**. It will highlight the need to reduce carbon emissions, and has been timed to coincide with rallies throughout Australia and the world prior to the United Nations Climate Change Conference at Nairobi, on 16th-17th 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

October 23rd (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Debbie Andrew will speak on ' Ecology of the Tiger Quoll - a threatened species' (see overleaf).

October 28th (Saturday) FIELD DAY. UPPER HACKING RIVER. Meet at Garawarra Farm car park at 9.30 am (as for the previous field day in September). Take Sir Bertram Stevens Drive through the Royal National Park, turn into the Garie Beach Road and almost immediately turn right onto the unsealed Garawarra Road. Follow this for about 2 km to the car park. After morning tea we will walk down The Burgh Track, cross to the western side of the Hacking River and continue through magnificent rainforest and open forest to the waratah farm (which supplied many of the waratahs for the Sydney Olympic Games). We will then proceed to the northern section of Red Cedar Flat picnic area where we expect to have lunch about 12.30 pm. As this is on Lady Wakehurst Drive (about 6 km south of Joan Holland Bridge) some participants may wish to arrange transport for either joining or leaving us there if they do not wish to do the full walk.

After lunch we will explore some minor tracks through the rainforest between Lady Wakehurst Drive and the Hacking River, returning to Garawarra Farm via Boora Flat and The Burgh Track again. Except for some short rainforest sections most of the 9 km walk is along well maintained tracks and roads. The final 2 km are a steady climb with many steps, but we can take it slowly and have frequent stops. Wear good walking shoes and bring lunch, water and hat. Leaders: Joan and Fred Bell, tel 9525 0552 or 0409 449 770 (mobile).

November 27th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Paul Storm will speak on 'Australian Flora & Fauna in Philately and the Decorative Arts'.

50th ANNIVERSARY PLANTING

There was a disappointing lack of participation in the Anniversary planting day on 7th October. Only four O.F.F. members came to help plant about 250 plants to improve habitat at Yawolloh Reserve. Julie McInnes from Hurstville City Council and one local resident also attended. A special thank you to Matt Allison who, in addition to a big effort of planting on the day, also planned and coordinated the project. Thanks also to Julie McInnes for arranging community liaison as well as attending on the day, to David Crawford who assisted with site preparation (110 planting holes), and to those members who did attend. (by Jan Douglas)

SIGNIFICANT LOCAL FAUNA SIGHTINGS

As reported in local newspapers, several sightings of a wallaby (probably a **Swamp Wallaby**, *Macropis bicolor*) have been made in **Oatley Park** by local residents during the past few months. No similar sightings had been reported in this area since 1997. The **Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) is a spectacular waterbird, sparsely distributed around the Australian coast and rarely seen in the Sydney area. However, a specimen was observed last month on the Georges River near **Lugarno** by Debbie Andrew. From the colouring of a band on its leg she found out that it had been caught, banded and released at Ashby Island on the Clarence River in October last year.

VERY BRIEFLY

National Water Week: October 15-21.

Oatley Flora & Fauna Annual Dinner: October 20

Oatley Lions Festival: Saturday, October 21. Please visit our stall, perhaps buy some plants, give stall holders a half hour break, or help pack up at the end.

Rainforest birds tour with Steve Anyon-Smith:

October 29, Sunday morning, Royal National Park. Cost \$30 per person. Further details and bookings, NPWS Discovery Program: 9542 0649 or 9542 0666

Walk Against Warming: November 4, Saturday, 11am, Martin Place, Sydney. Further details: Nature Conservation Council, 9279 2466 (see overleaf also).

O.F.F. Christmas Picnic: December 4, Monday, 5.30pm, Steamroller Park. Details next O.F.F. News.

DID YOU KNOW ?

The last volcanic eruption on the Australian mainland was **only 5000 years ago at Mount Gambier**, South Australia. This was about the same time as the Sphinx and first Egyptian pyramids were being constructed, and after the Sumerian urban civilization had become well established. Other relatively recent eruptions were in **North Queensland about 12,000 years ago** and feature in the Aboriginal oral history of this part of Australia. (from Professor Bernard Joyce, University of Melbourne)



O.F.F. NEWS



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LAST MONTHLY MEETING FOR 2006

Our last monthly meeting for 2006 will be the **27th November** (see details overleaf). The evening will feature a talk by **Paul Storm** entitled 'Australian Flora and Fauna in Philately and the Decorative Arts'. This will be followed by a **social supper and bargain stall**.

GLOBAL WARMING CAMPAIGNS

The 'walk against warming' in Sydney on 4th November (see last O.F.F. News) was very successful, with an estimated **25,000** people taking part. A number of O.F.F. members were among the walkers, sending politicians a clear message to sign the **Kyoto Protocol**.

To **sustain the message** of the walk, concerned O.F.F. members have been asked to join the 'Citizens Climate Campaign'. If you have email, this is done very easily by sending the word 'Yes' to climatez@aapt.net.au. At the beginning of each month you will then receive:

- information about an aspect of climate change,
- a few points to make in a suggested letter,
- contact details of appropriate politicians to which your letter could be directed.

The aim is to encourage thousands of Australians to individually lobby our elected politicians each month. It is essentially a 'numbers campaign' coordinated by **Robin Mosman** of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, supported by a number of other people and community groups. The campaign and its coordinators have **no political affiliations**.

KILLING WEEDS SWEETLY

Household sugar could soon become the new, **ecologically friendly herbicide** for many weeds. Recent research at Charles Sturt University has shown that it can stimulate the growth of micro-organisms in the soil which prevent weeds taking up nutrients. So far there appear to be **no adverse effects on native plants**. Further information may be obtained from *The Australian Landcare Magazine*, March 2006, or from Dr Suzanne Prober at suzanne.prober@bigpond.com.

'BEING GREEN'

If you missed out on your copy of 'Being Green' (story of O.F.F.'s first 50 years) more will be available for \$10 per copy from Alan Fairley at the next monthly meeting on 27th November.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2007

Places are still available for our annual trip to the beautiful Snowy Mountains in summer. To book or obtain further information call Robin Dickson as soon as possible on 9580 5663.

Dates: Saturday, 13th Jan. to Saturday, 20th Jan.

Cost: \$49 per person per night, double or share

\$73 per person per night, single

\$26 per child per night (6-18 years).

Accommodation is in self-contained apartments, with a large common lounge room for social activities.

UPPER HACKING RIVER FIELD DAY

A cloudy but fine day on 28th October provided good walking conditions for the 11 members on the Upper Hacking River field day. Features of the day included:

- the delightful setting of Lilyvale Cottage which may be a good venue for future O.F.F. events,
- Robyn Dickson's surprise when she recognised Lilyvale Cottage as the homesite of a relative (and legendary family character) many years ago,
- some plant species not often observed on our walks: Lilac Lilly (*Schelhammera undulata*), Grass-leaved Conospermum (*Conospermum tenuifolium*) and a Bush-Pea (*Pultenaea blakelyi*).

A more detailed report will be placed on our website, www.off.oatleypark.com (Fred Bell, co-leader).

NAMING OF JOAN HOLLAND BRIDGE

Participants in the last two field days have driven past the Joan Holland Bridge at the upper causeway on the Hacking River. To answer a question some asked, the late Joan Holland was **president of the Bundeena Progress Association** and campaigned strongly for many years for an all-weather road crossing of the river. Her efforts were finally fulfilled when the bridge was **opened in 1993**. Before then, Bundeena's road access was often cut off in wet weather by floods.

THYLACINE IN ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

Fossils indicate that the presumed extinct thylacine or **Tasmanian tiger** (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*) occurred throughout the Australian mainland, possibly less than 2000 years ago. Further evidence of this is provided by Aboriginal rock art. A rare example in the Sydney area is on the shore of **Southwest Arm** in Royal National Park. It is clearly a drawing of a thylacine with a snake and wallaby. (from S.S.E.C. Newsletter, Dec. 2004)

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 27th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Paul Storm will speak on 'Australian Flora & Fauna in Philately and the Decorative Arts'. This is the last monthly meeting for 2006, ending with a social supper and bargain stall. Please bring a plate of finger food and money for the bargains.

Note that there is no field day in November this year

December 4th (Monday) Annual Christmas Picnic/Barbecue in Steamroller Park (part of Oatley Park), from about 5.30 pm. Bring your own food and drink and, if you wish, picnic chairs, table and gas barbecue (provided there is no fire ban).

February 5th, 2007 (Monday) Annual General Meeting. Election of officers, slide night and social supper. If you have old slides of past trips/events that members have not seen, or new slides of special interest, bring them along. Please bring, also, a plate of finger food for the supper.

SUSTAINABILITY AT PIGFACE POINT

Pigface Point is on the southern bank of Georges River about 12 km upstream of Oatley Park. A bushland property here is the home of Ted Trainer, well-known promoter of sustainable living, academic, and author of books such as the highly acclaimed 'Abandon Affluence'. For some years Ted has been developing his property as an **alternative lifestyle educational site**, and from time to time conducts tours of the site to demonstrate and explain his ideas. One of these tours, on **Saturday, 25th November** from 9.30 am to about 12 noon, will include the following topics:

- global resource limitations and implications
- simple, low-cost, self-sufficient living
- waste utilisation, recycling and permaculture
- building a council-approved house for \$10,000.

Directions for travelling to Pigface Point and other information on its features may be obtained from Fred Bell on 9525 0552 or from Ted Trainer's website: <http://socialwork.arts.unsw.edu.au/tsw/>

TOWRA TRACK OPEN AGAIN

Towra Point Nature Reserve contains the **largest remaining wetland** near Sydney. An O.F.F. field day to this remarkable area was planned in 2004 but had to be cancelled when the track was found to go through an old asbestos dump and was subsequently closed. This problem has apparently been resolved but **access is still very restricted**. Guided walks are now conducted through the area by NPWS officers as part of their 'Discovery' program, and one of these will be on **Saturday, 2nd December** from 9.30am to 1.30 pm. Participants must book in advance on 9542 0649 (Coordinator) or 9542 0666 (Visitors Centre, Audley).

ALL ABOUT RAINWATER TANKS

Standards Australia and the Australian Rainwater Industry Development Association have recently produced a large and comprehensive handbook, 'Rainwater Tank Design & Installation HB 230-2006', now available for \$46. Further information and an order form may be obtained from www.arid.asn.au or from Brendon Scotter on 9543 0300.

VERY BRIEFLY

Sydney Ports Open Day: November 25, Saturday, 11am-2pm, Botany Town Hall. Community and environmental benefits (sic) of Port Botany expansion.

Buy Nothing Day: November 26, Sunday. Penrhyn Estuary. Details: Chairperson@botanybay.info. Part of International day to expose the adverse effects of consumerism. See <http://www.buynothingday.co.uk>

Sustainability Education Conference: November 27, Monday, 9am-5pm, Novotel Motel, Olympic Park. Department of Environment in partnership with other agencies and community groups. Cost: \$55 per person. Details: Carol Davies or Peter Salier on 8837 6000 or Sylvia at sylvia@horizoncommunication.com.au

NPWS Towra Point Wetlands Walk: December 2, Saturday. See 'Towra Track open again' on this page.

Oatley Lions' 30th Celebration: March 22, Thursday 7pm, Roslyn Gardens. Details and bookings (ASAP): Faye 9570 6338 (after 7pm).

DID YOU KNOW ?

Assuming minimum requirements for pasture growth and cattle raising, it takes at least **18,000 litres** of water to produce **every kg of butter** and **50,000 litres** to produce **every kg of beef**. (*National Heritage*, Spring issue 2006)