



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Price: 10 cents

Issue: 2007/1

Jan/Feb 2007

AGM FIRST MEETING OF 2007

Best wishes for the New Year to all our members and friends are extended by the 2006 Committee. The first meeting this year will be the Annual General Meeting on **Monday, 5th February**, when the 2007 office bearers and Committee will be elected, followed by slides/pictures and a light supper, as detailed overleaf.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS: JANUARY 13-20

15 people arrived at Smiggin Holes to a smoky haze which did not clear until Tuesday. Fortunately, this was the day we had chosen to undertake the **high Main Range** (Lakes Walk, Thredbo Chairlift, Summit walkway) - an excellent decision as it turned out.

By Wednesday everyone was into the swing of things and all went to **Rainbow Lake** except for two energetic walkers who took off for **Mt Stillwell** and beyond. Near the end of the Rainbow Lake walk we were advised that **the Park had been closed** - a fire alert was in place! Thredbo holidaymakers were evacuated that afternoon and we were informed that Smiggins would be evacuated if necessary, but probably not until Saturday (the day we were due to leave). Thursday afternoon the whole group visited **Happy Valley**, a working property and museum at Adaminaby. On the way we were delighted to drive through heavy, widespread rain. That evening all 15 of us enjoyed an excellent meal at **Stillwell Lodge Restaurant, Charlotte Pass**. The fire situation had now eased but the Main Range walking tracks and part of the Alpine Way remained closed.

Porcupine Rocks, Mount Piper and the Rennix Walk are a sample of the other walks enjoyed. Our evening get-togethers were also very much appreciated, thanks to those who provided DVD presentations and slides. Sadly, the countryside remains in severe drought and the rate of vegetation regeneration after the 2003 fire is disappointing. However, as usual, **a great time was had by all** - GREAT FUN - GREAT COMPANY! (thanks to Robin Dickson for this report)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Have you paid your annual subscriptions for 2007? If not, please post your cheque to P.O. Box 52, Mortdale 2223, or pay Lesley at the AGM on 5th February. The subscription is \$25 per person or family (living at the same address).

DON McMINN

Sadly, we have to report the death of Don McMinn on 3rd January. Don was a foundation member of O.F.F., was one of the six people on the steering committee formed 30th November 1955 and was a member of the first elected committee in 1956. He lived in Bay Road, West Oatley, for 80 years and his parents owned paddocks which extended down to the Lime Kiln Bay wetlands. Don gave an interview for our 50th Anniversary, outlining his early involvement in Oatley Park and O.F.F. which is printed in *Being Green* (the history of O.F.F.).

(Alan Fairley)

RALLY AGAINST NSW PLANNING SYSTEM

The recent 'planning reforms' of the NSW Government have **outraged community groups** concerned with the environment, quality of suburban living, and fairness to small property owners. Many of these groups have come together to organise a **protest rally** at Hyde Park, Sydney on **Sunday, 11th February** at 11 am. Details may be obtained from Rolf Clapham on 0407 900 615, Rosemary Hadaway on 9633 3380 or at www.kabnsw.org.au.

GLOBAL WARMING: GLIMMERS OF HOPE

Following signs of **attitudinal shifts** by U.S. and Australian governments on global warming last year (see O.F.F. News 2006/6, 2006/11), there is more recent good news in this area, including the following:

- A landmark ruling by the Land and Environment Court that environmental assessments must include the greenhouse gas emissions from the **burning of exported coal**, and a decision by the NSW Government not to appeal against the ruling.
- Approval by the Federal Government of a **\$220 million wind farm** at Bald Hills in Victoria.
- The announcement of a large renewable energy package by the Federal Government, including a \$75 million contribution towards building the **world's largest solar energy plant** with a capacity of **154 MW**.
- Development of a photovoltaic cell in U.S.A. with a conversion **efficiency of 41%**, promising to greatly reduce the cost of generating solar energy.
- **Professor Tim Flannery** named 'Australian of the Year', which will further strengthen his impressive efforts to promote renewable energy and conservation.

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 5 (Monday) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 7.45pm. Reports on O.F.F.'s 2006 activities (including financial activities as listed below), and election of office bearers and Committee for 2007. 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' pictures and a light supper.** If you have digital pictures on a CD or slides of interesting places or Society activities, please bring a few of them along. Also, **please bring a plate of finger food** to contribute to the supper.

February 26 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. This will feature a talk by **Dr Kathy Stewart** of University of Sydney and some of her students on 'The Oatley Project' (more details in next issue of O.F.F. News).

March 3 (Saturday) FIELD DAY, Milsons Point Wharf to Greenwich Wharf. This is the first section of the Inner Harbour Loop Walk. Great views and the bushland headlands of Balls Point and Berry Island. About 10 km, taking about 4 hours + lunch. Meet at Milsons Point Wharf (next to Luna Park) at 9.45am. Catch 8.39am train from Mortdale; change at Town Hall for Milsons Point. Then walk down hill to wharf. Or catch the 9.35am ferry from Circular Quay. Leader: Alan Fairley.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC. FOR YEAR ENDED 31.12.06 Lesley Wylie, Hon. Treasurer (J. Watters Consultant)

<u>Credit Balance as at 01.01.06</u>	\$4,492.76	
<u>Receipts</u>		
Membership subscriptions	4455.00	
Donations	1235.00	
Annual Dinner	1560.00	
Ann. Dinner Raffle	105.00	
Sales – Plants/Books	263.50	
Stalls Proceeds	220.00	
Off History	150.00	
Mug Sales	196.00	
Interest	26.51	8,211.01
		\$12,703.77
<u>Payments</u>		
Printing/Postage	900.55	
Annual Returns	78.00	
Donation Uniting Church	260.00	
Projector Repairs	300.00	
Printing Programs	212.00	
PO Box rental	60.00	
Annual Dinner	1456.00	
Donations (see Note)	1100.00	
Public Risk Insurance Policy	749.52	
Kog.Council Grant Expense	830.00	
Oatley Lions Festival	90.00	
Nature Cons. Council Subs.	172.50	
Colong Foundn. Subs.	25.00	
'Being Green' Printing	199.55	
Sundries	116.74	6,549.86
<u>Credit Balance as at 31.12.06</u>		\$6,153.91

<u>Credit Balance as at 31.12.06</u>	\$6,153.91
Add Cash Management Trust a/c	7,445.99
	\$13,599.90
Less balance of KMC Grant	170.00
Total Society Funds	\$13,429.90

Note: Donations (\$100) Total Environmental Centre, Birds Australia, Kuringai Bats, WIRES, Wilderness Society, Environmental Defender's Office, Gene Ethics Network, NCC Climate Change, Protectors of Belrose Bushland. (\$200) Australian Bush Heritage.

The Society's funds at 31.12.06 were \$13,430 including \$1,718 in The President's Fund for donations to other environmental bodies.

Included in the Society's funds is 2007 Subscriptions in advance of \$1,625 representing 43% of members. Generous donations of \$970 were received Nov/Dec as contributions towards the purchase of a digital projector – Thank you.

VERY BRIEFLY

World Wetlands Day: February 2.

Rally against NSW Gov't Planning: February 11, Sunday, 11am, Hyde Park, Sydney (see item on p.1).

Oatley Lions' 30th Celebration: March 22, Thursday 7pm, Roslyn Gardens, Peakhurst. Details and bookings: Wendy Cornish 9570 5332 .

Clean Up Australia: March 4, Sunday. Details in next O.F.F. News and at February monthly meeting.



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Since 1955

Issue: 2007/2

February/March 2007

NEW PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE

Congratulations to **Julian Sheen** who was elected our new President at the AGM on 5th February. Congratulations, also, to three elected new Committee members, **Elisabeth Cameron**, **Graham Lalchere**, and **Yvonne Penn**, and to the re-elected members from last year. Full details of our new Committee are in the **2007 Program** of Events which should be **posted to all Society members** with this issue of O.F.F. News. Special tributes were given at the AGM to retiring President Jan Douglas and retiring Committee member David Koffel. Faye Coughlan, our re-elected Secretary, delivered a very thorough and entertaining report on the Society's activities for 2006.

NEXT MEETING: THE OATLEY PROJECT

At the next monthly meeting on 26th February (see overleaf) **Dr Kathy Stewart** from the University of Sydney and some students will give a presentation on **The Oatley Project**. This is an environmental educational project, initiated and supervised by Dr Stewart, in which primary and high school students use **mobile technology** for learning outside the classroom about their **local environment**. A number of Society members have assisted with the project.

OATLEY PARK HERITAGE WALK

O.F.F. members conducted some very successful **guided tours of Oatley Park** in April 2005 as a 50th Anniversary event, and also as part of the National Trust Anniversary celebrations. The tours will be repeated this year on **Sunday, 18th March**. Further details will be announced at the next monthly meeting.

ALARMING DECLINE IN BIODIVERSITY

The revised NSW planning laws are not reducing, but seem to be accelerating the State's **alarming decline** in biodiversity. This is detailed in a new report '**Biodiversity Conservation in NSW**' and is one of the causes of great dissatisfaction with the planning system (see last O.F.F. News). The 35-page report may be obtained free from the **Nature Conservation Council** on 9279 0955 or from www.nccnsw.org.au

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2007 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 26th February.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA

Sunday, 4th March

This year, for Clean Up Australia on Sunday 4th March, we will be working on both sides of Lime Kiln Bay **around the Oatley Park footbridge to Peakhurst**. Meet in Yawolloh Reserve (also called Jinna Reserve), Pamela Avenue, Peakhurst at 10am (earlier we'd be hampered by a high tide). Please come along with suitable boots, gloves etc for **as little or as long as you can spare**. A lunch will be provided by Hurstville Council at the Oatley Park castle for all volunteers. (Julian Sheen, Coordinator)

TONKINS' PROPERTY TO BUSH HERITAGE

At the monthly meeting in June last year an inspiring talk was given by Roewen Wishart of the **Australian Bush Heritage Fund**. This is a non-profit organisation that has purchased over 600,000 hectares of land to protect threatened plants and animals. In recent years O.F.F. has made donations to the Fund and some of our members have participated as volunteers in the Fund's program of habitat restoration and maintenance. Our latest link to this worthy and effective organisation is through **Winn and Norm Tonkin** who have been active and very supportive **O.F.F. members since the 1960s**. Their magnificent 1,300 hectare rural property, 'Scottsdale', has become the Fund's most recent acquisition. Located on the upper Murrumbidgee River in southern NSW it provides a rare and particularly valuable conservation corridor between the ecosystems of the Australian Alps and coastal forests. The property also contains a substantial area of **yellow box - red gum woodland**. This is now an endangered ecosystem, poorly represented in reserves, and an important habitat for a number of threatened and vulnerable plant and animal species.

LITTLE TERNS, BIG CRANES

The Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance (with whom O.F.F. is affiliated) recently circulated an email headed 'Little Terns today, big cranes tomorrow'. It told us that **Little Terns had started nesting on Penrhyn Spit** 'right where the new port terminal will be built'. As the Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*) is endangered and particularly vulnerable to **dogs, foxes and other predators**, NPWS has temporarily fenced off the area. Although the 9 or 10 fledglings now seem to be faring quite well, their future survival must be regarded as very uncertain with the present and expanding Port Botany activities.

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(near the corner of Letitia Street)

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Coming Events

February 26 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. The main feature of the meeting will be a presentation by Dr Kathy Stewart of the University of Sydney and some of her students entitled 'The Oatley Project'. See p 1 for more details.

March 3 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Milsons Point Wharf to Greenwich Wharf. This is the first section of the Inner Harbour Loop Walk. Great views and the bushland headlands of Balls Point and Berry Island. About 10 km, taking about 4 hours + lunch. Meet at Milsons Point Wharf (next to Luna Park) at 9.45am. Catch 8.39am train from Mortdale, change at Town Hall for Milsons point. Then walk down hill to wharf, or catch the 9.35am ferry from Circular Quay. Leader: Alan Fairley, 9570 8332.

March 18 (Sunday) OATLEY PARK GUIDED HERITAGE TOURS. A repetition of the popular tours conducted for our 50th Anniversary in 2005. Details to be given at the February 26 monthly meeting.

HUNTING IN STATE FORESTS

The Greens, in association with various conservation groups, have organised a campaign against the **NSW Government policy** that allows hunting in most of our State Forests. The policy is supposed to provide a means of eradicating feral animals. However, it is now clear that the Game Council (an organisation to control hunting) has a **vested interest in maintaining the breeding** of feral animals to make their 'sport' sustainable. There have been a number of reports of hunting being 'improved' by the deliberate release of deer and pigs into some forests. Shooting, sometimes with the use of dogs, has also seriously **compromised** the value of the forests for other purposes such as **recreation, conservation and education**. Members who feel strongly about this issue should write to their local MP and the Premier, expressing their concerns. **Information on the Greens' campaign** may be obtained from MP Lee Rhiannon on 9230 3551 or downloaded from www.leerhiannon.org.au

FULL COST OF COAL

As environmental assessments of coal mining in NSW must now consider greenhouse emissions from the burning of the coal (see last issue of O.F.F. News), the **economic cost of the emissions** should also be calculated. This is more than \$85 per tonne according to British economist Sir Nicholas Stern, making the full cost of energy from coal **comparable to the cost of renewable** geothermal, wind and solar energy. The comparison favours renewable energy even more if **additional environmental and health effects** of the coal industry are considered. One increasingly important additional effect is the damage to our river systems by **longwall mining**. Examples of such damage in the Nepean, Hunter and Woronora river systems will be outlined in a later issue of O.F.F. News.

VERY BRIEFLY

'NSW targets for natural resources': talk by Dr John Williams, NSW Natural Resources Commissioner, February 28, Wednesday, 5.15 pm, Clayton Utz, No.1 O'Connell St, Sydney. Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand. Non-members of Institute welcome, admission free. anita.mitchell@wsn.com.au

Climate Change Forum with Peter Debnam (Lib), A. Rahill (ALP), D. Shoebridge (Greens): March 3, Saturday, 1pm, North Bondi Life Saving Club. Details: 9263 0349 or greypower@au.greenpeace.org

Clean Up Australia: March 4, Sunday. O.F.F. to work around Oatley Park footbridge (details overleaf).

Birdwatching walk, Eagle Rock, RNP: March 6, Tuesday, 9.30am-1pm, NPWS Discovery Program, Adults \$12, Children \$9, bookings essential, Visitors Centre 9542 0666 or Program Coordinator 9542 0629.

Seminar on 'Part 3a and the Public Interest' (recent controversial changes to environmental planning): March 7, Wednesday, 6pm, 201 Elizabeth St, Sydney. Speakers: Cate Faehrmann (Nature Conservation Council), Ken Morrison (Property Council), Sam Byrne (Local Government Association). Admission free. Environmental Defender's Office. 9262 6989.

Oatley Lions' 30th Celebration: March 22, Thursday 7pm, Roslyn Gardens, Peakhurst. Further details: Lesley Cox 9579 3782 or Wendy Cornish 9570 5332.

Recommended new book: 'Silencing Dissent' by Clive Hamilton and Sarah Maddison. Describes recent Australian Government suppression of expert findings on environment, conservation etc. 279 pages, \$25 rrp, The Australia Institute, Canberra, (02) 6125 1277.

NOTABLE QUOTE

"The situation in Australia is ironic. We get the most sunshine but burn the most coal." John Harrison, Managing Director, Australia-Wide Solar Ltd.



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Issue: 2007/3

March/April 2007

TRAVEL THE SILK ROAD

O.F.F. Vice President and well known author, **Alan Fairley**, will be the speaker at the next monthly meeting on **26th March** (see over). Alan has recently travelled through western China on parts of the old Silk Road trade route which are still rarely seen by western tourists. He will give us a **pictorial presentation** of features of this area, including:

- ancient Buddhist caves
- extraordinary deserts with huge sand dunes
- Urgan settlements
- the second lowest point on earth
- the fabled town of Kasgar.

This will undoubtedly be a fascinating talk that should not be missed.

CORRECTIONS TO 2007 PROGRAM

As one of a number of Committee members who read through the proofs of the Society's 2007 Program I can vouch that the final version sent to the printer was 100% correct. Nevertheless, in the printed Programs that later came back to us and which were mailed to all members in February, **the following minor mistakes** had somehow occurred:

- The **field day on April 1st is a Sunday**, not Saturday as printed
- **The September field day is on 29th**, not 39th
- Beverley Watters' name is **spelt incorrectly** under 'Hospitality and Welcome' (last page).

To avoid possible misunderstandings, **please correct your Program** accordingly. (Fred Bell)

FUTURE OF MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE ?

Close to the new supermarket and the railway station, Myles Dunphy Reserve (named after the famous Oatley conservationist) is still mainly native bushland. However, it includes the **site of the old bowling club** which obviously has much redevelopment potential, and Hurstville Council is reported to be carrying out **detailed studies of the area**, possibly for this purpose. There are concerns, of course, that inappropriate development here could be very detrimental to the bushland of the reserve. A good opportunity to discuss these concerns will be our **April monthly meeting** when the speaker will be Council Bushcare Officer, Heather Stolle (see 'Coming Events' overleaf).

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA 2007

Clean Up Australia on Sunday 4th March again drew a strong community response to the project area nominated by Oatley Flora and Fauna. We concentrated on both sides of Lime Kiln Bay near Jinna Reserve, Peakhurst. Our participants totalled 28 adults and children, and they collected 25 bags of rubbish. Although less rubbish was reported than in previous years, an area near Mortdale Heights was found to be badly littered and polluted by storm water from the golf course. The OFF committee is requesting a gross pollutant trap be installed in this area by Hurstville Council, possibly as part of an Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation grant. Thank you to all those who took part. (Julian Sheen)

RARE LOCAL FAUNA SIGHTINGS

Prince Edward Park and Forbes Creek, Woronora, are the sites of recent reports of **wombats** and a **koala**. The koala had been tagged and was tracked from near Campbelltown. There have also been new recent reports of a **swamp wallaby** in Oatley Park. (from John Kensett, 'Bushcare Link' and Sutherland Council)

INNER HARBOUR WALK: Sat 3rd March

It was a hot sunny day for our walk along the Inner Harbour from **Milsons Point to Greenwich Wharf**, but at least we avoided the storms of other recent days. There were 29 people at the start and almost as many by the time we arrived for the 3.56 pm ferry - not that we lost anyone, but some had to leave the group early. Participants were very impressed with the **variety of the scenery** and how each bay presented a different face. There are still some nice patches of bushland around the foreshore, and lunch was held in one of these under the shade of trees at Balls Head overlooking the harbour. An unexpected discovery was the **tunnels under the Coal Loader**. It was a good walk to start the year's program and a number of participants expressed the desire to complete the **second section** of the Inner Harbour walk to **Hunters Hill** in the future. (Alan Fairley)

FINAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Is your 2007 subscription overdue? Please note that, according to the Constitution, **membership ceases if payment is not made by 31st March.**

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(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

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

Coming Events

March 26 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. The main feature of the meeting will be a presentation by Alan Fairley entitled 'The Silk Route, a Photo Journey'. (see overleaf).

April 1 (Sunday) (Note this walk is NOT on Saturday, as in program) FIELD DAY. Colo River Gorge - Bob Turner's Track. This is a chance to visit the magnificent and unspoilt Colo River gorge by one of the easiest routes. It is truly beautiful. About 7.5 km round trip (there and back). It involves a descent and a climb but they are not arduous. The plan is to meet up at Wilberforce just north of Windsor at 9.30 am. We should meet at the garage on the corner in the centre of town where parking should be O.K. From there we will go in convoy up the Putty road past Colo heights to the turnoff on the left. Drive about 4km on a reasonable unsealed road before a small parking place. We will then walk down into the gorge where there is a picnic spot and a wonderful beach with swimming at the bottom. We will stay and explore the area before returning to the cars in the afternoon. Bring lunch, good walking shoes and swimming gear.

April 23 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Heather Stolle will speak on 'Small reserves, big impacts - bushcare in Myles Dunphy Reserve'.

CONSERVATION ELECTION ISSUES

On the eve of the NSW elections, conservation groups are demanding an end to the **iniquitous influence** of big business on the major political parties. As may be seen at www.democracy4sale.org, the development industry donated more than **\$5.5 million to NSW Labor** and **\$3.5 million to the Coalition** in a recent year, coinciding with the effective destruction of the NSW planning laws to protect the environment. This must be seen as **corrupt and antidemocratic**, and should be unacceptable in a decent, civilized society. Other election issues relevant to conservation are at:

- www.environmentelection.org.au (updated daily by the Nature Conservation Council), and
- <http://voteclimate.org.au> (climate change issues).

LONGWALL MINING SUBSIDENCE

Longwall mining was listed as a **Key Threatening Process** to 15 species and ecosystems under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act* in July 2005. This extensively used form of underground mining involves the continuous working of a long face of coal ahead of hydraulically operated roof supports that allow the roof to subside into the cavity as the face progresses. The amount of coal extracted and the subsidence of land at the surface are both greater with this method than with older methods. Near Appin and in the Hunter Valley, land **has subsided by up to a metre** through longwall mining, with severe damage to river systems, wetlands and other habitats. Current proposals to extend such mining into the water supply catchments of the **Woronora and Wyong Rivers** are now causing conservationists much concern.

EARTH HOUR, 31st MARCH

Residents of Sydney and suburbs will be asked to turn off all non-essential lights and electrical equipment for **one hour at 7.30pm**, Saturday, 31st March. This is to draw attention to the problem of global warming and also to mark the start of a campaign to **cut Sydney's greenhouse gas emissions by 5%** before 31st March 2008. The campaign is a joint initiative of WWF (originally World Wildlife Fund), the City of Sydney, and the NSW Government. Support has also been pledged by **more than 100 substantial corporations** (e.g. Fairfax Media, Toyota and AMP).

VERY BRIEFLY

Cooks River Festival: Sunday, April 15, Sustainable Water Showcase, 11am-4pm, Steel Park, free. Details: Marrickville Council, tel 9335 2104.

Beat the Drought Talk: Tuesday, May 1, 10.30am-12pm, Royal Botanic Gardens. \$18. Bookings: Friends of Botanic Gardens, tel 9231 8182.

Recommended publication

Day Walks in the Lower Grose River and Tributaries by Michael Keats (61pages). Copies are available from Keats Holdings P/L, 33 Livingstone Avenue, Pymble NSW 2073, 9144 2096, cost \$16.70 (incl. postage).

DID YOU KNOW ?

Australia is the **world's largest exporter** of coal and controls about 30% of the international trade in this commodity. Combustion of the 80 million tonnes we exported last year would have produced **more than 200 million tonnes of greenhouse gases.**



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Issue: 2007/4

Since 1955

April/May 2007

MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE

O.F.F. Committee has recently written to **Hurstville Council and The Leader**, expressing concerns about the future of Myles Dunphy Reserve. Our views are:

- the bushland in the reserve must be protected and preserved,
- the bowling club site must retain the present zoning, i.e. open space/recreation,
- there must be consultation with the local community on the future of the bowling club.

At our next monthly meeting on **23rd April** (see overleaf), **Heather Stolle** will speak about bushcare in the reserve. Heather is a member of the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators and is a **Bushcare Officer with Hurstville City Council**. Her talk will provide a good opportunity for members to discuss this important and topical issue.

THE OATLEY DUNPHYS

The naming of Myles Dunphy Reserve, after a remarkable Oatley resident, was suggested by O.F.F. and approved by Hurstville Council in 1992.

Myles Dunphy OBE, who died in 1985, was largely responsible for some of our most important national parks, and is often regarded as the 'Father of Australian Conservation'. His effective conservation campaigning was continued and extended by his son **Dr Milo Dunphy OA**, former Total Environment Centre Director, who died prematurely in 1996.

Myles' remaining son is **Professor Dexter Dunphy**, a distinguished international authority on organisational behaviour. He is currently focusing on the roles of corporate organisations in achieving sustainability, and this may well provide an effective approach to conservation in a future global corporate economy.

PERSONAL LINKS TO THE DUNPHYS

Around 1948-49, as a young scout leader and keen hiker/camper, I knew the odd name *Myles Dunphy* quite well. A number of **maps prepared by Myles** for bushwalkers, and bearing his name, were frequently used by my troop. They were then the best available maps for most of our hiking and camping activities.

A few years later, when I was working in the NSW Water Commission, that odd name kept coming up again amongst the senior engineers, usually coupled

with 'crank', 'ratbag' and much worse. They were struggling to answer **Myles' persistent public criticisms** of plans for water supply dams on the Warragamba, Shoalhaven, Colo and Grose Rivers (all except Warragamba were later abandoned).

In 1972 I joined the management committee of the newly formed **Total Environment Centre**, which had just appointed **Milo Dunphy** as its first Director. I remained a member of this committee for more than 20 years, working part-time with Milo and his staff as a voluntary scientific advisor. During that period I prepared and edited many of TEC's technical reports and I also accompanied Milo on some of his **bushwalks with politicians** (notably Bob Carr).

Frankly, it was not easy for me to work with Milo. His passionate, never-give-in approach was not at all compatible with the objectivity and logical rigour expected in my efforts as a professional scientist. Nevertheless, I deeply respected the **strength of his commitment** to conservation and his great **ability to influence important people**. He was a brilliant speaker, writer and debater, and from him I learned (slowly and reluctantly) that words are so often much more powerful than facts and numbers.

As a University of NSW academic during the 1980s, I also had occasional contacts with **Dexter Dunphy**. Only recently, however, did I realise how relevant some of his work could be to **conservation in an uncertain future**. (Fred Bell)

COLO WALK REPORT: 1st APRIL

Twenty members and friends gathered at the village of Wilberforce on a beautiful Sunday morning before driving off down the Putty Road. North of the Colo River bridge we found the turnoff to Bob Turner's track and reunited at the smaller bush car park at the top of the trail. The descent into the gorge was slow which meant we could enjoy the view and the ambience of the bush. On reaching the bottom we were truly rewarded by a beautiful river, beach and gentle rapids. The water was clear as crystal and the rocks shone underneath. Lunch and swimming were a great pleasure. We then faced the climb back to the top which, it was agreed, was arduous. But in time we all made it to the car park and agreed that it was well worth the effort. (Julian Sheen)

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Coming Events

April 23 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. Heather Stolle will give a talk on bushcare in Myles Dunphy Reserve entitled "**Small reserve: big impact**" (see overleaf).

April 28 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Narrow Neck Fire Trail to Clear Hill. **Approx. 20 km return.** Magnificent views over Kanangra-Boyd wilderness and Lake Burragorang. **Meet 8.45 am at the locked gate** about 1 km from Golden Stairs car park. To get there, drive from Katoomba along Cliff Drive and turn into Glenraphael Drive. Continue until you reach the locked gate about 3 km from the Cliff Drive turn off. About **2 hours drive from Oatley.** As this is a full day walk, bring plenty of water, hat, first aid kit, morning tea and lunch plus snacks. Wear strong walking boots/shoes as the gravel road is undulating with some steep grades and is rocky/eroded in places. There is a scramble up off the road along a short rough track to the morning tea spot where there are fine views. **Children on the walk will need to be carefully supervised** as there are sheer cliffs with no guard rails at some viewing spots. Clothing for changeable weather is also advisable.

Participants who do not want to walk the full 20 km can return at any time after signing off. A good place to do this is after the morning tea stop which is approximately an hour's walking from the car park. Leaders: **Peter and Lesley Cox, tel 9579 3782 or 0438 878 774 (M).**

May 28 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Ken Griffiths will speak on Frogs and Reptiles of Sydney.

HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL CLEAN UP

A free clean up for household chemicals will be held from 9am to 3.30pm on **Saturday 26th May** for all Sydney residents. The collection point for this area will be the Hurstville Council Works Depot, cnr Depot Rd and Roberts Ave. Paints, pesticides, herbicides, oils and fuels, solvents and cleaners, batteries, gas bottles, fire extinguishers, pool chemicals, fluorescent tubes, acids and alkalis will all be accepted. More details: www.cleanout.com.au or **131 555** (thanks to Jim Nicholson for this item).

OATLEY PARK THIS MONTH

Alan Fairley has listed the following plants in Oatley Park that should be flowering conspicuously now:

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)

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

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

Native Fuchsia (*Correa reflexa*; yellow-green bell-shaped flowers, Hills Lookout and sheltered places)

Woolisia (*Woolisia pungens*; small sharp leaves and clusters of white flowers, along Headland Track.

VERY BRIEFLY

Illawarra Grevillea Park Open Days: April 28 & 29, May 5 & 6, 10am-4pm. Princes Highway, Bulli. Details: 4284 9216 or info@grevilleapark.org.

Homo sapiens: Overabundant and Ultimate Pest ? Public Forum, Dr Alan Jones: Saturday, April 28, 2pm, Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt St Sydney. Further information: 9939 6889

Beat the Drought Talk: Tuesday, May 1, 10.30am-12pm, Royal Botanic Gardens. \$18. Bookings: Friends of Botanic Gardens, tel 9231 8182.

St George Councils' Eco-living workshop: Saturday, May 5, 2-4pm, Syd Frost Memorial Hall, Hawthorne St, Ramsgate. Bookings etc: 9330 6260.

Recommended DVD on oil crisis: "Crude Impact", www.crudeimpact.com/page.asp?content_id=9638.

NOTABLE QUOTES

"I want to see the evidence, I want to see the science. I mean, these sweeping generalisations are next to useless", **John Howard** on global warming, ABC's Four Corners, 28/8/06 (following the release of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*).

"There is no point in saving the planet if we ruin the economy doing it", **Morris Iemma** (reported in *The Land* 8/2/07 p.24).



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Since 1955

Issue: 2007/5

May/June 2007

EASY IDENTIFICATION OF FROGS

About two thirds of the 200 + Australian native frog species are found near Sydney, as revealed in the book *Frogs and Reptiles of the Sydney Region* by **Ken Griffiths**. It contains beautiful colour photographs and details of each frog, together with similar information on Sydney's lizards, snakes and turtles. A recently revised (second) edition also includes a **CD with the calls of the frogs**, greatly assisting identification. The 128-page book, published by New Holland, costs about \$25. O.F.F. is very pleased to have the author as our speaker at the **next monthly meeting on 28th May** (see overleaf). In addition to his special interests in herpetology, Ken is a professional wildlife photographer, and his skills in this area will ensure an excellent presentation.

EASY IDENTIFICATION OF RNP PLANTS

A **user-friendly** identification guide to native plants in the coastal areas of the Royal National Park has been prepared on a **CD** by the Sutherland Group of the Australian Plants Society. Its features include:

- an interactive system for people with no botanical knowledge to quickly identify **300 native plant species**
- **detailed information** on all the above species
- more than **1,200 excellent photographs** of the plants, flowers, leaves and fruit
- **compatible** with Windows 98/2000/NT/ME/XP.

The CD may be purchased for \$20 from RNP Visitors Centre Audley, Paddy Pallin Miranda, Sydney Wildflower Nursery Heathcote, or **at the next O.F.F. meeting on 28th May**. For other stockists, order forms and further information see <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~ssgap/coastal.htm> or contact Rhonda at rhodaniels@bigpond.com or 9521 8381.

O.F.F. INTO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

The Society has recently purchased a DELL digital projector, thanks to a number of generous donations by members. For many years we have owned a 35mm slide projector to assist guest speakers and members in their slide presentations. However, this equipment, although still operating satisfactorily, has become almost obsolete with digital technology's rapid replacement of traditional methods.

GENERIC PLANS FOR PARKS ETC.

Hurstville City Council's Draft 'Generic Plans of Management' for **Parks and General Community Use Areas** were on public exhibition up to 3rd May. These were very general (= generic ?) objectives and proposed actions for 159 parcels of mainly grassed community land and open space, with a total area of about 248 hectares. Following a report by Alan Fairley, O.F.F. Committee submitted comments on the plans to Council, suggesting that many of the areas should be recognised as important **links in 'green web corridors'** between bushland remnants. Comments were also made about the need to identify endemic trees and other native vegetation in each area for appropriate **specific management** plans.

OATLEY OYSTERS KO QX

Georges River was the oldest and largest Sydney Rock Oyster fishery until 1995. In that year it was struck by the **QX parasite** which is deadly to oysters, although harmless to humans. By 1998 the oyster industry in this area had completely collapsed, and QX had spread to other waterways such as the Hawkesbury River. In efforts to combat the parasite, scientists from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and several universities sampled **surviving oysters in Lime Kiln Bay** and other severely affected areas. These were used to breed QX resistant strains that were later re-introduced to some of the original fishery sites. The **first good crops** of healthy oysters in the Georges River - Botany Bay area from the resistant strains have recently been reported (DPI, April 2007).

NARROW NECK WALK, 28th APRIL

On a cool and misty morning, perfect for walking, our party of 12 set out for Clear Hill at the end of the Narrow Neck fire trail. We were soon rewarded with clearing weather and dramatic views over Wild Dog Mountains, Kowmung River and Cox's River. There were also many wildflowers out, especially *Banksia spinulosa* and *Lambertia formosa*. With such pleasant distractions the 10 km walk to our scenic lunch spot at Clear Hill seemed much shorter. After lunch, on the return walk, the cliffs around Kings Tableland and Mt Solitary, previously hidden in the morning mist, provided spectacular highlights in the afternoon sun. An altogether enjoyable day. (report by Lesley Cox)

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

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

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

Coming Events

May 28 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. The main feature of the meeting will be a presentation by Ken Griffiths entitled 'Frogs and Reptiles of Sydney' (see overleaf).

June 2 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Sydney Harbour National Park, North Head Loop Walking Track. Catch 8.47 am train from Oatley (or 8.49 am from Mortdale), then 10.00 am Ferry from Circular Quay to Manly. The walk starts outside the Information Centre near Manly wharf. About 7 km of good tracks/roads with one or two short hilly sections and a small number of steps. Scenic and historical features throughout. Carry lunch and water, wear suitable footwear and hat. Leader: Heather Mackey 9528 7071

June 25 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Libby Cameron (Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens) will speak on 'Maintaining an oasis in the concrete jungle'.

WARATAH RIVULET COAL PROTEST

As reported in the March/April issue of O.F.F. News, **longwall coal mining** has become a conservation threat. The most recent stream to be damaged by land subsidence from this industry is Waratah Rivulet, flowing into Woronora Dam. Extensive collapsing and cracking of the bed of the Waratah Rivulet is causing **pollution and losses** of water in this part of the Sydney supply system, and disrupting both aquatic and riparian ecosystems. As appeals to the mining company have not stopped the damage a number of conservation groups have planned a protest rally on **Saturday, 17th June** at 11 am. Participants will meet at the gates to the mining site on Old Princes Highway, 3 km south of the Helensburgh exit from the F6 Freeway. Further information may be obtained from 9261 3437 or 0409 447 913 or daveb@tec.org.au.

GREENS' GREENHOUSE BLUEPRINT

Senator Christine Milne recently launched a major Greens' policy response to the problems of climate change, oil depletion and economic trends. Entitled 'Re-Energising Australia', it stresses the **moral imperative to address these problems now**. It argues that, in doing this we can also 'rebuild our educational and manufacturing base, create jobs and wealth as well as build resilience in ecosystems and more secure, happier, healthier communities'. The actual measures proposed in the response are surprisingly moderate and have **good scientific support**. They seem less extreme than the measures that may well be imposed on Australia in the future through trade restrictions etc. by the governments of countries with more responsible greenhouse policies. The full document is about 36 pages (1.11 MB) and may be obtained from Senator Milne on 03 6224 8899 or senator.milne@aph.gov.au.

VERY BRIEFLY

Household Chemical Cleanup: Saturday, May 26, Hurstville Council Works Depot, cnr Depot Rd & Roberts Ave. Details of items accepted: tel 131 555 or www.cleanout.com.au

NCC Bushfire Conference, 'Bushfire in a Heating World', Thursday, May 31 9am-6.30pm, & Friday, June 1 9am-5pm, Centenary Lecture Theatre, Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards. Fees: \$165 (individual), \$99 (concession). Details: NCC www.nccnsw.org.au/bushfireconf2007, or 9279 2466.

Public film screening on Oil Crisis, 'Crude Impact', Saturday, June 2, 1.30pm Mitchell Theatre, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney. More details: Gordon 9528 6091

World Environment Day: Tuesday, June 5.

World Ocean Day: Friday, June 8.

Carbon Emissions Trading: Thursday, May 31, release of final report of Prime Minister's Task Group.

Seminar on Carbon Trading and the Derivatives Market (following PM's Task Group report): Thursday, June 14. The Australian Centre for Environmental Law, Sydney. Details: Val Carey on 9351 0238 or v.carey@usyd.edu.au

Waratah Rivulet Coal Protest: Saturday, June 17, 11am. (see item this page)

Recommended new book: 'Scorcher: The dirty politics of climate change' by Clive Hamilton. Published by Black Inc. 266 pages, RRP \$29.95.

O.F.F. JOKE

"Go forth and multiply" roared Noah, as he released the animals from the Ark. "Ssorry, Sir" hissed one of the snakes "we couldn't possibly do that". "Ha ha ha" chuckled Noah "even adders can multiply". "Yesss" sighed the snake, "but we're odd adders".



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Since 1955

Issue: 2007/6

June/July 2007

ANOTHER URBAN OASIS

With its safe, leafy streets, family-friendly homes, and bushland gardens, Oatley has been described as an **'oasis in the urban blight'**. Similar sentiments are expressed about Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens by Libby Cameron, the speaker at our next monthly meeting. Her talk is entitled **'Maintaining an oasis in the concrete jungle'**. Libby represents the *Friends of the RBG* which aims to promote enjoyment and understanding of the Gardens, and also to protect their conservation, scientific, educational and recreational values. As the objectives, outlook and some of the problems of *Friends of the RBG* are much the same as ours, this should be a very informative meeting. It will be on **Monday, 25th June**, as detailed overleaf.

NORTH HEAD LOOP WALK REPORT

In glorious weather on 2nd June, 17 O.F.F. members set out from Manly to walk the North Head Loop track of **Sydney Harbour National Park**. Panoramic views of the Harbour were the highlight of the morning, with a very pleasant coffee break at Little Manly Cove. We then continued on through the old gasworks site which is now **Little Manly Reserve**. As we approached the coast the old anti-aircraft battery installations were inspected, and the track passed through natural bushland with Grey Spider flower (*Grevillea buxifolia*), Fuchsia Heath (*Epacris longiflora*), and Flannel Flower (*Actinotus helianthi*) all in bloom. The lunch stop was above **Shelly Beach** where extensive views of the northern beaches were enjoyed. **Cabbage Tree Aquatic Reserve** was the final section of the walk, completing a great day for us all. (report by Heather Mackey, field day leader)

O.F.F. ANNUAL DINNER 2007

September 21st has been selected for the social event of the year, our Annual Dinner. Details of the venue etc will be given in later issues of O.F.F. News.

'BEING GREEN' AT NEXT MEETING

'Being Green' is a history of the Society written by Alan Fairley for our 50th Anniversary in 2005. It will be available again at the next monthly meeting on 25th June for \$10.00 per copy. See Alan at the desk near the back of the room.

NORM TONKIN

We were extremely sorry to hear of the death of Norm Tonkin on 16th June. Norm and Winn Tonkin have been members of the Society since 1968 and have played important roles in many of our activities. Until recently they owned Smiggins Chalet in the Snowy Mountains and made it available to the Society for our annual January visits to this part of NSW. They also owned 'Scottsdale', a 1,300 hectare property in southern NSW which was recently acquired by the Australian Bush Heritage Fund. Winn continues to be a regular participant in our monthly meetings and field days.

Our deepest sympathies are extended to Winn, and to family and relatives.

MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE WALK

Following her stimulating presentation at the April monthly meeting (see April/May O.F.F. News), Heather Stolle has agreed to lead a 2-hour walk through Myles Dunphy Reserve on **Tuesday, 26th June** (details overleaf). The walk will be **open only to the first 15 people** who book by calling Julian Sheen on 9594 4888. As shown by Heather in her talk, this local bushland reserve has substantial conservation significance and future actions may be necessary to protect it from impending development.

NEW PROJECTOR AT WORK ALREADY

As mentioned in the previous O.F.F. News, the Society has recently purchased a DELL digital projector, the cost of which was met almost entirely from members' donations. We are pleased to report that its value was amply **demonstrated at the May monthly meeting**. It was needed and used then by Ken Griffiths for his presentation on frogs and reptiles.

GLORIOUS GREVILLEAS GALORE !

Members with strong interests in Grevilleas and Prostantheras must see the special collections of these and other native flora at the 15 hectare **Illawarra Grevillea Park**, Princes Highway, Bulli. It is open to the public on only a few days each year. These include the **last two weekends of July**. Further information: tel 4284 9216 or email info@grevilleapark.org

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 25 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. **Libby Cameron** (Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens) will speak on 'Maintaining an oasis in the concrete jungle' (see overleaf).

June 26 (Tuesday) MIDWEEK WALK - MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE, OATLEY: (see overleaf) Meet at the old Bowling Club off Mulga Road at 9.30am. Duration: up to 2 hours. Places are limited to 15 and **BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL.** Phone Julian Sheen on 9594 4888. **Leader: Heather Stolle.**

June 30 (Saturday) FIELD DAY - TO BEDLAM & BANJO & BACK: Ferry to Kissing Point, a walk through Putney and Tennyson to Banjo Paterson Reserve at Bedlam Point, Gladesville (and hopefully a look inside *Banjo Paterson Cottage Restaurant*!). Wander among the historic buildings in the former Gladesville Hospital grounds then through Gladesville Park to 3.35 pm return ferry from Huntley's Point wharf. Train from Oatley 7.47am, Mortdale 7.49am. Change at Town Hall for Circular Quay. 9.25 am ferry from Wharf 5. Easy 11 km walk. Bubblers at various points. Bring lunch and camera. **Leader: Cliff Crane,** tel 9580 3269 or mob. 0401 875 391 (on walk day only).

July 23 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. **Jason Cockayne** will speak on 'Restoration work at Lime Kiln Bay, Oatley Park'.

RENEWABLE ENERGY vs LOBBY POWER

Dr Mark Diesendorf, an internationally recognised expert on renewable energy, has just released the results of his recent detailed research in a book entitled '**Greenhouse Solutions with Sustainable Energy**'. This clearly shows that most of Australia's future energy needs can be met economically from renewable sources, contradicting the influential (but inexpert and self-interested) claims of the **powerful coal lobby.**

ADAPTATION OF BIOTA TO WARMING

Professor Lesley Hughes of Macquarie University is an authority on the **potential effects of global warming on native plants and animals.** She was the keynote speaker at a forum in Sydney on 12th May and made the following particularly interesting points:

1. The temperature changes expected by 2030 would be equivalent to latitudinal climate shifts of 250 to 500 km, and altitudinal shifts of 200 to 400 m.
2. It will be more difficult for plants and animals to adapt in flat areas than in mountainous areas.
3. In Landcare and Bushcare revegetation programs, some of the new plants should not be propagated from local plants but from the **same species in warmer areas.** This will result in greater genetic diversity and better chances of adaptation.

Point 3 suggests some of the present **Landcare and Bushcare practices may need reviewing.**

VERY BRIEFLY

Wildlife Awareness Week: July 1-8

Native plants for your garden workshop: Saturday, July 14, 10.30am-12.30pm., Greening Australia Nursery, Knox Road, Doonside. Bookings essential: 9672 4009 or mclarke@ga.org.au

Illawarra Grevillea Park open days: Saturdays and Sundays of July 21-22 and 28-29 (see item on p.1).

'Secrets of the Silk Road', by Alan Fairley: Wednesday July 25, 8pm, Multi Purpose Centre, Flora St Sutherland. National Parks Association free slideshow. Details 9299 000, www.npansw.org.au

Schools Tree Day: July 27.

National Tree Day: July 29.

Recommended new book: 'Greenhouse Solutions with Sustainable Energy' by Mark Diesendorf. Published by UNSW Press, RRP \$49.95 (see this page under 'Renewable energy vs lobby power'.)

DID YOU KNOW ?

Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens were established in **1816 by Governor Macquarie** and are regarded as the oldest scientific institution in Australia. A number of trees in the Gardens in 1816 are still living, and the renowned Herbarium contains **over one million preserved plant specimens.** Some of these were collected by Sir Joseph Banks in 1770.



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Since 1955

Issue: 2007/7

July/August 2007

JASON'S QUEST

Jason Cockayne will be the speaker at our next monthly meeting on 23rd July (see overleaf). The topic of his talk will be '**Restoration work at Lime Kiln Bay**' which is one of his particular responsibilities as Hurstville Council's Wetland Officer. This project is not concerned with the mangroves but aims to restore the **rushes and sedges** of the freshwater creeks and wetlands. Jason is a local resident and has recently become a member of O.F.F. We look forward to gaining much knowledge from his experience and expertise in an important area of conservation for our waterways and shores.

PARKING PROBLEM AT NEXT MEETING

We have been warned that members with disabilities could have difficulty getting to the next monthly meeting. They may have to walk up the steps from Letitia Street to reach the door of the Uniting Church. **The parking area could be temporarily closed** to vehicles and pedestrians as it is scheduled for resealing around 23rd July, the date of the meeting.

BALMAIN-BEDLAM WALK REPORT

After a pleasant but chilly ferry ride we arrived at the starting place - Kissing Point. A young couple spied by a walker proved this spot true to its name - a good start to the day! In the bitter westerly wind, 21 of us, including the leader, gathered to sign on and then eagerly moved off to thaw out. We meandered through waterfront reserves, deviating into some residential streets with interesting mixtures of building types. Our morning tea stop, Putney Park, could boast the best tubular slippery dip in Sydney - tested and agreed by some of our young-at-heart members !

Spectacular river views abounded and we enjoyed the native flora and birds along the way to our lunch spot at Banjo Paterson Park. After lunch we viewed the outside of Banjo Paterson Cottage at Bedlam Point (wedding in progress inside). This was followed by a look over the well tended grounds and fascinating buildings of the old Gladesville Hospital, then to Gladesville Wharf for our return ferry. The one disappointment of the day was that the promised Banjo ballads did not eventuate. A GREAT DAY THANKS TO CLIFF CRANE ! (report by Robin Dickson)

O.F.F. ANNUAL DINNER 2007

The 2007 **Annual Dinner** will be held on **Friday 21st September**, 7.00 pm, at Peshurst RSL Club in the Legends Lounge. Cost: \$32 per person for a three-course meal including tea or coffee. A vegetarian option is available. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. **Robin Dickson** will be taking bookings and accepting payment at both the July and August monthly meetings, or can be contacted on **9580 5663**.

UPDATE ON MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE

In response to a letter from O.F.F. Committee on the future of Myles Dunphy Reserve, Hurstville Council's property manager has written to inform us that:

- **information is still being obtained** to review future options for the former bowling club site,
- when Councillors are informed of the options, **"full consultation with the public** and special interest groups will be undertaken, including public meetings and written submissions."
- ".... the Council has **not resolved** to develop or dispose of the former bowling club site."

A number of O.F.F. members took part in an excellent walk through Myles Dunphy Reserve on 3rd July. This was led by Heather Stolle, following her talk on the reserve at the May monthly meeting. The walk clearly demonstrated the very impressive efforts of Heather and her bushcare volunteers in restoring the original native vegetation of the area.

NATURE OF SOUTHERN SYDNEY

In a **combined celebration** of the National Parks Association's 50th anniversary and the National Parks and Wildlife Service's 40th anniversary there will be a special series of **eight evening lectures and several field trips** by experts in botany, zoology, geology, Aboriginal history and related topics. They will refer particularly to southern Sydney, and the field program will feature inspiring locations. The lectures will be held on Thursday evenings at St George & Sutherland Community College, Jannali, from **2nd August to 20th September**. Cost per person: \$55. For details and bookings, contact the College on 9528 3344 or Gary Schoer on 9570 1813, or see www.sgsc.nsw.edu.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

July 23 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. Jason Cockayne will speak on 'Restoration work at Lime Kiln Bay, Oatley Park'.

July 28 (Saturday) FIELD DAY- STANWELL PARK - WODI WODI TRACK. The walk starts at **10 am near the Beach Kiosk** at the end of Station Street, Stanwell Park. If you wish to come by train catch 8.48am train from Oatley and change at Sutherland for 9.11am Kiama train, arriving at Stanwell Park 9.45am. Depending on the weather, we will have morning tea and spend some time at the beach. We will then go by car about 1.4 km south of the beach to the start of the Wodi Wodi track (which is hard to find if you don't know it). The **first 2 km** of the track is a **fairly gentle rise** along parts of the old historic Bullock Road to the picturesque Blackbutt Forest. We then climb for about **1 km up a steep track** with steps to the top of the escarpment. Here there are **great views** of the coastline, Seacliff Bridge, historic viaduct etc, and it's a good spot for lunch (there are other options for people who want to avoid the steep climb). The viewing places have no guard rails so children will need to be carefully supervised. Return essentially the same way, the total walking distance for the full trip being **about 6 km**. Wear hat and strong shoes. Bring lunch, water and extra coat if weather is changeable. Leaders: **Joan and Fred Bell**, tel 9525 0552, mob 0409 449 770.

August 27 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Bob Beale will speak on 'If trees could talk; great Australian tree stories'.

'A CRUDE AWAKENING'

This highly recommended documentary film, similar in style to 'An Inconvenient Truth', explores an even more pressing issue. The world is rapidly approaching 'peak oil' (an expected dramatic change in supply). We are using crude oil faster than it can be produced, and global reserves are becoming depleted. No new major fields have been discovered since the 1970s.

The film shows how oil affects every part of our lives, from the obvious such as transport to the less obvious such as food production (with fertilizers), medicine, cosmetics, etc. It is a sobering thought that so many products we take for granted may be unaffordable in just a few years. One of the experts in the film says bluntly that he doubts his grandchildren will ever fly in a plane because air travel will become prohibitively expensive. The worry of this crisis is that governments are not taking it seriously and not investing in a future less dependant on oil. This is said to be because politicians would not get elected if they suggested our way of life will have to change.

'A Crude Awakening' is a film that all should see. It has been showing at the 'arthouse theatres' such as the Chauvel at Paddington and the Cremorne Orpheum, and is expected at other theatres soon. (thanks to **Graham Fry** for this review)

VERY BRIEFLY

'Twenty years of the Wilderness Act', The Colong Foundation for Wilderness: Tuesday July 24, 6.30pm, 'The Station' at Jackson's Landing, Bowman Street, Pyrmont. Presentations by the Hon Bob Carr and Henry Gold OAM. Drinks and supper provided, entry by donation at door. Details and RSVP : 9261 2400.

'Secrets of the Silk Road', free slideshow by Peter Vaughan, Wednesday July 25, 8pm. Multi Purpose Centre, 123 Flora St Sutherland. National Parks Association. Details: 9299 0000, www.npansw.org.au

Schools Tree Day: July 27.

National Tree Day: July 29.

NPWS and NPA Anniversary Lectures: Each Thursday from August 2 to September 20, 7pm, St George & Sutherland Community College, Jannali. Cost per person \$55. (see 'Nature of southern Sydney' overleaf for more details)

OFF JOKE

NPWS ranger to man on river bank: "That's a big bag of fish. How many have you caught ?"

Man: "If you can guess that, you can have them".

NPWS ranger: "Can I, really ?"

Man: "Yes, both of them."

(from Cliff Crane on walk, in lieu of Banjo ballad)



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Since 1955

Issue: 2007/8

August/September 2007

NEXT MEETING: GREAT AUSSIE TREES

At our next monthly meeting on **27th August** (see over), the speaker will be **Bob Beale**, well-known environmental author and journalist.

In a note about his talk, Bob refers to 'passionate debate' about top Aussie sports stars, entertainers, artists, writers, politicians etc. He then writes ".....But what if you asked Australians to list our **greatest individual trees?** Most would probably struggle to name just one. Yet their ranks include both the world's oldest and tallest living things; trees of great rarity and astonishing beauty; trees sculpted and gnarled by centuries of flood, fire and drought; and trees that are the living embodiment of our remarkable natural and human heritage. Without them, our society could not exist. Perhaps our love-hate relationship with native trees – think ring-bark, chainsaw, bulldozer and woodchip – has blinded us to what they can teach us about our environment, to the special stories they can tell us about ourselves, or simply to inspire us."

Bob's presentation will give us a 'sneak preview' of his forthcoming book "**If trees could talk**" and it is sure to be of great interest to all O.F.F. members.

OATLEY PARK IN SEPTEMBER

In September the following should all be flowering conspicuously:

- Myrtle-leaf Wattle** (*Acacia myrtifolia*; shrub to 1 m, short broad leaves, pale yellow balls up to 8 in group)
- Sunshine Wattle** (*Acacia terminalis*; shrub to 3m, feathery leaves, pale yellow balls up to 40 in group)
- Sweet-scented Wattle** (*Acacia suaveolens*; slender shrub to 2m, straight narrow leaves, pale yellow balls)
- Pink Spider Flowers** (*Grevillea sericea*; shrub to 2m, flowers usually pink but sometimes white)
- Green spider Flowers** (*Grevillea mucronulata*; low or spreading shrub to 1.5m, groups of 6 or more flowers)
- Rough Wax-flowers** (*Philotheca scabra*; small shrub on sheltered slopes, white flowers with 5 petals)
- Fuschia Heath** (*Epacris longiflora*; 2 cm red tubes with white lobes, sharp-pointed leaves to 12 mm long)
- Bush Pea** (*Pultenaea stipularis*; shrub to 2m, yellow pea-type flowers, crowded thin leaves to 3cm long).

from list provided by Alan Fairley

FINAL NOTICE: ANNUAL DINNER

Oatley Flora & Fauna 2007 Annual Dinner will be held on **Friday 21st September**, 7.00 pm, at **Penshurst RSL Club** in the Legends Lounge. Cost: \$32 per person for a three-course meal including tea or coffee. A vegetarian option is available. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. **Robin Dickson** will be taking bookings and payments at the **August monthly meeting**, or she can be contacted on **9580 5663**

WALKING THE WODI WODI, 28th JULY

There were 19 of us eagerly anticipating a day of good company and spectacular views from the escarpment over Stanwell Park. After warm welcomes and morning tea at the kiosk, the usual 'riot act' was expertly read (thanks to John Davoren), featuring 'what would happen to us if we forgot our shoes, hats or pills'. We then signed the warrant and were off - down the road a km, a bit of tricky parking, ducked under the railway line and our journey had begun.

A gentle rise through the Blackbutt Forest got our agile bodies ready for the stiffer half hour climb to the summit where we were rewarded with views of the historic viaduct, Stanwell Park valley, and lungs full of fresh air. Another 150m to where 'lunch was served', views of the Seacliff Bridge, sparkling beaches and headlands north and south, and where someone claimed a 'sighting of NZ'.

Our ever nimble legs made short work of the descent, although we were impressed with some children playing chasings whilst running **up** hill ! Report by Joan Bell, who was ~~not~~ the leader. (~~not~~ edited)

NEXT DONATIONS FOR LAPTOP

In the renewal of memberships last year we were invited to make optional donations to help update O.F.F. equipment. The very generous responses to this enabled the purchase of a digital projector which is now being used for presentations at our monthly meetings (see July/Aug O.F.F. News). The Committee has decided to invite donations again with the next renewal of memberships. If the responses are similar, we propose to purchase a laptop computer to complement the projector and assist our Secretary in her record keeping and other work for O.F.F.

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 27 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. Bob Beale will speak on 'If trees could talk: great Australian tree stories' (see over)

September 1 (Saturday) FIELD DAY- Kurrajong Heights bushland meander. Meet for morning tea at **Bill and Ruby's place 10.30 am**, 5 Stanley Avenue, Kurrajong Heights (off Bellbird Ave), about 2 hours drive from Oatley. The first section of the meander is down the steep slope behind Bill and Ruby's place to inspect rainforest along **Little Wheeny Creek**. On returning we drive about 4km to Kurrajong Heights and take a short easy to moderate walk along a disused **historic road** built about 1850. We then continue driving towards Bilpin about 6km and turn off to **Burralow Swamp picnic area** where there is a good lunch spot and an easy walk for several km along an interesting valley with signs of early farming, scribbly gums, native orchids, a glow worm cave and a waterfall. Total walking time all together is about 2 hours. Bring strong walking shoes, hat, lunch and drinking water. Leader: **Bill Holland 0425 357 993**

September 24 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Nancy Pallin (Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society) will speak on 'The wonderful world of bats'.

CAPE YORK HERITAGE AREA

When the Wet Tropics of North Queensland were officially inscribed as a World Heritage Area in 1988 many conservationists considered that parts of Cape York Peninsula were equally worthy and should have been included. Their assessments of the conservation values of the Peninsula were confirmed in 2001 when an expert study for the Queensland Government found it easily met all the criteria for a World Heritage Area. That study, and persistent lobbying by conservation groups, eventually resulted in the introduction of **the Cape York Peninsular Heritage Bill** to the Queensland Parliament in June 2007. If this is passed it should provide protection for an area as large as Tasmania which The Wilderness Society describes as **'one of the three most unspoiled wilderness areas on earth'**. In addition to its natural values it has very significant historical and Aboriginal cultural values. As some opposition to the Bill is expected, The Wilderness Society and other conservation groups are continuing their effective lobbying and campaigning.

UPDATES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Recent noteworthy developments on this issue are:

- **The Greens** have introduced a **'Climate Futures Bill'** to the NSW Parliament, and their Federal colleagues have launched an Energy Efficiency Access and Savings Initiative (**EASI**) to assist household energy savings throughout Australia.

- Dozens of **local climate action groups** are now operating in the Sydney area. Typical of these is Sutherland Community Action Network (**SCAN**) which has over 100 members.
- Climate action groups throughout the World are dismayed by President Bush's **'Major Emitters Summit'** on September 27-28 which they believe aims to sabotage the efforts of the Kyoto Protocol.

VERY BRIEFLY

Concert for Cape York: August 26, Sunday. Sydney Town Hall, 2.30pm-5pm. All proceeds for protection of Cape York. The Wilderness Society, 9282 9553.

Keep Australia Beautiful Week: Aug 27-Sept 2, Details: www.keeppaustraliabeautiful.org.au

National Threatened Species Day: September 7, Details: www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/tsday

Lugarno Lions' Sustainability Expo: Sept 16, part of 2007 Lugarno Lions' Spring Festival. Promoted by Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale Councils. Displays, educational stalls, UNSW Solar Car, water and energy efficient products etc. etc. Information: 9330 6260.

NOTABLE QUOTE

"If we do not change our direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed". Chinese proverb introducing an item on climate change in *American Scientist*, Vol 80, 1992 (during the George Bush Senior Administration).



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Since 1955

Issue: 2007/9

September/October 2007

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BATS

Well known conservationist, **Nancy Pallin**, probably **accompanied by a live bat**, will give a presentation with the above title at our next monthly meeting on **24th September** (see over). Nancy is the recipient of a number of awards for her conservation work, especially with bats. She is an Education Officer at the Australian Museum and Chairperson of the **Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society**. She is also a Director of Paddy Pallin Pty Ltd, daughter of Jean and Tom Moppett, and daughter-in-law of Paddy Pallin, all revered **pioneers of conservation and bushwalking**. This monthly meeting will undoubtedly be a highlight of our 2007 program.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE TREES GONE ?

For more than 50 years O.F.F. has been protesting about the **destruction of trees** by councils, developers, householders and others. Our feelings about such actions are well expressed in an article entitled **'Where have all the trees gone ?'** by Melina Amerasinghe, O.F.F. Committee member. This may be viewed on our website at www.off.oatleypark.com. Our feelings were also stimulated by Bob Beale's talk at the last monthly meeting about his forthcoming book on great Australian tree stories (see 'Very Briefly' overleaf). O.F.F. has therefore decided to create a **register or database of local trees**, significant for their size, history, rarity, or whatever. Please send your **suggestions to our Secretary** for trees to include in this database. You are also invited to tell us any stories you may know about local trees, perhaps guided by Bob Beale's stories.

BEDFORD COTTAGE BATTLE

Bedford Cottage (also known as 'Gardener's Cottage and Garage') is a derelict brick building near the tramway crossing on Princes Highway, Loftus. It is just inside Royal National Park and **NPWS wants to demolish it**. This has been strongly opposed, however, by Sutherland Historical Society and other groups because of its heritage values which include:

- Site of depot and garage for the earliest **horse-drawn buses** in Sutherland Shire during the 1800s
- The **first motor bus depot** in Sutherland Shire, and one of the first in the Sydney area.

The demolition has been delayed by the Department of Planning but is scheduled to occur in the near future if a **'cost-effective adaptive re-use'** is not found.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY APS !

2007 is the 50th Anniversary year for the **Australian Plants Society (APS)** which, until a few years ago, was called the Society for Growing Australian Plants (SGAP). Its objectives, as originally stated, are:

- To promote the work of **propagating and growing Australian native plants** in home gardens and public places.
- To improve native plants as **garden subjects**.
- To observe and strengthen the **laws for the preservation** of Australian native plants.

The Society was initially formed on 12th March 1957 in Melbourne, and a NSW Division held its first meeting in Sydney on 25th July of the same year. Also formed in 1957 at **East Hills** was the **first District Group**. Its 50th Anniversary is on 21st October (some of the currently active members of the East Hills Group are also members of O.F.F.). APS now has **more than 6000 members** throughout Australia in about 90 district or regional groups.

KURRAJONG SPRING MEANDER

The weather was great for the ten people participating in our 3-stage walk around Kurrajong Heights on 1st September. The first stage down to **Little Wheeny Creek** was in pristine rainforest (apart from a few water pumps), with Coachwood the dominant species. In the second stage, west of Kurrajong Heights, we followed the route of an **early road carved through the sandstone**, apparently with extraordinary effort by convicts. The highlight and final stage was a walk along **Burralow Swamp** through patches of rainforest again, and open forests of incredibly-sized scribbly gums. The track ended in a narrow, **awe-inspiring gorge** with beautiful ferny thickets, and a picturesque waterfall. Someone described it as a 'magic place'. All of us there would have agreed. (from a report by Bill Holland, walk leader - see website for photographs)

Editor's note: A very enjoyable morning tea provided by Bill and Ruby at their delightful Kurrajong Heights home, was much appreciated.

DON'T FORGET

**O.F.F. ANNUAL DINNER THIS FRIDAY
21st September**

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 24 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. Nancy Pallin (Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society) will speak on 'The wonderful world of bats'.

September 29 (Saturday) FIELD DAY- Loftus to Engadine via Audley. About 10 km, spring flowers - boronias, grevilleas etc. The walk starts at Loftus Station and follows the tramway (past Bedford Cottage - see item on p.1) to the Field Study Centre, and descends the Honeymoon Track to Audley. We then ascend Robertson's Knoll, and down to **Kangaroo Creek for lunch.** After lunch we climb a fairly steep rocky track at a leisurely pace and cut across a number of small creeks and ridges to Engadine Station. Catch the **8.22am train from Oatley.** Wear sturdy shoes, and bring lunch, water and a hat. Leader: **Janet Austin 9579 2375** or (on day of walk only) 0448 833 811.

October 22 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Amelia Martyn (Royal Botanic Gardens) will speak on '**Seedbanking: investing for the future**'.

SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER ?

During 2006 the House of Representatives **Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage** conducted an Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter for Australia. Its 101- page final report has just been released and copies may now be obtained by calling (02) 6277 4580 or by downloading from www.aph.gov.au/house/committee. The main recommendation is that a statutory **National Sustainability Commission** should be established with an 'ongoing role to create an **aspirational** Sustainability Charter'. Although the report identifies issues that the Charter should address, it **ignores the natural world** and fails to recognise that life-sustaining options of the future will depend ultimately on **biodiversity**.

NEW COASTAL GOURMET INDUSTRY

Aquaculture, like nuclear energy, is an issue that **sharply divides conservationists**. Some see it as the most realistic alternative to present unsustainable practices while others are quite convinced its adverse aspects are irredeemable. The controversy is likely to be intensified by new large projects in **Australian coastal areas** to produce '**soft-shell**' crabs, long regarded as a rare delicacy in Japan, Sicily and a few other places. Crabs usually shed their old shells at infrequent intervals in the **muddiest water they can find**. This hides them from predators and also makes them unpalatable. If the shedding takes place in clean water, however, their new shells are soft and the flesh has a **particularly delicious flavour** for a very short period. The developing industry aims to harvest the crabs in this period and dispatch them immediately to connoisseurs prepared to pay ridiculously high prices for such a luxury (see www.growfish.com.au/content).

VERY BRIEFLY

Tasmania's World Heritage Wilderness: September 26, Wednesday, 8pm. Free NPA slideshow. All welcome. Multi purpose Centre, 123 Flora St., Sutherland. Details: 9299 0000

United Nations World Habitat Day: October 1, Details: www.unhabitat.org or whd@unhabitat.org

Walk to Work Day: October 5, Pedestrian Council of Australia. Details: www.walk.com.au

Oatley Lions Festival: October 20, Saturday. Details: 9580 8805, 9570 5676 or www.oatleylions.org.au

50th Anniversary of East Hills APS: October 21 (see item on p1 overleaf).

Nature Conservation Council 2007 Walk Against Warming: On Sunday, two weeks before the Federal Election. Further details from Marnie Kikken, NCC, 9279 2466 or ncc@nccnsw.org.au

Recommended New Book: 'If Trees Could Speak' by Bob Beale. Due for release October 2007. Publisher: Allen and Unwin, 256 pages, RRP \$39.95.

OFF NOTE

Motivated by (a) climate change and persistent drought in Australia, (b) recognition that hard-hoofed grazing animals have damaged Australian soils, and (c) the urgent need for new rural industries, **CSIRO genetic engineers** are now attempting to interbreed Eastern Grey Kangaroos with Merino sheep. And their specific objective ? Environmentally friendly, economically viable, woolly jumpers. (from a very authoritative Kimberley bus tour driver)



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Since 1955

Issue: 2007/10

October/November 2007

SEEDBANKS FOR THE MILLENIUM

Amelia Martyn, the seed research officer at the Mount Annan Botanic Garden, is our speaker at the October 22nd meeting (see over). Amelia is part of the team *SeedQuesting NSW* conducting a program for storing seed of native plant communities to be used for regeneration. Amelia's role is to improve understanding of the seed biology of common and threatened NSW plant species. *SeedQuesting NSW* is a collaborative project of NSW SEEDBANK and the MILLENIUM SEED BANK of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK. (for further details, go to <http://www.kew.org/msbp/>)

THE WHAITES HONOURED AT DINNER

A feature of the very enjoyable **O.F.F Dinner** at Penshurst RSL Club on 21st September was the formal recognition of the outstanding contributions to the Society made by Harry and Olive Whaite since 1969. Harry was a **Committee member for 29 years** from 1972 to 2000 during which he was Hon. Treasurer for 21 years and Membership Officer for 7 years. Olive was a Committee member for 11 years, **Vice-President for 4 years** and Newsletter Editor for 4 years. Both are **esteemed life members** who have continued to play very significant roles in the Society's success.



SPOTLIGHTING IN OATLEY PARK

As shown in the 2007 Program, the field day at Barren Grounds (see over) was originally intended to include spotlighting in the evening. However, it has been decided now to have the spotlighting as an extra field event on the evening of **Thursday, 8th November** in Oatley Park. Further details of this event are overleaf.

HELP REQUESTED: VILLAGE FESTIVAL

The 2007 Oatley Village Festival, organised by Oatley Lions, will be held on Saturday, 20th October in Oatley Memorial Park. As in previous years, Oatley Flora & Fauna have been allocated a stall (SO 9) and will have a display there. **Volunteers** to help set up the stall about 8 am, or to man (?) it for short periods during the day (up to about 2.30pm), would be very welcome.

LUCKY 13 FROM LOFTUS TO ENGADINE

Thirteen of us started our walk on a beautiful spring morning (Sept. 29) at Loftus station, first crossing the highway then through a casuarina forest and past a very dilapidated Bedford Cottage. We continued on beside the tram tracks to the Field Study Centre before descending the Honeymoon Track through various grevilleas, epacrids and acacias to Audley Weir. Here we had morning tea with a couple of very friendly sulphur-crested cockatoos. After this break we ascended Robertson Knoll and crossed the plateau above Kangaroo Creek, passing through spring flowers of many types. We then descended to Kangaroo Creek for lunch, noting the abundant Dog Rose (*Bauera rubioides*) on the wet rock faces. An hour or so later we set off up the steep track above Kangaroo Creek, spotting our first Waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) near the top. Pushing on up the track we crossed two or three rills, passed more Waratahs and glades of Wax Flowers (*Eriostemen australasius* ?), and soon arrived at Engadine station. A great day! (report by Janet Austin)

PEAKHURST WEST SCHOOL PLANTINGS

Alan Fairley and **Matt Allison** have recently spent some time with students and teachers of Peakhurst West Public School to stimulate their interest in native plants. This activity included the establishment of gardens in the school grounds with plants purchased through our grant from Hurstville Council. A very nice **letter of thanks** has been received from the school informing us that the students are 'extremely proud' of the gardens and 'caring for the young plants with enthusiasm'.

XMAS 2007 PICNIC IN THE PARK

Our annual Christmas 'Picnic in the Park' will be held this year in 'Steamroller Park' after about 5.30pm on **Monday, 10th December**. Further details will be given in the next issue of O.F.F. News.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2008

Robin Dickson would like to get some idea of how many members may be interested in our annual trip to **Smiggins Chalet** for a week in **January 2008**. If you are thinking of going on this trip, please contact Robin on 9580 5663, or at the meeting on 22nd October.

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 22 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. Amelia Martyn (Royal Botanic Gardens) will speak on '**Seedbanking: investing for the future**' (see overleaf).

October 27 (Saturday) FIELD DAY- Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. Meet 10am Picnic area carpark at end of track 500m inside Reserve entrance. We will be walking the Griffiths Track, a circuit of **about 7 km** of undulating firetrail featuring Illawarra Lookout, Saddleback Trig, a natural stone bridge and spectacular wildflowers (if still in bloom). About 4 hours of leisurely walking time including a 45 minute lunch break. There is an optional extra 1 hr walk to Cooks Nose and back for **magnificent scenery** over Kangaroo Valley. Bring lunch, snacks, water, hat, jumper, walking shoes, binoculars, etc. Barren Grounds N. R. is about **2 hrs drive from Oatley**. Turn off Princes Highway at Albion Park roundabout, continue on for about 12 km passing through Albion Park and along Jamberoo Road to the Jamberoo Mountain Road turnoff. Proceed another 8km along Jamberoo Mountain Road to the N.R. entrance just after the crest of Jamberoo Pass. Leader: **Debbie Andrew 9570 2695**.

November 8 (Thursday) SPOTLIGHTING EVENING - Oatley Park. Meet at the **top gate** of Oatley Park (near the ovals) at **8.00pm**. The spotlighting is expected to take 2-3 hours and will include inspection of some **bat traps** along the way. Any trapped bats will be **released on Friday** about 8.30pm, and anyone is welcome to see this also. Leader: **Debbie Andrew 9570 2695**

November 26 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Dr Howard Wildman will speak on '**Fungi - the environment's quiet achiever**'.

MORE LOCAL WALLABY SIGHTINGS

Wallabies were believed to have disappeared from the Oatley area in the first half of last century but during the past decade three or four sightings have been reported. A knowledgeable local resident insists he has seen one on several occasions in recent weeks in Oatley Park, and has identified it as a **Swamp Wallaby** (*Wallabia bicolor*). He suggests the bushland remnants along Georges River provide sufficient habitat to support a small population moving around the waterways. He also claims to have several good photos from his sightings and we will try to obtain a copy of one of these for our website.

MORE BOTANY BAY CONCERNS

Conservationists have lost all confidence in the present NSW Government's concern for Botany Bay. Much of this follows from the Government's environmentally irresponsible decision last year to **ignore the recommendations** of the Commission of Inquiry and to proceed with the Port Botany extension. The resulting community anger has been reinforced and intensified by a recent proposal to **deepen additional areas** of the Bay beyond the Port extension. This is to accommodate regular oil tankers of similar size to the huge 'Energy Sprinter' that visited the Bay in September.

VERY BRIEFLY

Nature Conservation Council 2007 Walk Against Warming: On Sunday, two weeks before the Federal Election. Further details from Marnie Kikken, NCC, 9279 2466 or ncc@nccnsw.org.au

National Water Week: October 21-27, Details: Australian Water Association nww@awa.asn.au.

Inquiry into Environmental Impact Reporting in the NSW Public Sector: Submissions close 12th November. Terms of Reference and other details: Pru Sheaves, 9230 3382, pbrc@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Recommended book (new edition): 'Rainforest Trees and Shrubs - A field guide to their identification' by G. Harden, W. McDonald and J. Williams. From Gwen Harden Publishing, P.O. Box 186 Nambucca Heads NSW 2448, (02) 6569 5958. \$44.00 (incl postage etc).

DID YOU KNOW ?

The **Gippsland Earthworm** (*Megascolides australis*) grows to **nearly 3 metres in length** and is claimed to be the largest earthworm in the world. It is found only in moist patches of blue-grey clay in part of the **Bass River valley** of eastern Victoria, and is officially listed as a threatened species. (from Museum Victoria)



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Since 1955

Issue: 2007/11

November/December 2007

LAST 2007 MEETING: TALK ON FUNGI

Dr Howard Wildman is an expert on the extraordinary biochemical properties of fungi and various other 'quietly achieving' organisms that play very important roles in ecosystem functioning. The same properties also provide enormous potential for biotechnological, pharmaceutical and other valuable applications such as the '**myco-remediation**' of degraded and polluted soils. We are delighted to have Dr Wildman speak about these items at our last meeting for 2007 on **26th November**. At this special meeting there will also be a social supper and bargain stall as detailed overleaf.

BARREN GROUNDS WALK , OCTOBER 27

For this walk the Barren Grounds Reserve lived up to its reputation of **beautiful wildflower displays** in Spring. The heath was in full bloom with several species of Boronia (*B. barkeria*, *B. thujona*), and Tree Ziera (*Ziera arborescens*) was flowering prominently in the gullies. We were serenaded by the very secretive and **endangered Eastern Bristlebird** at several locations and had one brief glimpse of it. A large flock of more than 50 Topknot Pigeons were seen overhead and near the picnic area were some Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. The walk ended at the picnic area with afternoon tea and entertainment by a male Superb Blue Wren in full breeding plumage. (from a report by the leader, **Debbie Andrew**; the full version may be seen at www.off.oatleypark.com).

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2008

Our annual Snowy Mountains trip in 2008 promises to be as exhilarating as ever, with reports of particularly spectacular wildflower displays this season. As usual it will be at **Smiggins Chalet** with details as follows:

Dates: Saturday, 12th Jan. to Saturday, 19th Jan.

Cost: \$50.50 per person per night, double or share

\$75 per person per night, single

\$27 per child per night (6-18 years).

We need to book at least 7 rooms for these prices. For bookings or further information please see **Robin Dickson** at the next meeting or phone her as soon as possible on **9580 5663**.

TOM JONGEJANS

We were extremely sorry to hear of the death of one of our members, Tom Jongejans, on 17th October. Tom and Wilhelmina (Willy) Jongejans have been active and highly regarded members of the Society since 1995. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Willy and family.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2008 ?

Three of our present Committee members have indicated that they will not seek re-election at the next **AGM on 4th February**. The Committee consists of 15 elected members who meet once per month, usually on the evening of the Monday following each monthly meeting. Duties of the Committee include attending to the Society's correspondence, financial matters, policies and activities. **If you are interested** in becoming a member it is suggested that you contact the Secretary or one of the present members before the AGM.

SPOTLIGHTING IN OATLEY PARK

Incredibly, the rain halted for a few hours to allow us to complete the spotlighting walk on the evening of 8th November. Oatley Park was looking great after the rain. Masses of white delicate blooms of Blueberry Ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*), and numerous Flannel Flowers (*Actinotus helianthi*) were spectacular in the spotlight. In several places we noted the locally **rare Gosford Wattle** (*Acacia prominens*). The animals also appreciated the break in the weather and we spotted eight **Brushtail Possums**, including two with young on their backs, two **Ringtail Possums** and, in a tree hollow, a **Rainbow Lorikeet**. Following the distinctive 'mopoke' call of a **Boobook Owl** we tracked it down and caught a brief glimpse as it flew off. All participants agreed that more local spotlighting walks like this should be arranged next year. (from a report by the leader, **Debbie Andrew**. See O.F.F. website www.off.oatleypark.com for the full report)

NEW MEMBERS

If you wish to join O.F.F. you can obtain an application form from the Membership Officer on 9580 5663 or download it from our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/documents/membershipform.pdf>

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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

November 26 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Dr Howard Wildman will speak on 'Fungi - the environment's quiet achiever'. (see overleaf). This is the last monthly meeting for 2007, ending with a social supper and a bargain stall. Please bring a plate of 'finger food' for the supper, and plenty of money for the bargains.

December 10 (Monday) Annual Christmas Picnic in Steamroller Park (part of Oatley Park), from about 5.30 pm. Bring your own food, drink etc and, if you wish, picnic chairs and table.

February 4th, 2008 (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 or digital photos of special interest, please bring them along.

GRAFFITI IN PARKS !

With the apparent increase in graffiti, some vandals are now disfiguring **rock surfaces in Oatley Park** and elsewhere. If you notice any graffiti please notify your local Council. If you see the vandals in the process **please let the police know**, including any details that may help in catching the offenders. Back in 2002 it was estimated that graffiti vandalism was costing NSW **up to \$100 million per year**. This apparently included costs of clean up but not of prevention. It does not appear that the problem is diminishing. (www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au)

ADDRESSING THREATS TO TREES

Clearly not everyone appreciates trees and some do not hesitate to remove them if at all possible. O.F.F.'s continuing expressions of concern about this issue has given us two representatives on the **Hurstville City Council Tree Management Working Party (TMWP)**: Alan Fairley and Melina Amerasinghe. Another member of this working party is Sharyn Cullis, also an O.F.F. member. After several years of inactivity, the Council reconvened TMWP in September and a report by Alan on their most recent meeting will be on our website, www.off.oatleypark.com. The website has other information about threats to trees in the Oatley area and on our progress in preparing a **register of significant local trees**. We are seeking suggestions for trees to include in the register and any **interesting or funny stories** you may have about our local trees.

DON'T FORGET, 10th DECEMBER

That's the day for **Picnic in the Park**, our annual Christmas get-together. It will be near the steamroller in Oatley Park after 5.30pm. **Bring your own** food, drinks, picnic chairs, table etc. Barbecues will probably be prohibited because of the fire danger.

WALK FOR WARMING, 11th NOVEMBER

About **25,000 people** were estimated to be at the 2007 Walk for Warming in Hyde Park, Sydney. Most of the banners and speeches highlighted the significance of global warming issues in the **elections on November 24th**. Stimulating speeches were made by politicians Bob Brown, Peter Garrett, and Lee Rhiannon, but the most eloquent, moving and remarkable speaker was a **9-year old schoolboy, Jack Simmons !** A notable, but not surprising, absentee from the rally was the Federal Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Malcolm Turnbull.

VERY BRIEFLY

International Buy Nothing Day: November 24, organised by various groups around the world to expose the adverse effects of consumerism. Details: Lynda, (040) 969 8321, <http://www.botanybay.info/> or <http://www.buynothingday.co.uk>

Seminar on New Greenhouse Gas Reporting Law:

November 28, Wednesday 12 pm for 12.30 start, Clayton Utz Boardroom, 1 O'Connell St. Sydney, Environmental Defender's Office, RSVP 9353 5344.

Coastcare Week : December 3-9

Recommended new book

'How to build cat proof fencing & cat enclosures', Free from Victorian Government. Ph. 13 61 86 or see www.pets.info.vic.gov.au/community/catenclosure.htm (thanks to 'Hut News' for this information)

? QUERY ?

For Howard Wildman at his fungi talk next meeting : 'Are mushrooms shaped like umbrellas because they grow in damp places ?' (question by Doug Rickard in recent Sutherland APS Newsletter)