



O.F.F. NEWS



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

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Since 1955

Issue: 2010/1

OFF's Website: <http://off.oatleypark.com>

Jan/Feb 2010

OPENING SPEECH AT COPENHAGEN

Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] stated in his opening address, "The evidence is now overwhelming that the world would benefit greatly from early action on climate change, and that delay will only lead to costs in economic and human terms that become progressively higher. IPCC has been able to provide substantial evidence through its assessments that science provides us with a basis for undertaking changes that this conference must urgently initiate. [However], given the wide-ranging changes that are likely to be made, some will find it inconvenient to accept them."

www.ipcc.ch/pdf/presentations/

Fred Bell noted in a paper he wrote early in 2009 "Most scientific sceptics actually agree with IPCC that the present warming trend is real, and has been occurring since 1970 or earlier, and that concentrations of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have continuously risen for at least 150 years. Both [factors] should now be regarded as established facts."

RISING TEMPERATURES

The Climate Group reports that temperatures were consistently above average in 2009, the second warmest year on record in Australia. New maximum temperature records were set in numerous cities early in the year, as well as in the unusual heatwaves in August and November. 1999 – 2009 was the warmest decade on record. The Bureau of Meteorology now believes that Australia's decadal temperature profile has shifted from one influenced solely by natural variations, to the upward trend caused by anthropogenic factors. Globally, 2009 was the fifth warmest year on record. www.theclimategroup.org/

THE OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

Serious vandalism at the site in December sparked off another message to Hurstville Council. OFF supports Friends of Oatley in asking the Council to undertake emergency steps to stabilise the building and make it available and useful to the local community while a decision on its future is awaited.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Have you paid your annual subscriptions for 2010? If not, please post your cheque to P.O. Box 52, Mortdale 2223, or pay Lesley Wylie at the AGM on 1st February. The subscription is still only \$25 per person or family (living at the same address). Donations are also welcome

LUCKY LADYBIRDS

Ladybirds are natural controllers of aphids, scale insects and mites which otherwise damage plants. If your garden has regular ladybird visitors, you can be sure it is receiving a helping hand to keep healthy. This is probably why nearly all cultures believe that ladybirds are lucky. The nursery rhyme "Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home" encourages children to catch the beetles and blow them on their way to disperse them amongst the crops to destroy pests.



www.fnw.org.au/Backyard_Buddies/B-mail_November_09.html

FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

One effective way to halt climate change is to ensure the conservation and protection of national parks is extended to other natural areas, including intact native forests, rainforests, wilderness areas, wetlands and urban wildlife corridors.

Recent research found that maintaining forests and their soils is one of the most effective means of storing carbon. Forests function as air coolers, rain catchers and air filters that remove carbon monoxide and air pollution. Destroying forests accelerates global warming because it leads to less rainfall and increased desertification. If we stop the clearing, logging and degradation of forests in Australia and around the world we would reduce global emissions by approximately 25 per cent per year.

Dr Mary White, a palaeo-environmentalist, argues strongly that if Australian politicians are serious about climate change they would immediately halt the clearing of Australian forests. They would also ensure that poorer nations are assisted to keep their forests.

This is taken from an article by Janine Kitson www.npansw.org.au, edited here and endorsed by Alan Fairley. Alan also noted this admirable conservation sentiment while in India and brought it back to share with us.

REMOVE NOTHING FROM HERE EXCEPT
NOURISHMENT FOR THE SOUL
CONSOLATION FOR THE HEART
INSPIRATION FOR THE MIND.

IMPACT ON WILD LIFE

Rising temperatures and sea levels, bushfires and other dramatic environmental events will have a considerable impact on our native wildlife and ecosystems. www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2010

Robin Dickson would like to know how many members might be interested in our annual trip to Smiggins Chalet for the week 13th to 20th February. [Costs are \$99 double or twin share, \$47 extra adult in room, \$78 single, and \$37 per child]. If you are thinking of going on this trip, please contact Robin at the next OFF meeting or 9580 5663.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

Feb 1st (Monday) 7.45pm Annual General Meeting with the election of officers and review of the work of the Society. If you are interested in nominating for committee membership, please contact Liz Cameron. The challenging position of Program Officer, for example, is available at this stage. If you have interesting photos please bring them for a "PowerPoint presentation", [sorry no slides, must be digital photos on CD or memory stick!]. The meeting will close with a social supper - please bring a plate.

Feb 22nd (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting and **Gary Dunnett**, Regional Manager, Sydney NPWS speaking on "Port Hacking - Under Water Marine Life".

Feb 27th Tree Planting Oatley West Public School. [See the note below].

Mar 2nd (Tuesday) Business Clean Up Day and **Mar 5th (Friday) School Clean Up Day**

Mar 6th (Saturday) Field Day migratory wading bird observation Kurnell. **Leader Debbie Andrew** [More details next OFF News].

Mar 7th (Sunday) Clean Up Australia Day -OFF members and friends will be working in the Poulton Park mangroves.

Mar 22nd (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Dr Peggy Eby** speaking on **Flying Foxes in Sydney**.

Mar 28th (Sunday) Field Day. Tour of the **Glen Reserve** and **Burnam Burnam Sanctuary, Bonnet Bay.**
Leader: Jason Cockayne

SUMMARY OF THE O.F.F. FINANCES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.12.09

This report by Lesley Wylie, Hon. Treasurer, is now with the auditor.

Credit Balance as at 01.01.09		\$5,743.0
Receipts		
Subscriptions	\$4,025.00	
Donations	\$1,140.00	
Sale - Plants	\$277.85	
Annual Dinner	\$1,600.00	
Annual Dinner Raffle	\$208.00	
Possum Boxes - refund Oatley West PS	\$200.00	
Cancelled Cheque to Birds Australia	\$320.00	
Sundries	\$90.00	
Interest	\$17.10	
Total Receipts as at 31/12/09	\$7,877.95	
Balance		\$13,621.03
Payments		
Department Fair Trading	\$45.00	
Uniting Church	\$275.00	
Printing/Postage	\$803.10	
Australia Post Box Rental	\$75.00	
Printing Programs	\$225.50	
Hall Sound Equipment	\$264.83	
Annual Dinner	\$1,525.00	
Insurance	\$749.52	
NCC Membership	\$200.00	
Donations (see Note)	\$1,800.00	
Lions Oatley Festival Stall	\$90.00	
School Book Prizes	\$37.90	
Printing Oatley Bowling Club Flyers	\$122.50	
Birds Aust. Donation re-issued from 2008	\$320.00	
Sundries	\$360.15	
Total payments	\$6,893.50	
Credit Balance as at 31/12/2009		\$6,727.53
Add Cash Management Trust A/c	\$8,751.06	\$15,478.59
Less balance of HCC Grant	-\$311.70	
Total Society Funds		\$15,166.89

Note: Donations - \$100 each went to Sydney Wildlife, Auburn Council Wildlife Reserve, and the Florentine Protection Society. \$200 went to the

Colong Foundation, Birds Australia, WIRES, the Environment Defenders Office, Kuringai Bats, and the Wilderness Society, while \$300 was given to Australian Bush Heritage.

The Society's funds at 31/12/09 stood at \$15,167 including \$802 to the President's Fund for donations to other environmental bodies.

Included in the Society's funds is \$1,500, 2010 subscriptions paid in advance from 37% of members. Generous donations of \$630 were received in November for the President's Fund.

Thank you very much.

BRIEFLY

Carbon accounting: The Wilderness Society notes that Forestry Tasmania is planning to log, and find out the true carbon value of Tasmania's forests in Feb and March. www.wilderness.org.au/articles/

EcoForum Feb 23rd - 24th Conference & Exhibition Australian Technology Park, Sydney NSW
www.ecoforum.net.au/2010 quitz@ecoforum.net.au

International Year of Biodiversity. The UN declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. It is a celebration of life on earth and of the value of biodiversity for our lives. The world is invited to take action in 2010 to safeguard the variety of life on earth: biodiversity.
www.cbd.int/2010/

Smiggins Chalet: Our annual trip is for the week 13th to 20th February and some twenty members have already indicated that they will be there for some or all of the time. Please let Robin Dickson know urgently if you are able to join us.

Tree planting planned for Oatley West Public School. There are a considerable number of young native plants for a planting in the area of the newly exposed rocks at OWPS. The planned date is 27th February. Members of the school community will be there. They would be delighted to receive help from members of OFF. [More details in the next OFF News.]

Carbon Footprints do seem to have been rather circular at Copenhagen!



[Copenhagen carbon footprint]



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Feb/Mar 2010

AT THE AGM - 1ST FEBRUARY

Julian Sheen, the president of the Society began his address with the comment that each year the AGM serves to renew the Society, and that it has rarely been stronger in numbers and interest than at present. He spoke of the purpose of the Society and its objectives, on conservation that is not just a form of conservatism, a love of growing plants, or a view of humans as a scourge on the planet. He put the case strongly that conservation aims at our being a part of nature, a partner, striving to maintain and adjust to a dynamic equilibrium. Conservationists must work to maintain biodiversity, and he looked at some of the implications of this in the International Year of Biodiversity. He called on the Society to celebrate the biodiversity of Australia, to rejoice in it, to appreciate the wondrous variety and diversity, and to feel a love for our natural places. He said that as love has the four aspects of knowledge, respect, care and responsibility, so too has conservation:

He concluded that we need to give renewed thought to conservation's implications. It may be measured by the depth of our knowledge of nature, and the monthly talks can be of help there, the extent of our respect for the bush, its diversity and its right to prosper; the depth of our care in protecting the bush and what it signifies to us, and our acceptance of responsibility to maintain its diversity and continuity.

Liz Cameron delivered the Secretary's Report of which the following are excerpts. Our membership is growing, and we now have 313 members, (274 adults, and 39 children). Thank you Robin Dickson for looking after the membership so well. Melina Amerasinghe again produced an excellent program of speakers for the monthly meetings, attended by an average of 55 members and visitors. Janet Austin's field program offered ten activities with plenty of variety, attracting an average of 20 people to each. The weekend on the South Coast was very successful and we hope to run more such activities in the future.

In 2009 OFF wrote to various authorities on a number of conservation issues, namely:-

i) Opposing development of commercial tourism within national parks. ii) Urging NSW DECC to stop issuing licences to shoot flying foxes. iii) Supporting the Natural Resources Commission's recommendations on River Red Gum State Forests; especially the creation of new National Parks and Reserves. iv) Objecting to the Bulli Seam Operations Project of longwall mining of coal. v) Supporting the reservation of the Gardens of Stone stage two proposal on the edge of the

Blue Mountains. vi) Lobbying to keep the former Oatley Bowling Club site for community use.

OFF again awarded environmental book prizes at Oatley and Oatley West Public Schools and will offer a complimentary OFF membership to the families of the successful students.

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The 2010 OFF Committee elected at the AGM will be listed in the program posted out next month. Julian, re-elected as president, noted the essential role of the committee in the process of renewal, thanked the outgoing committee and other members for their work during the year and the new committee for their willingness to continue the work.

THE NATIONAL PARK DEBATE OVER 20 YEARS

In 1989 in response to some OFF News criticisms of N.S.W's forest management policies on the far south coast, the then Minister for Natural Resources wrote strongly supporting the continued "harvesting" of forests. "Conservation embodies both preservation and utilisation, with the need for a balance between them", he wrote. "Multiple-purpose management", he declared, was the only way to proceed; protection of flora and fauna "complemented" by harvesting an equivalent area for timber. "To preserve all remaining natural areas in an undisturbed condition would mean less than optimal benefits." [Reported in OFF News- Feb 1990].

OVER TEN YEARS

In 2000, the government was to decide whether it should protect the forests forever, or leave them open for logging for another 20 years. The forests, protective habitat for over 40 threatened species, some 35 thousand hectares of old-growth forests, 5 wilderness areas, and vital water catchments were still unprotected. [Reported in OFF News- Feb 2000]

Now [Feb 2010], the government is assessing an application by the owners of the Eden Chip mill to construct a native wood fired power station in the area. www.woodchippingsux.net.au/

SPEAKER AT THE FEBRUARY 22ND MEETING

Gary Dunnett is Regional Manager Sydney with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water. He is responsible for the management of a group of 20 national parks, nature reserves, regional parks, and state conservation areas across Western Sydney. He began as an archaeologist with Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife, has worked in both State and Commonwealth conservation agencies in a variety of roles including research, environmental planning, and reserve management. A strong focus of his work has been on the sustainable management of small urban reserves with high natural and cultural heritage value.

www.westernsydneyparklands.com.au/

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

Coming Events:

- Feb 22nd (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Gary Dunnett** speaking on *Shiprock Aquatic Reserve and Other Points Of Attachment*, about the rocky outcrops in the Hacking River and Botany Bay.
- Mar 6th (Saturday)** Field Day migratory wading bird observation Kurnell. **Leader: Debbie Andrew.** [See note below].
- Mar 7th (Sunday)** OFF members and friends will be working in the Poulton Park mangroves for *Clean Up Australia Day* [see the note below]
- Mar 22nd (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Dr Peggy Eby** speaking on *Flying Foxes in Sydney.*
- Mar 28th (Sunday)** Field Day: Tour of the Glen Reserve and Burnam Burnam Sanctuary, Bonnet Bay. **Leader: Jason Cockayne** [Details next OFF News]
- April 19th (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Kris Spike** -speaking on Population & Sustainability
- May 1st (Saturday)** Field Day: Tour at Bulli - Illawarra Grevillea Park. **Leader Heather Mackey**
- May 2nd (Sunday)** Tree Planting Oatley West Public School. [See note below and advise friends receiving this by post].

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY - SUN 7th MARCH

For OFF this year's site is at the bottom of Poulton Park from 8.30 am to 12 noon. Meet at the corner of Morshead Drive and Kyle Parade near the entrance to Yara-Nura boardwalk (off the Great Kai'mia Way). Come along for as little or as long as you can spare. Bring sturdy shoes, boots or gumboots (recommended), hat, gloves, water, and sunscreen. A Scout Group will be putting on a "brunch" (bacon and egg rolls + some sausages) 7.30 to around 12.

MIGRATORY WADING BIRD OBSERVATION

Debbie Andrew is leading the field Day on Sat 6th March at Boat Harbour Kurnell. As the birds are best observed 2 hours either side of the high tide, at 1:40 pm on the day, meet at 11:00 am. Assemble at the corner of Captain Cook Dr and Sir Joseph Banks Dr (where the Desal plant is) and then drive to the eastern end of Sir Joseph Banks Dr, park some cars and proceed on the narrow road to Point Potter. It is about then about a half hour walk to Boat harbour and Merries Reef rock platform to the south, moderately difficulty, largely level but with some small rises and some uneven ground around the rock platform and shore. Bring hats, shoes that can get wet, sun protection, binoculars, telescopes and cameras and lunch and drinks. 2 telescopes will be provided. It is possible to have a swim on the Bate Bay side of the rock platform. With 1-2 hours observing the birds, the whole excursion would be 3-4 hours. Birds commonly seen there in summer are the migratory wading birds e.g. Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Golden Plover, sometimes Mongolian Plover, Sanderlings ^, Terns, Cormorants, Reef Heron, and even Sooty Oystercatchers. images.google.com.au/



Sanderlings ^, Terns, Cormorants, Reef Heron, and even Sooty Oystercatchers. images.google.com.au/

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE GROWTH?

Prof Dexter Dunphy notes problems with this often-used term. "The notion that the world in general and Australia in particular can continue on an economic growth path is a form of insanity. We are already consuming resources at a rate well above the planet's capacity to replace them; the world is being devastated to meet the growing demands of its existing population." www.environmentalmanagementnews.net/

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

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The Secretary, PO Box 52 Mortdale.

Subs remain at \$25 per person or family living at the same address.

ABORIGINAL FIREFIGHTING

A project in northern Australia has cut carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 488,000 tonnes during its three years and generated 200 jobs by helping avert wildfires. Under the scheme, Aborigine rangers fight fire with fire - setting small blazes early in the dry season to create fire breaks and a patchwork of burnt and unburnt savannah. That helps avoid far more damaging wildfires when vegetation gets tinder dry at the height of the dry season. www.abc.net.au/science/articles/

BRIEFLY

Birds in Oatley Park: 145 species are recorded for the bushland of the Park, its tidal mud flats, mangroves and Lime Kiln wetlands. The full list is at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

Earth Hour 2010. Saturday 27th March 8:30pm - 9:30pm. All lights off for the hour. You might light a candle in a safe and prominent spot to indicate that you are taking part.

Grand Canyon Track in the Blue Mountains is closed until further notice. [Reported in Hut News Feb 2010]

Oatley West Public School Tree Planting There are a considerable number of young native plants for a planting in the area of the newly exposed rocks at OWPS. Originally set for 27th Feb, it is now to be on Sun May 2nd. Members of the school community would be delighted to receive help from OFF. [NB the date change was not listed in OFF News posted 11 Feb.]

Royal National Park: World Heritage The Sutherland Environmental Centre is campaigning to achieve a World Heritage Listing for the RNP. The centre is looking for learned papers on the Park's special and unique features to submit to the UN. It is convening a special meeting at the Council offices on 11th March. If you wish to contribute to the discussion, you will be very welcome office@ssec.org.au www.ssec.org.au 9545 3077

Sustainable Energy without the Hot Air written by David J C McKay, [only available as a downloaded PDF file] is reviewed by Ross Coster in Hut News. He describes it as a brilliant explanation of global warming and sustainable energy. withouthotair.com/ www.bluemountains.org.au/HutNews/





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Mar/April 2010

OATLEY PARK - A LITTLE HISTORY

Oatley Park was dedicated for Public Recreation on March 25th 1887 and proclaimed on May 29th 1888. Under the Public Parks Act of 1884, Governor Baron Carrington declared the land at Limekiln Bay, Georges River to be a public park, then to be known as 'Peakhurst Park'. West Oatley between Gungah Bay Road and the Park had not yet been subdivided. From Oatley Park Ave to Jew Fish Point (116 acres) was the Donnelly Fisher grant. *The Gates* now at the western end of Mulga Rd is, apparently, where the gates of the Fisher property were located. North of Oatley Park Avenue was the John William Alexander White grant, (81 acres), occupied by Myles McRae, whose name is better known now in Penshurst.

ACACIA PROMINENS – GOSFORD WATTLE

This is a rare plant in Oatley Park flowering in mid August. A few plants are on the out-road beside the



phyllode margin. [Note from Alan Fairley]

A BIRD IN THE HAND

Australian Geographic reports that Erin Stone, experienced bird trainer, rehabilitated this injured peregrine falcon. "The falcon was quite nervous, so the first step I took was to build a relationship with him. Gaining trust is the most important step in training any animal. Then we started the lure training, a technique used for centuries, where the keeper swings a leather lure around with



food attached that the bird chases."

www.australiangeographic.com.au/journal/

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

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The Secretary, PO Box 52 Mortdale.

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Mar 31st is usually the cut off date

KOALAS

Koala numbers are declining dramatically, and in the far south coast particularly. The Australian Koala Foundation wants the Koala listed as a threatened species. Data from Mumbulla, a threatened area, suggests that koalas will eat any species of eucalypt, and that it is nutrient content not tree species that is important! Clearly, whole forests need protection, but Forests NSW is to log a far south coast forest, home of the last remaining koala population in the region. www.chipstop.forests.org.au/



THE KIMBERLEY CAMPAIGN

The Wilderness Society calls for support for the Kimberley campaign. The West Atlas oil spill off the Kimberley coast brought into sharp focus the risks associated with oil. It calls for a clear message to the State and Commonwealth Governments that the Kimberley is too important to put at risk. Ph: (08) 9420 7255:



wa@wilderness.org.au secure.wilderness.org.au/cyberactivist/

CLIMATE CHANGE?

The World Meteorological Organization notes that 2000-2009 was the world's warmest decade on record, warmer than the 1990s, in turn warmer than the 1980s. In Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology notes that each decade since the 1940s was warmer than the preceding decade. The Earth has warmed by around 0.74 °C from 1906 to 2005, a statistically significant climatic change. www.climatechange.gov.au/

HELP COPE WITH CLIMATE

The head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced a \$AUD112 billion fund to help countries mitigate the effects of climate change. He said at the World Economic Forum. "Efforts to deal with climate change should not be blocked because we cannot meet financing needs." environmentalmanagementnews.net/

OUR ENVIRONMENT

In 2010, for the first time in history, a majority of the world's population will be living in cities. In 1950, 30% of the world's population was urbanised. By 2050, 70% will be. [David Hall reporting in Hut News]

bluemountains.org.au/HutNews/1003news.pdf

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Visitors and are welcome to all meetings and excursions

COMING EVENTS:

Mar 22nd (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Dr Peggy Eby** a biologist, for the last 20 years studying Grey-headed Flying Foxes, who will speak on *Flying Foxes in Sydney*, focussing on the biology, behaviour, and conservation of flying foxes, including Oatley's Myles Dunphy Flying Fox camp.

Mar 28th (Sunday) Field Day: Tour of the Glen Reserve and Burnum Burnum Sanctuary, Bonnet Bay. **Leader: Jason Cockayne.** Meet at 9am at Lincoln Crescent Seat/Washington Drive, Bonnet Bay. Morning Tea will be at 10.30am at the Sanctuary, Tudar Road, Bonnet Bay. We continue through reserve for an hour, and then have lunch. It will be a fairly casual walk, and we may discuss plants along the walk, as the walkers would like.

April 15th (Thursday) Field Day: Exploring the environs of Ultimo/Broadway **Leader: Keith Robinson.** The walk starts at cnr Broadway and Harris Sts at 9.30 am, and then moves on to visit various buildings and points of interest in the area, including The Peter Johnson building, the ABC building, TAFE catering college, Harris Community Centre, and the Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre. It should finish about 2.30- 3 pm.

April 19th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Kris Spike**, a composer, pianist, and environmental campaigner, speaking on *Population & Sustainability*.

May 1st (Saturday) Field Day: Tour at Bulli - Illawarra Grevillea Park. **Leader Heather Mackey**

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY - SUN 7th MARCH

This year's site for OFF was at the bottom of Poulton Park, Morshead Drive, Connells Point. It was a successful day with many joining in, including groups of local Guides and Scouts. It was also the site of a free breakfast BBQ organised by Kogarah City Council for all volunteers that participated in Kogarah's Clean Up Australia Day. This made it a very busy site.

SMIGGINS 2010: FEBRUARY 13-20

There were sixteen of us this year and we were so pleased to have Win Tonkin amongst us. Steady rain in the first two days turned the alpine streams into foaming cascades and the Snowy River crossing below Charlotte's Pass was briefly inundated, but the weather soon cleared, and it was a delight to feel the cool mountain air after Sydney's oppressive heat.

Above the tree line were drifts of white gentians and clusters of deep pink berries of Carpet Heath. The rain brought out lots of wildlife including lizards, butterflies, and flame robins and Jan photographed a crayfish in one of the clear tarns.

Various groups completed walks including the Dead Horse Track, Waterfall Walk, Porcupine Rocks and ascent of Mt Townsend, and there were car trips to Yarrangobilly Caves and Tom Groggin and Khancoban. The cosy 'fire', challenging jigsaws and sharing of films and photos enhanced the happy hours in the lounge. We do appreciate Robin Dickson's organisation of this annual event. [Report by Liz Cameron]

BURNUM BURNUM SANCTUARY

A haven of serenity and solitude, the sanctuary at Bonnet Bay offers a range of great bushwalk tracks revealing stunning rock escarpments & formations. Keep an eye out for "Eagle Rock" the shape of the rock is much like the head of an eagle. You may come across an array of wildlife, blue tongue lizards, black cockatoos, and tiny wrens. The sanctuary also offers lots of parking, picnic areas, playground, and a wetland area to explore. [See field day on Mar 28]

OFF NEWS OF 40 YEARS AGO.

March 1970 referred to oil drilling on the Great Barrier Reef, proposals for Sydney's second airport to be at either Wattamolla or Duffys Forest, and plans to have Towra Point reserved as a Park.

April 1970 reported on reactions to the continued industrial development of Kurnell Peninsula [in the year of the Cook Bi-centenary] and on the public meeting pushing for the "retention of the remainder of the Kurnell Peninsula".

SPEAKER AT THE FEB 22nd MEETING

The 2010 program began in spectacular fashion with 60 enjoying Gary Dunnett's talk and his stunning photos of colourful underwater life at Shiprock Aquatic Reserve in Port Hacking. The biodiversity in such a small area, close to Cronulla, was extraordinary. Gary explained the adaptations of the animals and algae that allow them to crowd onto the sandy substrates and rocky cliffs of what is essentially a flooded sandstone valley, and how some of the land and water-based human activities can threaten the fauna and flora at Shiprock.

BRIEFLY

Biodiversity (International Year of) - Details of what the world is doing throughout the Year can be found at: <http://www.cbd/int/2010/celebrations>

Climate Change Conference - 18-21 April for those interested in the efforts of local communities in adapting for and helping mitigate effects of climate change, at the Fairmont Resort, Leura. Registration is essential. www.localclimatechangeconference.com/

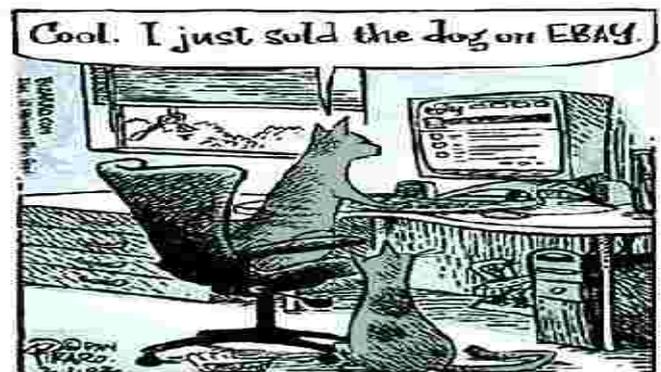
Cooks River Wetland. Work begins soon on constructing a new wetland on the banks of the river at Heynes Reserve, Canterbury. [Mambara: - Ise 25]

Earth Hour 8pm Sat March 27th. You can sign up and support on <http://www.earthhour.org.au/>

Oatley Bowling Club Site is still under threat. Community representatives cannot gain access to review its potential as a temporary [or even continuing!] community centre.

Requiem For A Species: Why We Resist The Truth About Climate Change: by Clive Hamilton. Most eminent climate scientists agree that the world is now on a path to a catastrophe and it is too late to stop it. This book is about why the warnings were ignored. [Reviewed in Hut News]

<http://www.bluemountains.org.au/>]





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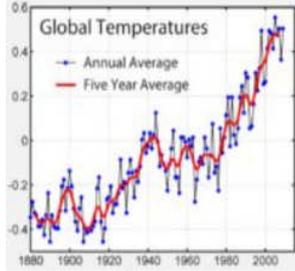
Since 1955

OFF's Website: <http://off.oatleypark.com>

April/May 2010

GLOBAL WARMING

CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology, Australia's leading climate science agencies have published a snapshot of the state of our climate. It shows highly variable rainfall across the country, increases in the north and centre, and decreases across much of south and east. From 1993 to 2009, sea levels rose by 1.5cm to 3cm per decade in the south and east, and 7cm to 9cm in the north.



About half of the observed reduction in winter rainfall in south-west Western Australia is associated with greenhouse gas. <http://www.csiro.au/>

BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Australia's government department dealing with the environment has a plan to address biodiversity conservation over the next decade. The plan identifies the main threats to our biodiversity as: a) climate change (with conditions such as prolonged drought), b) invasive species, c) loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat, d) unsustainable use of natural resources, e) changes to the aquatic environment and water flows, and f) inappropriate fire regimes. It calls on all Australians to play an active role in protecting biodiversity currently in decline. www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/

THE PAST CONFRONTING THE FUTURE

In April 1990, OFF News noted Biology Professor Charles Birch's comments on his living in a unique period of human history. The earth's population had grown by a thousand million in 13 years, 200,000 hectares were disappearing every day under concrete and asphalt, reducing the size and number of natural areas, and the original countryside. He called for planning to preserve remaining rainforests, sand dune vegetation, coastal wetlands, estuaries, and mangrove areas, coastal lakes, and lagoons. It seems that not much has changed!

DESTRUCTION OF RIVER RED GUMS

The Wilderness Society continues to campaign hard to change the current NSW government decision on the Murray River Red Gums, a reversal of its promise to create a new National Park. The eastern half of the area is now open for logging for five years, and ostensibly then to become a National Park. It is habitat for 13 threatened species, including Squirrel Glider, Koala, and Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail Bat, and is the most drought resistant and important environmental refuge in the region. www.lists.wilderness.org.au/

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

"Contrary to popular belief, Australia is not a land of largely untapped and underutilised resources. It is one of the driest continents in the world with ancient soils leached of nutrients. Our native vegetation has grown a remarkable diversity to cope with these conditions but we ourselves have not yet learned how to live within the natural constraints of this continent and to develop a truly sustainable lifestyle".

[Prof Dexter Dunphy]

BIODIVERSITY: ECOLOGY AND ECONOMY

According to Urban Ecology Australia a more diverse ecosystem is better suited both to withstand environmental stress and to support the economy by providing us with crops, livestock, fish, fruits and vegetables, fibres, wood for shelter and warmth, and the wide range of products derived from plants. www.urbanecology.com.au

POWER FROM THE TIDE

Darwin-based Tenax Energy plans to progress a tidal energy project worth up to \$500 million in the Clarence Strait between the Northern Territory and the Tiwi Islands. Located many metres below the ocean's surface, tidal energy turbines are strategically located to maximise the tidal flow to turn the turbine blades to generate 100% green energy. Generating tidal energy means: - more accurate energy planning; no visual impact as the turbines are not visible, greenhouse gas emissions reduced; and existing resources utilised. www.tenaxenergy.com.au/

CLIMATE SCEPTICS

The fierce argument continues in the popular media on the existence, nature, causes, and impact of climate change. Sceptics argue heatedly that any increase in heat is within normal variations, the human contribution is irrelevant, and any gloomy predictions are inaccurate.

Then we have *Requiem for a Species* by Clive Hamilton. As Tim Costello expressed it, "[This book] magnificently captures the idea that, by and large, none of us wants to believe that climate change is real. It explains our inability to seriously weigh the evidence of climate change, and to take appropriate action to ensure our own survival."

DIFFICULTIES IN THE OATLEY PARK AREA

OFF is discussing with the appropriate authorities, sediment build-up in ponds around Lime Kiln Bay, the landslip on Frog's Hollow Rd and street trees under threat of removal in Oatley Park Ave.

EMAIL COPY OF O.F.F. NEWS?

There are advantages in receiving the newsletter by email - you receive it a little earlier, save postage costs for the Society, and you have instant access to the precise places in the websites mentioned. You can arrange it easily by contacting Robin on 9580 5663 or John at oatley2@optusnet.com.au

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. .

Visitors and are welcome to all meetings and excursions

COMING EVENTS:

April 15th (Thursday) Field Day: Exploring the environs of Ultimo/Broadway. **Leader: Keith Robinson.** The walk starts at cnr Broadway and Harris Sts at 9.30 am, and then moves on to visit various buildings and points of interest in the area, including The Peter Johnson building, the ABC building, TAFE catering college, Harris Community Centre, and the Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre. It should finish about 2.30- 3 pm.

April 19th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Kris Spike**, the NSW Branch President of Sustainable Population Australia, speaking on *Population & Sustainability*. [See note below.]

May 1st (Saturday) Field Day: Tour of Bulli Illawarra Grevillea Park. **Leader: Heather Mackey.** Catch Bulli train leaving Sutherland at 8.11 am. Train from Oatley is 7.48am, into Sutherland at 7.58, and change onto the Bulli train. By car it is about 55mins drive from Oatley, down the freeway, and to Bulli pass. Turn left into Grevillea Park Rd. Meet at the park gate at 9.15am. Entry \$5, children free. Bring lunch, morning tea.

May 2nd (Sunday) Oatley West Public School Tree Planting. There are a considerable number of young native plants for a planting. Members of the school community would be delighted to receive help.

May 24th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Holly Parsons**, who is the Sydney Project Manager, of the organisation Birds in Backyards, speaking on *Birds in Backyards, promoting urban bird diversity*.

KRIS SPIKE AT THE APRIL 19th MEETING

Kris is a composer, a pianist and an environmental campaigner. His interest in sustainability comes from his love of the outdoors and his concern for preserving our remaining wild areas for future generations to enjoy. His scepticism about the sustainability of growth-based economics goes back to high school days, and his interest in the politics of population grew on the reluctance of environment groups even to mention the issue.

FLYING FOXES

Peggy Eby's talk on flying foxes at the last meeting detailed their life cycle and behaviour. Her remarkable photos documented birth and changing social structure within a roost. Radio tracking has shown that some fly over 100 kms in a night between sites. Roosts are located in different places in different years, depending on the trees that provide good supplies of nectar, pollen, and fruit. Grey-headed Flying foxes are listed as a threatened species, but large numbers are still legally shot to protect agricultural crops. OFF has lobbied the NSW Minister for Environment to cease licensing these killings.

FIELD DAY MAR 28th - BONNET BAY WALK

We had eleven energetic walkers enjoy a leisurely stroll through the beautiful Glen Reserve, admiring canopies of paperbarks and glistening bay views. We were then lucky to find the hands cave. To end the morning we traversed Burnum Burnum Sanctuary and lunched on the edge of a small waterfall, such small oases so close to home.

[Report by Leader: Jason Cockayne]

BOAT HARBOUR SHOREBIRD EXCURSION

Twelve keen birdwatchers set off on March 6th from Potter Point walking to Boat Harbour. We observed the Black-fronted Dotterel at Potter Point, the very large Aboriginal midden on the cliff of the northern shore, and from the rock platform a large group (14) of threatened Sooty Oystercatchers with their stunning red bills and legs. We had some terrific views of the migratory Pacific Golden Plover (12), some Red-necked Stint (34) and Ruddy Turnstone (6), looking very attractive in their rich autumn breeding feathers. These migratory shorebirds are due to



Pacific Golden Plover.
Photo: Purnell Collection © Australian Museum

head off to the Arctic Circle in Siberia and Alaska in the next few weeks. We may also have observed a Double-banded Plover from New Zealand that usually arrives here for our winter leaving again in August. [Report by Leader: Debbie Andrew]

KEEPING VISITORS POSTED

SMH of Mar 31st reported the installation of artificial roosting posts at Towra Pt for the comfort of birds about to begin their annual 17,500kms round trip to the Arctic Circle [with a comment from Debbie Andrew.]

CANE TOADS

Scientific studies of the *Bufo marinus* show that very little is known about it, that there are many myths creating unjustified fear and loathing, and that better control methods [not including golf clubs] may be not far off. www.raci.org.au/chemaustr

BRIEFLY

Biodiversity (International Year of) - Details of what Australia is doing throughout the Year can be found at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/>

Community Garden Project: Narwee Public School is establishing an organic, no-dig vegetable garden within the school, and is seeking community members to participate and assist in running the project. [More at ph 9253 9756 or <mailto:narwee-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au>]

Time Kiln Bay Planting Day will be on 20th April at 8am. Meet at Glen Rd, Scout Hall. Bring a trowel if you can.

Salt marsh and crabs. Mia Dalby-Ball, a specialist in saltmarsh regeneration, is speaking at Field of Mars, Sat 17th April 2010 at 2pm on crabs in the saltmarsh, a critical link in the ecology of Sydney Harbour. A short walk around the saltmarsh area is also available, before or after the talk. Info: Cathy Merchant on 9817 4935 or <mailto:rhffps@optusnet.com.au>

Trees dying outside Coles in Mulga Rd Oatley West after a very short life are of concern. O.F.F. has written to Hurstville Council expressing its concern and requesting replacement with a more suitable tree, native to the area, e.g. Blueberry Ash.

World Heritage: Royal National Park: Sutherland Environmental Centre is continuing its campaign for a listing for the RNP. Next meeting is on Thurs 15th April at 6.30. [Enquiries: Bob Walshe ph 9528 0444]

Some useful signs from Australia, NZ and Canada





O.F.F. NEWS



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May/June 2010

RAINFORESTS

Rainforests protect unique plants and animals, fragile rainforest soils and the equality of water draining from the catchment. To increase public awareness and interest in the rainforests of New South Wales, Information Centres are located around the State. To botanists, intact rainforests provide important clues to the evolution of the Australian flora. Rainforests largely escaped the fluctuating conditions that changed the face of the rest of Australia's vegetation by surviving in moister sheltered locations along the Great Dividing Range. As a result, the remnant rainforests provided long-term stability, and as some have existed unchanged for so many years, they support many unusual animals, including the gastric-brooding frog, tree kangaroos, the primitive musky rat-kangaroo, and the chameleon gecko. Until the 1980s, it was thought that our rainforests originated overseas and invaded this continent across ancient land bridges. We now know that they once covered large areas of Australia and 'parented' the gum trees, wattles, waratahs and all the other plants long regarded as the typical Australian vegetation. <http://www.rbgsvd.nsw.gov.au/>

KIMBERLEY: HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

The Wilderness Society notes that the Australian Heritage Council recently released a favourable preliminary assessment for a National Heritage listing for West Kimberley, site, a thousand million years ago; of major geological significance for the land that is now Australia. <http://www.wilderness.org.au/>

FERAL DEER

The Invasive Species Council (ISC) lists Deer as a serious emerging pest problem, causing damage to both the natural environment and agriculture. Numbers are expanding and invading new areas, many, reportedly, due to deliberate introduction by recreational hunters. NSW has listed them as threatening, but they are still protected. ISC calls on NSW to fall into line with other States and declare feral deer as pests. <http://www.invasives.org.au/>

LATEST ON RIVER RED GUMS

NSW Environment Minister Frank Sartor has introduced legislation in parliament to protect some areas of River Red Gum Forests, but leaving half of the highest conservation forests at Millewa open to destructive logging for five more years. The Wilderness Society and other groups are striving for get a much better outcome for the forests before this bill becomes law. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/>

OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

In the face of the continuing threat to this part of the Myles Dunphy Reserve, and vague promises to resolve the matter of its future without great delay, Hurstville Council's Draft Management Plan 2010 – 2014 does not even mention the site or Reserve. <http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/>

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 5TH JUNE

"The global host of this year's World Environment Day celebration is Rwanda. This small country in the Great Lakes region of Africa is rapidly earning a reputation as a green pioneer. Home to 52 threatened species, including the rare mountain gorilla, Rwanda is showing how environmental sustainability [can contribute to] a country's economic growth". [Quote from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/media]

FAUNA IN OATLEY

On April 19th, a pair of Australasian (Little) Grebes or "Dabchicks" were feeding their stripy-headed chicks on the artificial wetland above the reed bed in Lime Kiln Bay. The adults were continually diving and popping up to the surface, but with little food to supply their begging young; the whole pond was covered in a floating carpet of red Azolla and green Duckweed. The water had become oxygen-starved and grebe food such as Mosquito Fish, larvae and molluscs was rapidly diminishing. There were three chicks, but each parent concentrated on feeding a single chick, with the third left to its own devices. This chick dived only rarely and spent most of its time gleaning what little food it could from the Azolla covering. "Favouritism" is common with grebes and the two favoured ones were clearly larger than the lone chick. By April 22nd, the adults had gone and the chicks left to fend for themselves. Were they abandoned, or just considered old enough to look after themselves? [Noted by David Waterhouse]

OATLEY PARK THIS MONTH

Alan Fairley listed these as flowering in May / June
Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*) once known as Port Jackson wattle is a graceful, open shrub to about 1.5m high, with bright yellow flowers. The branches were a source of witchetty grubs.
Sweet-scented Wattle, (*Acacia suaveolens*), a slender shrub to 2m, pale yellow or cream flowers.
Heath Banksia (*Banksia ericifolia*) small crowded leaves, orange-red flower spikes
Variable Bossiaea (*Bossiaea heterophylla*) shrub to 1m tall, yellow, and red pea-type flowers
White Fingers (*Caladenia catenata*) white ground orchids with a single flower on a 20 cm stem

WILDLIFE PARK?

A large block of land along the upper Hacking River at Helensburgh between sections of Garrawarra SCA, Royal National Park and the Illawarra Escarpment is to be auctioned at the end of May. As private subdivision and development of this land could pose serious threats to the wildlife of the area and the water quality of the Hacking River, OFF, among other organisations, is urging the NSW Government to consider purchasing this and adjoining blocks to add to the national park area.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [near the corner of Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors, including accompanied children, are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

May 24th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Holly Parsons**, Sydney Project Manager of the organisation *Birds in Backyards*, speaking on *Birds in Backyards*, promoting urban bird diversity, what we can do to make our gardens more bird friendly.

May 30th (Sunday) Field day: Sydney Harbour - Balmoral to Cremorne **Leader: Alison Gilroy**. Meet at 0800 at Cnr Hodgson Ave and Cremorne Rd, Cremorne. We will carpool to Balmoral, to Cnr Awaba St and the Esplanade, by 08.30, from where the walk will commence. Initially we go up over the hill to Clifton Gardens, then via the Harbour National Park, around the waterfront, to Reid Park Mosman for lunch. We finish with a walk around Cremorne Pt, back at the cars, about 3pm. [Bring boots, hat, sunscreen, water, lunch (and swimmers if desired)]. T 9580 5557

June 28th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Ray and Elma Kearney** speaking on *Fantastic Fungi - Facts and Findings*. Dr Ray Kearney is Associate Professor in the Department of Infectious Diseases, University of Sydney. Elma Kearney is an Executive member of the Sydney Fungal Studies Group.

MEMORIAL TO FRED BELL

OFF determined to plant a memorial tree in Fred's honour, and the northern approach to the Como Bridge Walkway chosen as a suitable place. The formal planting will be on Friday 28th May. People should gather at 10am at the start of the walkway, at the gate at the bottom of Myra Place Oatley, the cul-de-sac, left off Mimosa Street.

Do put this in your diary.

SUSTAINABLE POPULATION

At the April 19th meeting, Kris Spike, the NSW Branch President of Sustainable Population Australia, spoke on Population & Sustainability. His theme was that continuing economic and population growth can only result in irreparable damage to the environment Governments want to expand their countries, their population, and economies. Politicians, business groups, academics, and media commentators refuse to acknowledge the inherent problems arising from inexorable growth. The transition to an economic system based on stable levels of production and consumption would be full of challenges, but continuing with the intellectually bankrupt system of endless growth will hasten our headlong rush to environmental disaster.

THE ULTIMO TOUR Thurs 14th April

We started at the Agincourt Hotel at the corner of Harris Street, with members of the group reflecting on the history of Agincourt and Henry V's battle with France in 1415. In a small lane behind the hotel, we observed some sandstone block construction bonded with shell mortar dating from Sydney's earlier days.

At the northern end of the Devonshire St, we saw the disused railway that once carried the goods trains to Darling Harbour. We looked inside the Peter Johnson building belonging to the UTS School of Architecture. We then moved to the ABC building with its TV and radio studios and the Eugene Goosens Hall. Outside we viewed the Gary Deirmendjian sculpture and then the Field building in Thomas St.

The next points were the city's major power substation, the old Haymarket Bell tower, and the disused railway bridge over Ultimo Rd before we came to the TAFE building, the Apprentice Restaurant, and a room containing historic items from early TAFE days. Along Mary Ann St, named after one of Surgeon Harris's daughters, is a row of early terrace houses. Then along Bulwara Rd, we came to the Ultimo Community Centre. The manager told us about the Centre and its various functions. Also in the Community Centre is the Jessie Street National Women's Library, and here we were told of its work and its books.

Following lunch at the Centre, we took a short walk to the Uniting Church where the Minister, Robin Davies, made us welcome, talked of the church and introduced us to the Coffee Table form of gathering. [cont]

We then went next door to the Harris Community Centre, previously the manse. Then, north along Bulwara Rd at Fig St, we saw the sandstone blocks with engravings of native plants. This was the end of our venture north and our return journey took us past interesting terrace houses The final stop was at the Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre where we had a guided tour of the complex, its pools and gymnasium.

[Report by Keith Robinson: Tour Leader]

ILLAWARRA GREVILLEA PARK FIELD DAY May 1st

Twenty-five attended a very pleasant day at these beautiful gardens at Bulli. Plant sales just inside the gate were a popular stop. Moving on to the chapel area, we enjoyed a short talk on the history of the Park, and had morning tea. Equipped with maps, most did the rainforest walk, while some chose one of the several other walks. Meeting back for lunch, we then spent some time browsing around the gardens, especially enjoying the artistically arranged grevilleas. Then back to the plant sales, before we finally headed home.

[Report by Leader: Heather Mackey]

BRIEFLY

Answers to Global Warming Scepticism by Heather Hughes & Fiona Bell-Whittaker is a non-technical summary of Fred Bell's in-depth study of this contentious subject. <http://pronomics1.com/answers.pdf>

New Bus Route Punchbowl Bus Co [PBC] has introduced Route 955 linking Hurstville, Oatley, Mortdale station, and return, on an hourly basis. This may help to reduce car use. It is suggested that PBC might change the times a little to link up the 955 buses with the trains at Mortdale and Hurstville that do not stop at Oatley. [Timetable T 9153 8787 www.punchbowlbus.com.au/]

Wood-Fired Electricity Plant: Eden, on the south coast, is to be the first Australian town to be so powered, despite concerns that burning trees could generate more greenhouse gas emissions than burning coal. <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/>

World Ocean Day 8th June. Designation of World Oceans Day by the UN provides an important boost to those organisations and individuals deeply committed to ocean conservation and improving the health of our world's ocean. <http://www.theoceanproject.org/>



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Hon. Editor: John Davoren



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PLANTING A TREE FOR FRED BELL

A group of OFF members, friends, and members of Fred's family gathered on 28th May at the start of the walkway from Oatley across the Como Bridge to witness the planting of a tree for Dr Fred Bell, a wonderful OFF member who died last year.

It was a beautiful morning after rain, and the gathering felt uplifted in remembering and honouring a man who did so much for our society and the cause of conservation. An insightful academic and a profoundly decent man Fred is sorely missed. The tree planted in his name is now a symbol of our regard for him. Joan Bell planted the lilly pilli (*Acmena smithii*) with the assistance of Matt Allison who had prepared the ground. Fred and Joan's daughters, Fiona and Heather, shared some of their memories of their father and read thoughts prepared by Joan. John Davoren spoke on behalf of OFF, noting that the tree is on the pathway linking many fields and aspects of life that were of special significance to Fred.

There was then a period of silent reflection on Fred's life and the life of the tree. The fresh breeze blew and the birds chattered all about as the gathering quietly celebrated Fred's life and the healthy sapling, now known as *Fred's Tree*.

BIRDS IN BACKYARDS

Holly Parsons, Sydney Project Manager of the organisation Birds in Backyards, spoke at the May 24th meeting on making our gardens more bird friendly. Birds in Backyards is a research, education, and conservation program focusing on birds and the urban environment. The program was in response to the reduction of bird species living in built up areas, the rapid expansion of these areas and the consequent loss of habitat. There is much background material in website: <http://birdsinboxyards>

LOWER GEORGES RIVER SUSTAINABILITY

The Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative (LGRSI) has launched its *Getting Greener Program* aimed at improving sustainability across the Lower Georges River catchment area, covering parts of Hurstville City, Kogarah City, Rockdale City, and Sutherland Shire. Community groups and business are invited to get involved and OFF is looking at ways of assisting in the process. More information on the program is available from Col Freeman 9562 1703 or 0434 154 865 and at www.georgesriver.org.au/

TREE PLANTING FOR URBAN AREAS

State Line [5th May] reported on the \$30 million program for tree planting in urban areas. Competitive tender will purchase 15,000 semi-matured trees from state nurseries. However, Chinese elms and Plane trees are to be preferred, and one quote for \$1000 for one of the trees selected was puzzling. www.abc.net.au/

AUSTRALIA'S YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY

Bush Blitz is a three year multimillion dollar program to document the plants and animals in hundreds of properties across Australia's National Reserve System. Teams of Australia's top scientists will survey hundreds of Australian reserves to document the native plants and animals they protect. The surveys are expected to uncover hundreds of new species and provide baseline scientific data that will help protect Australia's biodiversity for a generation to come. This is the world's first continental scale survey - www.bushblitz.org.au

LOCAL FAUNA

In July last year a Grey Butcherbird built a nest in a dead tree in Myles Dunphy Reserve. The nest bowl was shallow and untidy, consisting of an interwoven platform of thin crooked sticks. Each time the bird returned with a new stick, it sat on the nest and turned or swivelled its body as if shaping the platform into a bowl. A surprising number of birds will commence nest building in mid winter – including Magpies, Ravens and Rainbow Lorikeets as well as Butcherbirds. [Nature Note from David Waterhouse]



OATLEY PARK IN JUNE

Alan Fairley has listed the following plants as flowering:

- ❖ Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*); shrub to 2m, pinnate leaves, bright yellow flowers, >>>>
- ❖ Sweet-scented Wattle (*Acacia suaveolens*), slender shrub to 2m, pale yellow or cream flowers,
- ❖ Heath Banksia (*Banksia ericifolia*); small crowded leaves, orange-red flower spikes,
- ❖ Variable Bossiaea (*Bossiaea heterophylla*); shrub to 1m tall, yellow, and red pea-type flowers,
- ❖ White Fingers (*Caladenia catenata*); white ground orchid with a single flower, and a 20 cm stem,
- ❖ Rough Wax-flower (*Philothea scabra*); white with five petals, small shrub on sheltered slopes.



OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

Hurstville Council has spent some \$110,000 on a feasibility study and community consultation with no resulting action. Council does not refer to the site in its planning documents, has still made no decision on its future, refuses community access, and is not maintaining it. Councillor Anne Wagstaff has lodged a notice of motion for the Council meeting on 23rd June asking for a public briefing for councillors and community on progress on options for future use of this important facility. You are encouraged to attend this meeting in support. The 23rd June council meeting will commence at 8pm.

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Visitors, including accompanied children, are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

June 28th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Ray and Elma Kearney** speaking on Fantastic Fungi - Facts and Findings. Dr Ray Kearney is Associate Professor in the Department of Infectious Diseases, University of Sydney. Elma Kearney is an Executive member of the Sydney Fungal Studies Group.

July 4th (Sunday) Field day: Royal National Park- Curra Moors Circuit. Distance of about 9-10 Km, an easy 5 hours or so. Meet at 9.30 am at the Curra Moors car park on Sir Bertram Stevens Dr, approx 1 Km north of the turn off to Garie Beach (car park sign faces south). The first part of the walk is on Curra Moors Track, then down a track with some damp and eroded sections, to an easy walk along a service track onto the heath. We return along the Coast Track, though the heath, then back to re-join the Curra Moors Track. Curracurrong Falls can be observed while we have lunch. Note that there are no safety fences near some cliff edges. Bring hat, lunch and water, and strong walking shoes/boots, as the track may be wet in places. **Leader: Graham Lalchere**, T 9580 3107 or 0430 968 260.

July 26th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Alison Hanlon** speaking on Catchment management, partnerships and the management of the Georges River

July 31st (Saturday) Field day: Sydney Harbour - Watsons Bay to Bondi. **Leader: Alan Fairley**

Aug 23rd (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Jeff Smith** speaking on Legal Aspects of Climate Change and Biodiversity Conservation.

Aua 28th (Saturday) Field day: Gerrinaona to Kiama - Costal Walk. **Leaders Leslev and Peter Cox**

THE MOSMAN FIELD DAY Sun 30th May

12 participants braved the weather forecast of cyclonic wind and rain, to have an extremely pleasant walk from Balmoral to Mosman. We proceeded up over the hill by the naval reserve, to Clifton Gardens and a delicious morning coffee break. This precinct has become part of the Sydney Harbour National Park, with all types of interesting historical naval buildings. We proceeded around the harbour foreshore to Taylors Bay and to Bradleys Head and had lunch at Sirius Cove Park. We then climbed up over Mosman hill to Reid Park and arrived back at the cars at Cremorne about 3pm. [Report by Alison Gilroy: Walk Leader]

MYLES DUNPHY CREEK - SAFETY UPGRADE

Last year the OFF Committee decided to investigate improving the safety of the sewer viaduct over the creek in Myles Dunphy Reserve below the Bowling Club by installing safety rails. Sydney Water was contacted, inspected the site, and volunteered to install the safety rails. The work is complete and with the installation of covers over the trip hazards on the viaduct, as shown here.



NEVERFAIL BAY RESERVE



There is a little known narrow strip of conservation public land at Neverfail Bay, with some significant environmental features. Neverfail Bay was named after a water

spring which supplied a reliable source of fresh water. The bay was once home to extensive oyster farms and a landing point for oyster barges. In 1993, the last oyster farm was removed due to deteriorating water quality. www.kogarah.nsw.gov.au/

FAYE COUGHLAN

Faye recently resigned from the OFF Committee after ten years of service, including seven years as Welfare Officer, and five years as Secretary. Faye is an enthusiastic and effective worker and, among her many contributions, arranged the OFF Annual Dinner. Faye will be very much missed by and from the Committee.

‘KIMBERS CREEK’

The volunteers of Lime Kiln Bay Bushland Sanctuary were successful in securing a government water grant in 2005 that helped to stop erosion along the embankment of the creek. Weed trees were removed including Weeping Willows (Salix sp.) and small and large leaf Privet (Ligustrum sp). Two organised planting days were part of the grant to revegetate along the creek line, and 1,200 trees, shrubs and grasses have been successfully planted.

Seeking a name for the creek upstream from the area now known as L.K.B. Bushland Sanctuary, the Bushcare Group suggests ‘Kimbers Creek’. This was the name used by locals in the early twentieth century, obviously linked to the Kimber’s dairy farm beside the creek. One of the Bushcare Group, Ruth Staples remembers, as a child, running around the L.K.B. area with its salt marsh and the large body of water, later to be clogged with sediment. [Report by Jason Cockayne]

BRIEFLY

OFF Committee The committee is looking for a new member, and your nomination at the next meeting would be warmly welcomed.

Lime Kiln Bay constructed wetland The rubbish trap has been severely damaged, is no longer protecting the water, and requires urgent repair.

National Parks: The NSW Government’s National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Visitors and Tourists) Bill 2010 was passed on 9th June. Permitted now in national parks will be new hotels, resorts, cabins, lodges, private facilities, and shops for tourists, sport, and recreation.





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July/Aug 2010

FORMER OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

Hurstville Council has finally called for a report on the land in question, with a view to community consultation before any decision is made. The report is to be ready, at the latest, by Council's September meeting. After nearly five years in waiting, the public will be very interested, and many will no doubt want to attend the Council meeting on that night. At Council's last meeting, it was clear that some councillors considered the area as separate from the Myles Dunphy Reserve, and its reserve status as no obstacle to a long-term lease to private contractors.



From early in the 1940s there were requests from the local community for Council to declare the bushland northeast from Gungah Bay as a reserve. Council finally agreed to do so up to the Waratah

street line. While part of the area had been subdivided years before, it was largely inaccessible for housing, and parkland was the best choice. However, the blocks from Waratah Rd to the railway were seen differently. Facing onto the Yarran Rd corridor, they seemed to be viable housing blocks, and some were allocated for war service housing. However, swampy conditions made the road impossible, and a 1973 report noted that Council bought more than two acres of the blocks for "park purposes" at the end of WW2. It was assisted by a government grant of £500, about half the cost. Council then declared the purchased area part of the Gungah Bay Bushland Reserve. When some of the community protested at Council taking over "war service" blocks, it responded with an assurance that the land was "parkland" and would remain permanently in public hands.

From 1959 until 2005, the area designated as DP 7124 [Sec 3, and part of 4] was leased to the bowling club. When the club closed, Council considered releasing the area for an aged care facility. A report was prepared by Council but it was not released. The local community objected to this option, and it seems that the site is unsuitable anyway. After much campaigning, Council consulted the public in September 2009; this showed no support from community participants for the site to be handed over for private use.

In 1991, Hurstville Council, encouraged by OFF, approved a change of name, and Gungah Bay Bushland Reserve became Myles Dunphy Bushland Reserve. This

is a most appropriate name recognising a local identity, and famous conservationist, noted for the part he played in securing public parks, especially the Blue Mountains National Park.

OFF does not expect the site to be returned to a natural state. It does expect and demand that it be retained as public space. Surely, in the light of this history, the iconic status of the Myles Dunphy Bushland Reserve and the need to retain and consolidate much needed parklands, Hurstville Council must not allow this site to be given over to private contractors, not even in response to some alleged social need.

FOX ERADICATION

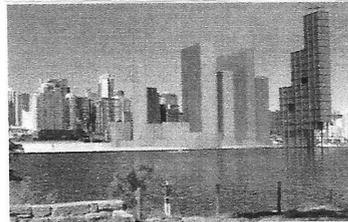
The introduction of the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) in to Australia in the 1870s had a devastating effect on native fauna. Foxes are now wide spread across NSW and eradication is not yet possible. However, the fox impact can be reduced by targeted fox control in crucial areas. A draft revised Fox Threat Abatement Plan has been prepared. Submissions on this draft plan can be made in writing by **23rd July** to Fox Threat Abatement Plan Pest Management Unit, Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Water, P.O. Box 1967 Hurstville BC NSW 1481 or into: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/pestsweeds/

'RED GOLD' RUSH

Just two years after European settlement, the discovery of one of the finest sources of cabinet timber in the world triggered a rush on the rainforests. The tall-shafted trunk of the softwood Red Cedar (*Toona ciliata* - formerly *T. australis*) was easy to work and could be floated down creeks and rivers to sawmills or waiting ships. Disregarding the limited nature of cedar supplies, timber getters in New South Wales cut out most of the cedar by the 1860s. At least half the timber felled never made it to the mills, and later attempts to grow cedar failed. <http://www.rbgsvd.nsw.gov.au/>

BARANGAROO

Lend Lease proposes is to construct a hotel, with the potential of conversion into apartments, in the middle of Sydney Harbour, and to relocate the Cruise Ship Terminal to White Bay. The NSW Government is the owner of the land, protector of our environment and the consent authority adjudicating on a long list of breaches of the current planning regulations by this proposal. Another on-site protest meeting is to be held on Sat 31st July. <http://www.barangarooaction.com.au>



Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [near the corner of Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors, including accompanied children, are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

July 26th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Alison Hanlon**, Executive Officer at Georges River Combined Councils' Committee Inc speaking on Catchment management, partnerships and the management of the Georges River.

July 31st (Saturday) Field day on the Sydney Harbour Coast walking from Watsons Bay to South Head-Bondi Beach. Distance: total 12 km (you may wish to leave the walk at lunchtime), mostly on paths with cliff views, historic buildings, and parks. Meet 9.15am in Robertson Park, Watsons Bay (at bus terminal, opposite Watsons Bay Hotel). Leader will be catching 7.39am train from Mortdale (it does not stop at Oatley) to Edgecliff, then bus 325 to Watsons Bay (departs 8.27am). Return by bus from Bondi Beach. Leader: **Alan Fairley** Tel: 9570 8332.

Aug 1st (Sunday) National Tree Day. More information on <http://treeday.planetark.org/>

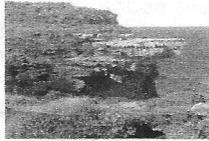
Aug 15th (Sunday) Walk Against Warming - 12pm Belmore Park <http://img.ymlp107.com/>

Aug 23rd (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Jeff Smith**, Director of the NSW Environmental Defender's Office speaking on Legal Aspects of Climate Change and Biodiversity Conservation.

Aug 28th (Saturday) Field day: Gerringong to Kiama - Coastal Walk. Leaders **Lesley and Peter Cox**

CURRA MOORS CIRCUIT RNP: FIELD DAY

On July 4th, a beautiful clear sunny winter's day 17 members set out about 9:45 am to walk to Eagle Rock and Curracurrong Falls. The first section of the track was down through lovely bush on a sometimes eroded and drying track (after the recent rains). The next section was along a service trail until we reached the coast and a magnificent view of Eagle Rock, the symbol displayed at the entrance to the Royal. Not only was there the rock to entrance us, but the wonderful sight of Curracurrong Creek flowing over the cliffs into the Pacific Ocean. We then nestled down amongst the heath for lunch, during which some eagle eyes spotted whales making their way North. What a find! Then we proceeded along the Coast Track, which is simply beautiful. Meandering through the heath, we admired the myriad New Holland Honeyeaters and Wattlebirds flitting from bush to bush, attracted by Banksias in flower and the odd Gynea Lily poking out above the heath. Overall, a pleasant and most rewarding walk. [Report by Graham Lalchere: Walk Leader]



FANTASTIC FUNGI, FACTS, AND FINDINGS

Ray and Elma Kearney were at the OFF meeting on 28th June and Ray spoke on fungi in Lane Cove Bushland Park, Australia's first fungal heritage site, now listed on the Register of the National Estate. Ray and Elma played a significant part in having the site so listed. Ray spoke of the investigations of fungi in the Park, of the types involved and of fungi's significance in areas of medicine, industry, and biodiversity. His detailed presentation included a time-lapse photo sequence of bacterium, isolated from a truffle-eating beetle, of the phenomenon of 'flocking' through quorum sensing, and many other interesting pictures of which this is one example.



PONDS IN LIME KILN BAY WETLANDS

The duckweed and Azolla sp. floating vegetation is rampant this year, as the ponds have had a couple of sewerage overflows. The wetland is a more productive system when the sediment is removed frequently. Visitors are encouraged to keep an eye on the ponds, and to contact the Council when it appears that they need attention.

TREES AGAINST FENCES

Oatley West Public School and Hurstville Council agreed to realign the new fence around the school so that the surrounding trees did not have to be removed or be under threat. Requests from OFF and members of the public were influential in their making the decision to save the trees.

FRED'S TREE

Pictured here are some of those who gathered on 28th May to plant the tree in memory of Fred Bell. Joan [3rd from left] planted the Lilly Pilly (Acmena smithii) and Fiona and Heather spoke of memories of their father.



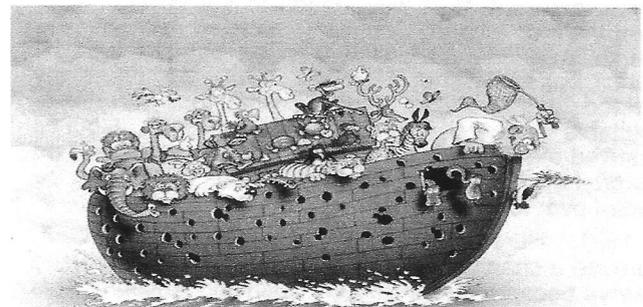
Briefly

Free Trees: As part of National Tree Day, on Sat and Sun 31st July/1st Aug 8am to 3pm, Kogarah City Council rate payers may collect two native trees or shrubs from the Kogarah City Council Works depot, 78 Planthurst Road, Carlton. Bring your Council rates notice, and be an early bird. www.kogarah.nsw.gov.au/

Guide to Private Conservation in NSW Free copies of this new publication are available. Just call (02) 9262 6989 or email <mailto:education@edo.org.au>

Parkland: Property immediately east of Helensburgh tip has just been purchased by the State Government as an addition to Garawarra State Conservation Area. It is part of an important moist forest corridor linking the Royal National Park, Garawarra SCA, and forests of the Illawarra Escarpment.

Tree Mismanagement at the corner of Baker and Burke St, West Oatley on 23rd June is pictured here. The cutting of the main trunk and removing the canopy is surely against Council's current tree preservation requirements.



An Ark Conservationist's Dilemma



O.F.F. NEWS



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Check out OFF website: <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

Issue 10/8

Aug/Sept 2010

GEORGES RIVER COMBINED COUNCILS' COMMITTEE Inc (GRCCC)

At the July meeting Alison Hanlon, Executive Officer of the Committee spoke on the history, objectives, and work of the GRCCC. The Georges River begins its journey approximately 60km south-west of Sydney in the town of Appin, flows north towards Liverpool, through the Chipping Norton Lake Scheme, then east to Botany Bay. The catchment area of land draining into the river is approximately 960km². With over 1 million people living within it, this is one of the most highly urbanised catchments in Australia, and everything that occurs within this area affects the river, and is of concern to the Committee. Alison's most informative address cannot be appropriately summarised in this space, but much of the detail can be found on website: <http://www.georgesriver.com.au/>

THREATS TO WILD ANIMALS OR TREES

Threatened native animals and plants that live on prime development land could be "offset" by an undertaking to protect different species somewhere else, under proposed state government changes to biodiversity rules. It means an echidna colony in one part of NSW could be destroyed in exchange for the preservation of a rare stand of trees elsewhere in the state. The proposed new biodiversity certification guidelines would allow developers of large urban projects even greater flexibility than the controversial BioBanking scheme, and includes provisions for cash payments for building on the habitat of certain animals if no suitable offset can be found. www.smh.com.au/environment/

FORESTS TO WOODCHIPS

Australian native forests are being logged at a greater rate than ever before. 85% of all of the native trees logged in Australia are wood chipped and shipped to Japan for the paper industry. New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania are involved in logging native forests for woodchips, and it is not a sustainable practice in any of these states. In NSW alone, 2000 trees a day are sent to the chip mill, or 1 million tonnes of logs a year. Native forests are now being logged on 20-year cycles, when it takes some 150 years for a tree to grow to maturity and form part of a mature ecosystem. Logging in such short cycles thins out the canopy, takes away most of the mature trees, and causes the forests to dry out. There is mounting evidence to suggest that the devastating fires such as the recent Black Saturday fires are made worse by logging forests. <http://www.forestmedia.com.au/>



WATTLE DAY – 1ST SEPT



Proclamation of Wattle as the national floral emblem was completed during the Bicentennial Year 1988. Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, was the actual species chosen. In 1992, the Commonwealth and States agreed to unify Australia's Wattle Day to 1st September, the first day of the spring season. www.wattleday.asn.au/

GREENER ELECTRICITY

Electricity generation across Australia's five eastern states was greener in 2009 compared with the previous year. Growth of 11% in renewable electricity generation and 8% for gas meant that the average carbon intensity of electricity fell by 1% compared with 2008. This was despite a continued reliance on coal-fired power stations and an increase in the use of some of the largest and most greenhouse intensive coal-fired stations in the country. The findings are part of *The Climate Group's* Electricity Generation Report 2009 on electricity generation and associated emissions from coal, gas, liquid fuel and renewables. However, electricity and emissions across the five states continue to be dominated by a relatively small number of large coal-fired power stations: the top 20 generators of electricity were all coal-fired and accounted for more than 90 % of [their] greenhouse gas emissions. The top 10 accounted for more than 70 % of total emissions. <http://www.theclimategroup.org/assets/files>

WEATHER-RELATED DISASTERS

The number of disasters has doubled in the last 30 years, according to a comprehensive analysis of storms, floods, and droughts. There were 828 "weather catastrophes" involving loss of life and major economic damage across the world last year, compared with 317 in 1980. The analysis by Munich Re, the reinsurance company, found 385 such events in the first six months of this year - the second highest in any January to June period since records began in 1974. The report does not include the recent flooding in Pakistan, landslides in China and wildfires in Russia. <http://blogmyway.org/news/>

JUDITH MALCOLM 1940 – 2010

It is with great sadness that I note the death of our member Judith Malcolm. Judith died suddenly on 31st July following a stroke. With a background in teaching and law Judith became a great conservationist and was active in each place she lived, in North Sydney, Balmain and Haberfield before coming to Oatley, where again she took a great interest in matters of community concern. Judith was a vibrant member of OFF and was on the committee for a term. Our deep sympathy goes to John and all their family. Julian Sheen

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

Aug 23rd (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Jeff Smith**, Director of the NSW Environmental Defender's Office speaking on Legal Aspects of Climate Change and Biodiversity Conservation.

Aug 28th (Saturday) Field day: Kiama to Gerringong and return. 12 kilometres. (Note change from program, due to possible track closure at Werri Lagoon). Meet Kiama Railway Station 9.30 am and then drive to start of walk at end of Elanora St. Allow 1½ hours driving time from Oatley. Train departs Sutherland 7.11 am, arriving Kiama 9.13 am. The track is very exposed, has some steep grades, is generally grassy but with some rocky/muddy/uneven sections. Wear sturdy footwear, and bring hat, jacket, sunscreen, first aid, plenty of water and lunch and snacks. Please contact **Leaders: Lesley or Peter Cox** on 0438 878 774 for more details.

12th Sept (Sunday) *Earth Foundation* is having a Spring Gathering in Oatley Park focussing on the bushland, catchment management in Lime Kiln Bay and fire management. The organisation is a not-for-profit group providing environmental education in the field. Lunch is to be provided and a fee will be charged. Bookings essential. Phone Kate Hughes on 45 682118

Sept 16th (Thursday) Field day Cabarita and Breakfast Point **Leader: Keith Robinson**

Sept 27th (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Robin Stacey** speaking on Flora and Fauna that shaped Australia's science and culture.

Oct 9th (Saturday) Field day: Lower Blue Mountains **Leaders: Graham and Janet Austin**

WALK REPORT. WATSONS BAY TO BONDI.

On 31st July, the forecast of showers kept some participants away and only nine defied the threatening weather to meet at Watsons Bay. As it turned out, there were no showers, the early cloud lifted and it was a wonderful day for a walk. Firstly, the group inspected fortifications at Green Point and South Head and walked around the historic Lighthouse and Cottage. The Harbour looked great and sunshine lit up the City through the clouds. After The Gap, the track led up the cliff line to Signal Tower for a picnic lunch. Beyond Macquarie Lighthouse, we passed around the spectacular rocky inlet known as Diamond Bay, and then followed the track and road towards Bondi Beach. We inspected the Aboriginal rock engravings in the middle of Bondi Golf Course, and as we stood beside a large carved whale, the real thing appeared offshore spouting and frolicking - a truly fitting end to another memorable OFF walk. [Report by walk leader Alan Fairley]

OATLEY PARK IN SEPTEMBER

Myrtle-leaf Wattle (*Acacia myrtifolia*; shrub to 1 m, short broad leaves, pale yellow balls up to 8 in a group)

Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*; shrub to 3m, feathery leaves, pale yellow balls up to 40 grouped.)

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 (*Philothea 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, and crowded thin leaves to 3cm long). [Alan Fairley provided this list]

OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA SOCIETY

Oatley Flora and Fauna Society conducts regular bush walks and has speakers on interesting topics at their monthly meetings. The Society also supports tree-planting events, Clean up Australia and restoration of the local bushland. You can help improve the local environment. Join us at our monthly meetings to hear interesting speakers and meet like-minded people. More detail at: <http://off.oatleypark.com/documents/> If you are reading this on line just click the underlined section to open up the website at the precise reference point.

OFF ANNUAL DINNER

The 2010 Annual Dinner will be held on Friday 12th November, 7 pm at South Hurstville R.S.L. Club, 72 Connells Point Rd, South Hurstville (almost cnr of King Georges Rd) in the South Lounge. Cost \$35 per person for a Buffet including pre dinner platters, a selection of hot dishes, salads, desert, bread rolls and tea or coffee with mints. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. **Alison Gilroy** and **Robin Dickson** will be taking bookings and accepting payment at the September/October meetings, or can be contacted on 9580 5557 or 9580 5663.

Briefly

Speakers for Next Year: Our Program Officer is looking for interesting speakers on subjects related to flora and fauna for some of next year's meetings. If you have any suggestions please contact Melina Amerasinghe on 9580 1504.

Myles Dunphy Stream Watch The watch is monitoring the 2 drainage lines that meet in the reserve, one carrying stormwater from Oatley shopping centre and the other just downstream of Mulga Rd. Testing days are generally 4th Tue of the month, meeting at the former Oatley Bowling Club car park about 9 a.m. Visitors are welcome. For more information ring Sharyn T9579 1262 or Heather 0425 291 879. www.streamwatch.org.au/

Membership fees Next year members can opt to pay their membership fee by direct bank transfer - [more detail when the renewal notice is sent out]. The fee will remain at \$25 per family for 2011.

Marine sanctuaries The NSW government plans to remove the vital protection provided by marine sanctuaries for our turtles, dolphins, seahorses and hundreds of other marine plants and animals. This move goes against the overwhelming scientific and community support for marine parks. www.bluemountains.org.au/HutNews/



"There are better ways to log off."



O.F.F. NEWS



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Issue 10/9

Sept/Oct 2010

OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

The terrible news has just arrived that at the Hurstville Council meeting on 22nd Sept this iconic site will most likely be taken from public hands, and given to developers, in response to an allegedly social need, dismissing opponents as a narrow-minded minority. Go urgently to <http://www.friendsofoatley.com/> **PLEASE REACT**

OBJECT TO LONGWALL COAL MINING

The Bulli Seam Operation (BSO) threatens the Headwaters of the Georges River and the Woronora and Cataract drinking water catchments. The expert panel established to review BHP's 30-year plan to undermine 220 sq kms of the landscape has delivered its final report to the planning minister, but it is not known when the minister's decision is to be announced. Many OFF members indicated to Sharyn Cullis at the August meeting that they would be objecting. Now is the time for lobbying letters, faxes, and conversations with politicians! To assist in your efforts, Sharyn has prepared a one page Letter Writers Kit with key facts, arguments and a list of politicians and their contact details. If you have not yet written faxed or talked, and do not remember the details, phone Sharyn 9579 1262 or mailto:go_river@hotmail.com to receive an email or post.

[Note the "underscores" after go and river, i.e. go_river_@]

SAVING RED RIVER GUMS

16,000 hectares of threatened river red gums along the Murray River on the NSW-Victoria border will gain from a NSW government plan to flood the Koondrook-Perricoota State Forest from 2011. The NSW Natural Resources Commission revealed in 2009 that in some areas, 75 per cent of river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) are stressed, dead, or dying from a lack of water. The new \$57m project aims to simulate a major natural flood every few years. <http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/journal/artificial-flood-boost-for-river-red-gums.htm>

OFF ANNUAL DINNER

The 2010 Annual Dinner will be held on Friday 12th November, 7 pm at South Hurstville R.S.L. Club, 72 Connells Point Rd, South Hurstville (near the corner of King Georges Rd) in the South Lounge.

Cost is \$35 per person for a Buffet including pre dinner platters, a selection of hot dishes, salads, desert, bread rolls and tea or coffee with mints. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. Singers are expected.

Prior booking is essential. **Alison Gilroy** and **Robin Dickson** will be taking bookings and payment at the September and October meetings. Otherwise, they can be contacted on 9580 5557 or 9580 5663.

Each guest is asked to wear a hat (conservative or zany/frivolous).

The donation of suitable raffle items would be warmly welcomed.

LIONS FESTIVAL - OATLEY - 16TH OCTOBER



Each year, on the 3rd Saturday in October the streets and parks of Oatley are transformed into a sea of stalls, entertainment, rides, music. www.oatleylions.org.au
OFF runs a stall each year, and is looking for volunteers for the day, or any part thereof. Please contact Liz Cameron.

WEEDS CRISIS

After land clearing, weeds are recognised as the most serious threat to endangered native plants and animals in NSW. This threat is rapidly increasing as more weed species are introduced and spread into new areas. That is why the Invasive Species Council has prepared *Stopping NSW's Creeping Peril*, a 26-page report calling for concerted action, largely from the NSW Government, to address the state's growing weed problem. The report has been endorsed by 30 organisations that represent weed experts, bush regenerators, land managers, volunteer weed groups, and national, state, and local conservation groups. <http://www.invasives.org.au/>

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE LATEST EVIDENCE

The *Australian Academy of Science* publication, "The Science of Climate Change: Questions and Answers" argues that: "The Earth's climate has changed. The global average surface temperature has increased over the last century and many other associated changes have been observed. The available evidence implies that greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the main cause. It is expected that, if greenhouse gas emissions continue at business-as-usual rates, global temperatures will further increase significantly over the coming century and beyond." The full report is at www.science.org.au/ [Courtesy of the latest Hut News]

SEA EAGLES ON VIDEO

There is a nest of Sea Eagles high on a Scribbly Gum in the Newington Nature Reserve at Sydney Olympic Park. A team of Volunteers from the Birds Australia Discovery Centre and Sydney Olympic Park Rangers have placed cameras atop the trees to record these birds' behaviours and very interesting observations have been made. <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/the-organisation/eaglecam.html>.

MORE WHALES

The Humpback Whale has been protected in the southern hemisphere since 1963 and a worldwide moratorium on whaling was declared in 1986. All marine mammals in Australia are protected and the Humpback Whale population is making a slow recovery. <http://www.npansw.org.au/> [These last two items are courtesy of the Hut News Sept n 91]

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

***Sept 27th (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Ben Hope** speaking on his study of the impact of hazard reduction burns on long-nosed and southern brown bandicoots in northern Sydney. Ben works as a technical officer with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. He will focus on the results gained by radio-tracking bandicoots before, during, and after a hazard reduction fire. [Robin Stacey, the scheduled speaker, had to withdraw, but hopes to be with us next year. Ben agreed to speak a month earlier.]

***Oct 10th (Sunday)** Field day to Jibbon Head, Royal National Park, 6.5 km return. Meet at the Bundeena Ferry Warf at 9.55am, or by train, take the 8.50 am from Mortdale (new timetable) to Cronulla, front carriage and catch the ferry from Cronulla wharf at 9.30am to Bundeena (Seniors fare \$2.85). The day includes Port Hacking and ocean views, Aboriginal rock engraving, and a possible swim at Jibbon Beach. There will be some uphill walking, then downhill on a sandy track to the coast, narrow cliff track, then across the sand on Jibbon Beach. Wear sturdy footwear, hat, and sunscreen. Bring lunch, plenty of water and cossie (optional). **Leader: Janet Austin** T 9579 2375.

***Oct 30th (Saturday)** Field day to Cockatoo Island. **Leader John Davoren** [Details in the next OFF News]

Nov 12th (Friday) 7 pm Annual Dinner at South Hurstville R.S.L. Club,

*[*Please note the several changes in dates, speakers, and destinations from the published program]*

LEGAL ASPECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

At the August 23rd meeting, Jeff Smith Director of the NSW Environmental Defender's Office spoke on Climate Change and the profound implications for biodiversity conservation in NSW. He spoke of the role of the EDO in arguing for the re-evaluation of the current approach to conservation, and the importance of the legal and ethical questions of what to protect and why. There is a need to enshrine references to climate change in legislation and to try to predict its effects. More at: <http://www.edo.org.au/edonsw/>

SOUTH COAST FIELD DAY - 28TH AUG.

With a brisk breeze and brilliant sunshine, 18 walkers set off on the Kiama Coast walk, starting south of Kiama at Loves Bay, walking to Werri Lagoon at Gerringong over some quite steep hills and then returning to Loves Bay, a distance of 12 kilometres. Soon after starting, we were fortunate to see a pair of sea eagles circling over the hills. A little later, some sharp eyes noticed a pod of dolphins, very close inshore, apparently 'surfing' in the big swells. Then in the afternoon whales were spotted. The Kiama coastline is dramatic and from the highest point, there are views south to the Point Perpendicular region and north to Port Kembla. Interpretative signs along the way provided interesting details about the history and geology of that part of the coast. It was a delightful day and much enjoyed by everyone. [Report by Leaders Lesley and Peter Cox]

CABARITA AND BREAKFAST Pt - SEPT 16TH

Eight walkers joined Leader Keith Robinson's tour, starting at the Federation Pavilion and going on to the William Beech Monument, the Marina, Hen & Chicken Bay, Correy's historic house, several restaurants, and Cape Cabarita. Keith reflected on the history of the area, and the extraordinary mixture of conservation and development in recent years.

OFF SOCIETY LOGO.

OFF Committee has decided that the Society needs a logo for our publicity and promotion. If you are a Graphic Designer and could contribute ideas for an effective design, please contact the Secretary.

OFF DONATIONS FOR 2010

OFF has a tradition of donating to other environmental organisations. This year we will donate \$1400. An amount of \$200 will be given to each of seven groups. They are Total Environment Centre, Australian Bush Heritage, Birds Australia, Kuring-Gai Bats, Wires, Wilderness Society, and the Colong Foundation.

If you cannot open the pdf version of this newsletter, click here for an Adobe Reader <http://www.adobe.com/>

OFF WEBSITE

Members should look at the up-dated OFF website. There are new sections on Myles Dunphy Reserve, Stream Watch, Flying Foxes and photos and stories from our activities. The site is getting many "hits" from students doing environmental projects. Check it out at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>.

THE OFF COMMITTEE

Are you interested in joining our committee? We would like to hear from OFF members who would be interested in standing for the committee. New members would soon discover how rewarding participation is for the individual and the committee. New members will be particularly welcome.

Briefly

Friends of Hurstville Library meet on 4th Thurs. at the library Exhibition. Room at 10 am with interesting guest speakers; new friends welcome! Contact Dawn Emerson, Secretary Ph: 9543 1060

Marine sanctuaries The NSW government plans to remove the vital protection provided by marine sanctuaries for our turtles, dolphins, seahorses and hundreds of other marine plants and animals. This move goes against the overwhelming scientific and community support for marine parks. <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/>

Tackling Wicked Problems recently published by Newsouth Books looks at climate change and related issues and long-term solutions. <http://www.gleebooks.com.au/>

Turpentine Ironbark Forest Field Event, Macquarie University. Thurs 7th October 10.15am -12.30pm, through the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest remnant on Campus, followed by a planting bee and Lunch. RSVP to Angie Fricker by the 30th Sept on 98956137 or <mailto:angie.fricker@cma.nsw.gov.au>

Membership fees For 2011 members can opt to pay their membership fee by direct bank transfer - [more details when the renewal notice is sent out]. The fee for 2011 will remain at \$25 per family.

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O.F.F. NEWS



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**OATLEY-FLORA-&-FAUNA
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Since 1955

OFF website: <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

Issue 10/10

Oct/Nov 2010

OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

Hurstville Council records show that on 22nd Sept it agreed to a four-part resolution summarised here.

1. Council as landowner, submit an application to rezone to Residential and reclassify to Operational Land the former Oatley Bowling Club site to permit seniors' housing.
2. Council as landowner ensure that any seniors' housing on the site includes a community meeting facility and community garden for general public use.
3. Funds from the lease go towards the upgrading of Jubilee Park, Mortdale.
4. Council consult with Kogarah Council, engage an access consultant to report on grades and pathway widths, and to investigate and report on ways to overcome excessive grades and narrow pathway widths and to prepare a specific plan of management for the *Myles Dunphy Reserve*.

Seven Councillors, Sansom, Badalati, Wong, Liu, Pickering, Perry, and McMahon voted in favour and five Councillors, Wagstaff, Hindi, Istephan, Jacovou, and Giegerl voted against the resolution.

On the positive side, Council has at last agreed to address a specific Plan of Management for the Myles Dunphy Reserve, some public use of the area in question and the significant issue of steep grade access.

These positives steps, however, do not compensate for the number of alarming problems arising from this resolution.

1. Council's primary concern still appears to be the raising of money, not the conservation of a significant part of the iconic *Myles Dunphy Reserve*.
2. The seniors housing objective could be misleading. If it is, as it appears, in the "over 55" category, this simply provides an opening for developers. The houses would be expensive to lease or buy, and could not be accurately described as meeting a social need.
3. The proposed reclassification to "operational land" means that Council can then sell the land.
4. Finally, there was no restriction of "low rise building" mentioned in the resolution.

THE DUNPHY WILDERNESS FUND

The Dunphy Wilderness Fund was set up by the NSW Government in 1996, to honour the contribution made by the Dunphy family to the conservation of NSW. The Government started the fund by committing \$5.5 million over five years. The Program aims to acquire private land to consolidate and protect wilderness areas. It has purchased 32 properties totalling 38,000 hectares in eight wilderness areas. The Colong Bulletin of September notes that less than half of the lands acquired by the Fund have so far been declared under the Wilderness Act. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/>

TASMANIAN FORESTS

The Florentine Protection Soc reports that despite recent announcement by the forest industry that it will no longer log Tasmania's ancient forests, it still is logging. Meanwhile, radiocarbon dating tests carried out on wood from Styx Valley trees reveal tree ages between 500 and 600 years. www.stillwildstillthreatened.org/

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS COAL THREAT

The Environmental Defenders Office [NSW] reports that Korean steel maker POSCO, in partnership with local coal miner Cockatoo Coal, are purchasing a 115sq km coal lease in Sutton Forest from Anglo American, and that Boral has recently been granted a new coal exploration lease over 63sq km in the Berrima area. If allowed, serious coal mining is coming to the Southern Highlands.

QUEENSLAND WILD RIVERS

The Wilderness Society notes that the Queensland Wild Rivers Act, passed five years ago and now being debated at federal level, was aimed at protecting free-flowing rivers. Ten spectacular river systems are now protected Wild Rivers and 40 Indigenous Wild River Rangers work across Far North Queensland. While there was clear Indigenous support for Act at the time, some now see it as a threat to Indigenous development. The mining lobby has also spoken out forcefully against it. Supporters of the legislation say it is an environmental regulation designed to work with landholders and Traditional Owners to help maintain the wildlife, natural resources, and productivity of the river basin. They argue that it restricts highly destructive development, like mining, from sensitive waterways and wetlands, and that it regulates the impact of development in the river catchments. <http://www.wilderness.org.au/>

THE OFF ANNUAL DINNER

The 2010 Annual Dinner will be held on Friday 12th November, 7 pm at South Hurstville R.S.L. Club, 72 Connells Point Rd, South Hurstville (near the corner of King Georges Rd) in the South Lounge.

Cost is \$35 per person for a Buffet including pre dinner platters, a selection of hot dishes, salads, dessert, bread rolls and tea or coffee with mints. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. Singers are expected.

Prior booking is essential. Alison Gilroy and Robin Dickson will be taking bookings and payment at the October meeting. Otherwise, they can be contacted on 9580 5557 or 9580 5663.

Each guest is asked to wear a hat (conservative or zany/frivolous). The donation of suitable raffle items would be warmly welcomed.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

***Oct 25th (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Robyn Stacey**, speaking on Flora and Fauna That Shaped Australia's Science and Culture. Robyn, a noteworthy Sydney based photographer will refer to the Herbarium Project at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and the Macleay Museum collection, noting our bizarre plants and animals attracting so many 19th century visitors to make the long sea voyage to see them.

***Oct 30th (Saturday)** Field day to Cockatoo Island. Meet at the Oatley Station to catch the 9.13 am train [4th carriage from the front], cross platform at Town Hall to Circular Quay. Catch the 10.13am ferry to Cockatoo Island. The leaders of the tour will have an audio machine to provide interesting details of the place and its history. The walk is reasonably level; the upper part of the island is approached by a good road with a sensible incline. Bring water, hat, sunscreen, and comfortable shoes. Drinks, food available, or BYO. **Leaders: John Davoren ph 9029 4869, and Graham Austin ph 9579 2375.**

Nov 12th (Friday) 7 pm: Annual Dinner at South Hurstville R.S.L. Club, [details on page 1 above].

Nov 22nd (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Graham Fry and Liz Cameron** speaking on Wildlife of Namibia and Northern Botswana.

Nov 26th (Friday evening) Field day spotlighting in Oatley Park. **Leader: Debbie Andrew**

Dec 6th (Monday afternoon) OFF Christmas Picnic. [Details next OFF News]

[*Please note several changes from the published program]

FIELD DAY JIBBON HEAD, 10TH OCTOBER

After a somewhat bumpy ride on the ferry to Bundeena, eleven walkers set off around Jibbon Head. The day was fine with a stiff wind near the coast. We saw some spring flowers and heard many New Holland honeyeaters. After a morning tea stop, we continued along the cliff track with views over Port Hacking to see the Aboriginal rock carvings. There were about ten engravings of marine and land animals, some quite large. After a leisurely lunch, we walked along Jibbon B each and through the streets of Bundeena to the ferry. [Report by walk leader: Janet Austin.]

BANDICOOTS, FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION

Ben Hope, technical officer with the National Parks and Wildlife Service spoke at the last meeting. He described the current studies of bandicoots, looking at the effect that fire hazard reduction may have on them. It seems clear that they are in danger from the back burning intended to reduce the number and severity of bush fires. However, the movement of the bandicoots, in and out of the area in question, and the apparent influence that nearby fires have on them make it difficult to assess just how endangered they are in the areas under surveillance.

LOWER GEORGES RIVER SUSTAINABILITY

Oatley Flora & Fauna has been successful in obtaining a *getting greener* grant from Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative. In 2011, we will be sponsoring Birds in Backyards workshops run by Birds Australia. The workshops will be used to educate people on the importance of attracting smaller birds into their gardens as insect predators; this should reduce reliance on pesticides and make their gardens more sustainable. Workshop participants will receive a selection of plants and are eligible for a garden visit if they wish to learn more about landscaping for bird habitat. Bird walks in local bushland will also be offered, to demonstrate the kind of habitat that small birds like.

The *getting greener* grant partnerships link a number of groups interested in sustainability. They include Oatley West Primary School, St George Migrant Resource Centre, Carss Park Community Gardens, Permaculture Sydney South, and the Menai Wildflower Group (which will be propagating plants for the project). Anyone interested in helping with the propagation or any other aspect of the project can contact Jason Cockayne ph. 9570 8559; <mailto:jay.shaz@hotmail.com> or Liz Cameron ph. 9580 6621; <mailto:lizc@pacific.net.au>.

OFF WEBSITE

Oatley Flora and Fauna Society (O.F.F) was formed in 1955 by local residents concerned about the vandalism of the flora and fauna in Oatley Park. Over the years, its area of interest has expanded and the Society aims to stimulate interest in Australian flora and fauna; foster an understanding of the need to conserve and protect the natural environment and to cooperate with other organisations in doing this. The OFF website is an important vessel in carrying out its objectives and, in its recently revamped form is especially worth visiting at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>. There are new sections on Myles Dunphy Reserve, Stream Watch, Flying Foxes and photos and reports on OFF activities. The site is getting many "hits" from students doing environmental projects. OFF News will now be published on the website, so the e-mail message to those who used to receive an e-mail copy will just remind them to open the website to get their copy.

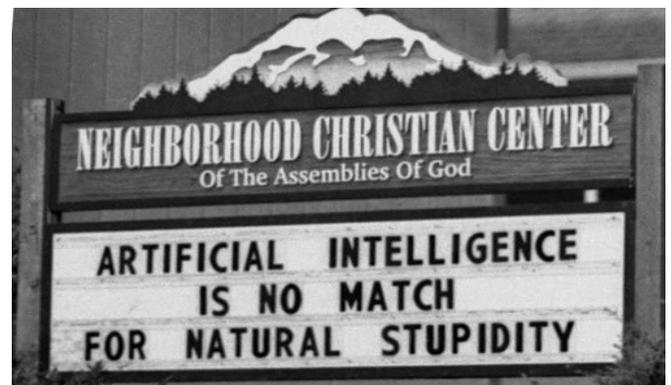
Briefly

OFF Committee OFF would like to hear from members who would be interested in standing for the committee.

Membership fees For 2011 members can opt to pay their membership fee by direct bank transfer - [more details when the renewal notice is sent out]. The fee for 2011 will remain at \$25 per family.

Elizabeth Farm Sunday 31st Oct 9am to 11.30am \$55 Includes breakfast and tour

OFF Christmas Picnic on 6th December at the Steamroller Park





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BIODIVERSITY IN THE ILLAWARRA REGION

The NSW Action Plan on Climate Change notes that rising sea levels and extreme storm events are likely to have a major impact on biodiversity in the Illawarra region. Some low-lying coastal areas are at risk from inundation, erosion, or saltwater intrusion into the water table, threatening ecosystems. Coastal freshwater wetlands are likely to be affected by saltwater, existing saline wetlands are likely to be substantially modified, and mangroves are likely to colonise new areas. An increase in fire frequency and intensity, high temperatures, dry spells and heavy downpours are also likely to affect the biota to varying degrees.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/>

500 YEARS OF TREE HISTORY

Tree rings of the snow gum are being used to build a record of the Australian climate back 500 years. "It's ironic how snowy gums [*Eucalyptus pauciflora*] do not like snow," says Dr Matthew Brookhouse, spearheading the study at the Australian National University in Canberra. For that reason, he says, the tree is ideal for observing growth and seasonal change. For decades, tree rings have been used as a kind of clock to indicate the age of trees (even in fossils that are tens of thousands of years old). "Tree rings are typically not very clear in Australia, but they are clear at the alpine tree line in the snowy gum because the trees are so sensitive to the temperature." <http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/>

PESTICIDE INFORMATION

The Environmental Defenders Office [EDO] has published *Getting the Drift*, about the use of pesticides on the Northern Rivers. The book, written in conjunction with the National Toxics Network, is a guide for community members and in response to the large number of inquiries the organisation receives about chemical sprays. The forestry, macadamia, sugarcane, and tea tree industries supplied information on which chemicals were used on the Northern Rivers. A copy of the booklet can be downloaded free from the EDO website: www.nsw.edo.org.au

HURSTVILLE COUNCIL - BETTER PRACTICES

Division of Local Government is attending the Council meeting on 24th Nov as part of its *Promoting Better Practices Review*. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

OATLEY BOWLING CLUB - NOVEMBER 2010



SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS COAL THREAT

BHP Billiton revealed that it had dropped plans for mining in the Dharawal State Conservation Area just a day before a scathing review by NSW Planning Assessment Commission. PAC found that the mine would cause unacceptable damage to rivers and creeks in the area. It stated that it is no longer a viable proposition for mining to cause damage to pristine waterways in drinking water catchments. BHP replied in the Illawarra Mercury that while listening to community opposition, it intends further research and mining proposals.

Sharyn Cullis, Secretary of Georges River Environmental Alliance noted the large number of submissions of groups and individuals [including OFF] opposing the undermining of the rivers. Sharyn added that most of the coalition of groups opposing the undermining of Dharawal are now writing to the Minister for the Environment to ask that it be declared a National Park; and that further support from OFF in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

TASMANIAN FORESTS

The Wilderness Society notes that environmentalists have long been trying to protect Tasmania's ancient forests from destruction, and timber workers acted to protect their jobs. However, the Tasmanian timber industry is now apparently close to collapse, and after five months of constructive discussions, a Statement of Principles has been agreed upon by all sides, conservation groups, timber communities, forest unions and the industry. Tasmania is now in a unique position to create a sustainable timber industry, while protecting its remaining native forests. <http://www.wilderness.org.au/>

QUEENSLAND WILD RIVERS

The Federal Opposition hesitated in seeking to overturn the Queensland Wild Rivers Act, saying it needed more time to think through the issues and to talk to Traditional Owners and landholders. Apparently, it was unconvinced by the discussions and is moving against it once more. [Australian Nov 10 - <http://www.wilderness.org.au/>]

BRITAIN BACK AMONG WOODLAND FOLK

The Sunday Times [UK] reports that Britain's tree cover is now 11.8% of total land area. This is at its highest level since about 1750 when the forests were replenished after being grubbed out during the agricultural revolution. It was also before they were denuded again for wood to make ships and charcoal for gunpowder in the Napoleonic wars. The growth is attributed to "new-born greens" and "tax breaks promising that money can grow on trees".

THE OFF AGM

Note that our Annual General Meeting is on Monday 7th February 2011 followed by a social supper. Members with interesting photos are encouraged to bring and display them.

20-25 slides would probably be a good benchmark!

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

Nov 22nd (Monday) 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Graham Fry and Liz Cameron** speaking on Wildlife of Namibia and Northern Botswana. When we think of lions, elephants and zebras, we often think of Kenya and Tanzania but there is also impressive wildlife in less-well-known South-West Africa - in Namibia and Botswana. In addition to its rich savannah fauna, this region has stunning desert scenery, ancient rock carvings, and extensive riverine habitats. Graham and Liz will share their 2009 experiences of this remarkable part of Africa.

Nov 26th (Friday evening) Field day spotlighting in Oatley Park with **Leader: Debbie Andrew** Meet at 7:30 pm at the top gate at Oatley Park Avenue (Sunset is 7:46 pm). Bring a torch, binoculars, camera, warm jumper, mozzie repellent, [and raincoat if]. It will be dark by 8:30 pm; we expect to be out by 10:00pm.

Dec 6th (Monday) OFF Picnic in the Park, This is our annual Christmas get-together. It will be at the "Steamroller Park" from 5.30pm. **BYO** food, drinks, picnic chairs, table etc. Barbecues may not be possible if there is any fire danger. For any queries, ring Liz Cameron 9580 6621

Feb 7th (Monday) 7.45pm Annual General Meeting with the election of officers, members photos and a social supper.

Feb 28th (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting.

FIELD DAY COCKATOO ISLAND

Twenty-one enthusiastic members joined the train and ferry to Cockatoo Island on 30th October and enjoyed the unfolding of the history and current plans for this largest of the Sydney Harbour islands. Its troubled past as a punitive prison for difficult convicts was examined on the island's upper level. While on the lower, its role as a highly specialised shipbuilding and repair facility, especially during the world wars, was examined with interest. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day, the views of the surrounding suburbs, the passing yachts in the wild wind, and the social interaction.

[Report by walk leader: John Davoren.]

FLORA, FAUNA, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE

This was the theme of Robin Stacey's talk at the 25th October meeting. Robin presented photographic reproductions of the images of plants and animals collected in the early years of European settlement, by settlers and visitors to this country. The variety and number of the collections showed a high level of interest in the "new" flora and fauna. It is not surprising that studies beginning with people like Joseph Banks, contributed significantly to both our science and culture.

COUNCIL TREE MANAGEMENT

Two OFF representatives are members of the Hurstville Council's Tree Management Working Party. At its recent meeting, the first for a while, it received a report on current tree management. There were 1197 new street trees and plants, 350 placed at Oatley West Public School, 158 plants pruned, 318 privately owned trees and 63 street trees removed.

THE OFF ANNUAL DINNER

Fifty-four members attended the delightful evening organised by Alison Gilroy and Robin Dickson at the Hurstville Grove RSL. All very much enjoyed Trevor Revis singing *Cootamundra Wattle* and *Starry Starry Night*, songs so in harmony with the spirit of the night.

SILVER JUBILEE 1985 - 2010

HISTORICAL INTEREST 2

**OATLEY - COMO
WALKWAY - BIKEWAY**

This Walkway - Bikeway was officially opened by Federal Members of Parliament, Gary Punch and Robert Tickner, on 15th December 1985, to mark the Centenary of the original Rail Bridge.

Four Oatley Community minded Citizens, Janet and Graham Austin, Noreen Whittaker and Milton Hill, initiated and worked tirelessly to achieve its completion.

KOGARAH MUNICIPAL COUNCILOATLEY HERITAGE GROUP

OFF COMMITTEE MEMBERS - 2011

There are several vacancies in the present Committee, with provision for 15 elected members. Committee meets monthly, usually on the Monday after the monthly meeting, attending to correspondence, financial matters, policies, and activities. If the idea of becoming a committee member appeals to you, please contact Liz Cameron.

LEAD A FIELD DAY?

If you have a favourite bushland or heritage walk up to 12km and are prepared to lead an O.F.F. outing, please contact our Field Officer, Alison Gilroy, on 9580 5557. Alison is now preparing the program of field days for 2011 and would like to hear from you.

OFF NEWS ON THE WEBSITE

OFF News is now published on the website, and those formerly receiving an e-mail copy will just be reminded to go to the website to read or download it. This month however all members are receiving the newsletter by mail with the notice about fee renewal. New members go to <http://off.oatleypark.com/documents/>

Briefly

Joel Salatin "the world's most innovative farmer" (TIME Magazine), is speaking at the Teachers Federation Conference Centre, Surry Hills, on 23rd Nov, 6:30pm. \$15 entry, tickets on line or at the door if not sold-out. <http://tracking.involvecrm.com/>

Picnic in the Park on Dec 6 [see above]

Coastcare Week Dec 6-12 <http://www.coastcare.com.au/>

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2011

We would like to know how many members might be interested in our annual trip to Smiggins Chalet for a week, probably February 12th to 19th. [Costs are \$102 double or twin share, \$47 extra adult in room, \$81 single, and \$39 per child]. If you are thinking of going on this trip, please contact Liz Cameron at the next OFF meeting, or on 9580 6621 or Robin Dickson on 9580 5663.

THE CONTINUING CURRICULUM DEBATE

