



**HAZARD REDUCTION AND BACKBURNING**

Following the recent dramatic bushfires, heated debate continues on what are the most appropriate and effective ways of fighting bushfires.

Hazard reduction is any activity that reduces or removes fuel before the onset of a bushfire. Back burning, on the other hand, occurs during a bushfire, burning back towards the oncoming fire to reduce fuel in its path.

The debate is about whether hazard burning is effective enough to justify its potential damage to the environment.

It is generally agreed that there is no way of stopping bushfires altogether at this stage, but there is considerable evidence that a) dry forests and bushland, and even some areas of farmland, need fire regimes to preserve biodiversity, and b) that reducing fuel loads by prescribed burning reduces the rate of bushfire spread. Fire in an area with prescribed burning every three years will spread more slowly, and much less intensely, and thus be more likely to enhance biodiversity. In an area with no hazard reduction fires are more likely to devastate the bush.



There is a need to develop a regime of cautious burning with due allowance for different types of landscape, preferably in winter, with lower temperatures, and winds, and with some humidity, helping limit the intensity of the burning. More at <http://bushfirefront.com.au/issues-on-public-and-private-land/examples-of-the-value-of-burning> & *Fires, facts and friction* in the December Colong Bulletin & [www.nationalparksandwildlife](http://www.nationalparksandwildlife)

**BIRD WATCHING IN RNP - Dec 1<sup>st</sup>**

A keen group of birders assembled at Fig Tree Flat at the northern end of Lady Carrington Drive at 7:00 am. The sun had emerged and the Hacking River was still and glassy, creating beautiful reflections of the reeds and cliffs. We all admired a stunning Azure Kingfisher as it perched low in a eucalypt and watched the antics of the Australasian Grebe and Dusky Moorhen and Coot chasing each other about the reeds. At 8:00 am, with the addition of a couple more birders, we set off on a leisurely walk along Lady Carrington Drive. The calls of the Rufous Whistler were strong and clear, a species present in Royal only in the summer. The Golden Whistler is present all year round and has a beautiful call. In the treetops were Leaden Flycatchers, with their silvery grey plumage, and the Black-faced Monarch. The very unusual call of the Cicadabird was heard, sounding something like cicadas. Its close relation the Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike was seen by many. We also saw a few of the smaller LBB's or "Little Brown Birds" such as the Brown Gerygone, White-browed Scrubwren and Brown Thornbill, which are often a challenge to new birders. We reached Jersey Springs (1.5 kms) where a pair of Black Ducks were hoping for a few nibbles, and we admired a Coachwood in full bloom on the river. After a snack we ambled back to Fig Tree Flat, spying a bird of prey, identified as a Collared Sparrowhawk, departing from a nest. A Catbird made an appearance on our return route, and a Superb Lyrebird was heard mimicking the call of the night bird, a White-throated Nightjar. During a lovely morning tea at Fig Tree Flat we heard the soft whoooing call of the Wonga Pigeon. 50 bird species were observed and an enjoyable walk had by all.

Leader: Debbie Andrew with expert assistance from Liz Cameron and Graham Fry.

**PUBLIC OFFICER - JOHN WATTERS**

John has resigned as OFF's Public Officer, a position he has held since 2003. This is an appointed position, essential in the governance of the Society. Before taking on the role, John served as Treasurer from 1993 to 2002 and handled difficult financial matters with care and professionalism. We thank John for his extensive service in these and other capacities, including as leader of five OFF trips to Lithgow, and representing us at a number of conservation conferences. He received the Georges River Community Award in 2002. The committee has appointed Julian Sheen to replace John.

**UPLAND SWAMPS - WORONORA PLATEAU**

Dr. Ann Young, our speaker at the 25<sup>th</sup> November meeting, addressed one of her areas of expertise, *Upland Swamps, and Ecology & Mining Threats*.

Upland swamps are treeless areas found on the sandstone plateaus around Sydney. Banksia thickets, restioid heaths, cyperoid heaths and sedgelands are located across the swamps, a range of valuable ecological niches that:

- ✚ provide green feed and water to many animals (e.g. wallabies, birds, snakes, frogs, crayfish)
- ✚ support stygofauna (groundwater-dependent fauna) such as crayfish, skinks
- ✚ are breeding sites for endangered fauna (giant burrowing frog, giant dragonfly)
- ✚ release clean water to streams especially during dry spells
- ✚ store carbon, probably at similar rates to temperate forests

Upland swamps are resilient to fires, their dense root mats are not easily eroded, and the vegetation recovers quickly.



However, they are suffering serious impacts due to the surface subsidence of some 2m above longwall coalmines. The water table in the swamps drops when the bedrock surface under the swamp sediments is cracked. This means that the sediments dry out, and become more susceptible to

damage from fires and to rapid erosion. Coal leases underlie 90% of the water catchment areas south of Sydney, and several large swamps have already been damaged by the subsidence impacts, losing water, being invaded by shrub species and having significant erosion channels cut into them. These are permanent impacts with no available practical means of rehabilitation. We cannot quantify how much catchment yield is lost by this damage, but visible loss of water and sediment dehydration, cracking of streambeds, iron staining of water, and drying of once-permanent pools strongly suggest significant impacts on water quantity and quality.

These swamps need to be protected, both for their recognised ecological value and for their role in Sydney's water supply. [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/planningsystem/southerncoalfieldinquiry](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/planningsystem/southerncoalfieldinquiry)

**SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2014**

Our annual trip to Smiggin Holes Chalet is from Sat 8<sup>th</sup> to Sat 15<sup>th</sup> February. [Costs per night are \$113 double, or twin share, \$93 single, and \$43 per child 6-18]. For information and booking, phone Robin Dickson ☎ 9580 5663.

**Please confirm your booking by 20<sup>th</sup> January.**

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [near Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

## COMING EVENTS

**Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm Annual General Meeting** with election of officers bearers and committee, followed by a slideshow of interesting photos and a social supper.

**Feb 8<sup>th</sup> (Sat) the Smiggin Holes Chalet week.** [See the note on page 1]

**Feb 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting and Social Supper** with **Matt Mo** speaking on "Frogs, Reptiles and Timber Harvesting: the balance and the bright side". The practices for timber harvesting in Australia are changing - and so too should our view of this industry. Public perceptions of native forestry are plagued with generalisations and the outdated legacy of a former era. Forest and wood products are used by all, and the ecological sustainability of forestry is being realised through scientific research. Come with an open mind for an exploration into the balance between herpetofauna and timber harvesting.

**Mar 1<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field trip to the Sydney Observatory** on the night of a new moon when there is a maximum of stars to be seen. Anyone interested in coming must pay beforehand, as it is prepaid to secure the booking. Fee is \$16 per person, with a limit of 20 people. Travel by train, leaving Oatley 19.13 or Mortdale 19.15, to arrive at the Observatory for the 20.15 start. The viewing will take about 1½ hours, and there will be viewing in the 3D planetarium, even if it is cloudy

**Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sun) Clean Up Australia Day 2014.** The Day inspires and empowers communities to clean up, fix up and conserve our environment. A simple concept became an international success story thanks to the foresight of its founders.

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT - 3/01/2014

Rodger Robertson - Treasurer

Income	2013	2012
Subscriptions	\$3,691.00	\$3,550.00
Donations received	\$2,011.00	\$1,299.00
Sales Stalls etc.	\$259.85	\$153.00
Oatley RSL donation	\$500.00	\$0.00
Hurstville Council Grant	\$2,000.00	\$678.00
NSW Government Grant	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Misc. Income	\$19.00	\$0.00
Interest (cheque acct)	\$1.56	\$1.37
Annual dinner	\$0.00	\$1,919.00
Total income	\$9,982.41	\$7,600.37
<b>Expenses</b>		
OFF Newsletter printing postage	-\$831.49	-\$765.61
Insurance	-\$290.00	-\$749.52
Mail box rental	-\$99.00	-\$93.00
Church Hall hire	-\$408.60	-\$399.60
Dept Fair Trading	-\$51.00	-\$49.00
Oatley Lions stall	-\$120.00	-\$120.00
Brochures Printing	-\$5,275.75	-\$600.00
Print programs	-\$266.20	-\$266.20
Other expenditure	-\$552.30	-\$695.70
Donations out*	-\$3,230.00	-\$2,100.00
Annual dinner	\$0.00	-\$1,724.00
Total expenses	-\$11,124.34	-\$7,562.63
Net Profit/Loss	-\$1,141.93	\$37.74
<b>BANK RECONCILIATION</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
Balance as at 1 January 2013	\$6,989.46	
Outstanding cheques	\$1,607.65	
Loss on year -	-\$1,141.93	
Cheque account balance 31 Dec	\$7,455.18	\$6,970.46
12 month term deposit (net)	\$10,392.30	\$9,907.56
Total balance at bank	\$17,847.48	\$16,878.02

Notes:

- The loss for the year was a deliberate strategy in view of the \$17000 in the coffers.
- Donations to allied conservation bodies [noted below] increased in 2013 by \$1130.
- Accounts include advance subscriptions for 2014; the Term Deposit interest of \$484.74 not included as income, but as asset.
- The accounts are with the auditor.

\*Donations to the following totalled \$3230 for 2013 and \$2100 for 2012.

NCC Membership including fees	\$300.00	\$200
Environmental Defenders Office	\$600.00	\$500
Colong Foundation	\$400.00	\$300
Wilderness Soc	\$300.00	\$200
WIRES	\$300.00	\$200
Kuringai Bats	\$300.00	\$200
Total Environment Centre	\$300.00	\$200
Blue Mountains Conservation Soc	\$300.00	\$200
Sydney Wildlife	\$200.00	\$100
Friends of Royal	\$30.00	\$00
Lithgow District Community Nursery	\$200.00	\$00

### AGM FIRST MEETING OF 2014

Best wishes for 2014 to all our members and friends. The first meeting of the year will be the Annual General Meeting on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb when the 2014 office bearers and Committee will be elected. We would like to hear from anyone interested in joining the committee. The AGM will be followed by a slide show and supper. Members are encouraged to bring and display interesting photos, [Ø>15!] and some finger food for supper.



### FOR NOTING

**C**lean Up Australia Day 02/03/2014. The Day inspires and empowers communities to clean up, fix up and conserve our environment. Details of OFF participation will be in next News and at the February meeting. [www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/](http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/)

**C**olong Foundation, the successor to Myles Dunphy's National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, continues the battle for the wilderness. <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>

**E**arth Hour 29/03/2014 between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. [www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour](http://www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour)

**E**nvironmental Defenders Office facing renewed attacks [us5.campaign-archive2.com/](http://us5.campaign-archive2.com/) & [www.edonsw.org.au/have\\_your\\_say](http://www.edonsw.org.au/have_your_say)

**L**inked organisations. OFF has affiliation through membership, donations or common purpose with a significant number. They are listed on our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Feb 25<sup>th</sup>. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (☎0425 291 879).

**N**ature Conservation Council in these challenging times for our fragile environment is involved in so many important conservation issues. <http://nccnsw.org.au/content/take-action-1>

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Society: The next meeting and AGM is on 28<sup>th</sup> February at 10.30 am in the Oatley RSL, Alan Fairley speaking about OFF. [www.oatleyheritagegroup.com/](http://www.oatleyheritagegroup.com/)

**O**atley Park Walking Tracks: OFF has recently published a walking guide to 7 walking tracks in the bushpark. [off.oatleypark.com/](http://off.oatleypark.com/)

**R**enew membership - Welcome New Members Details of OFF Membership are on our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

**S**nowy Mountains Trip Note that Jan 20<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for booking in.



# OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.  
Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 2/2014

Feb/March

## OUR 58<sup>th</sup> AGM HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY

Congratulations to Graham Lalchere re-elected President, and to our elected committee members. The Presidential address and the Secretary's Report can be found on our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

The quotes below seek only to summarise the highlights of the two addresses.

### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Graham Lalchere's theme was our need to think globally, and act locally. He listed the following as local priorities for Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc. for the coming year.

- 1. Underground Coal Mining South of Sydney** He spoke of the effect of the mining on the Special Areas of the Sydney Catchment Authority, the impact on our water supply and on our local Georges River. We saw the possible extent of this problem last year in the very informative talk by Dr Anne Young. The effect of these mines seems to be quite devastating and we should endeavour to bring this to the attention of people in our area and our politicians.
- 2. Sewer Overflows in our Local Area** There have been a significant number of overflows from the designed relief structures over the past couple of years. Sydney Water has made some changes to the system, in particular reducing the risk of syphons forming at these points, not only in Lime Kiln Bay, but also at other locations, as there was a design fault common to them all. It appears that the Sydney Water options are limited and more needs to be done. This sewer main was constructed in the 50s or 60s; there has been much development since, and the mains may now be overloaded.
- 3. The Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands** They are suffering from increasingly significant environmental impacts from urban development (gross pollutants, sediment, weeds, etc.) that are causing deterioration in the natural qualities of the area. OFF has applied for a Community Awareness Grant from SITA, [the Waste resources company] and this will be used to produce a brochure with map/tracks, flora, and fauna, listing significant sites and showing how wetlands work. The aim of the project will be to raise awareness in the local community on impacts on the wetlands, to promote increased engagement and behaviour change, and to reduce environmental impacts.
- 4. Membership** OFF needs more, and younger members to remain a relevant and vibrant organisation. One of the important changes in our area is the recent arrivals from other countries (and cultures). We want to reach out to these people, and make them aware of what we do, and more importantly, what we stand for. We want to make them locals and engage them in acting locally while thinking globally.

Graham indicated that these are not the only issues we will be pursuing this year, but that we need to focus on them in particular.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2014

Have you paid your membership fee yet? The fee is \$25 per family. One way to pay is by direct bank transfer to BSB 062 206 Account number 901997, AND put your name on the transfer form.

## THE SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2013

Liz Cameron outlined the activities of OFF in 2013, as it continued to realise its objectives through actions to improve the local area and to inform the community of the values of the natural environment.

Oatley Park remains a focus. A major achievement was the publication of three colour brochures on the Park - the Birds, Native Plants, and Walking Tracks in which Alan Fairley played a principal part. Thanks to OFF members for their donations to supplement the publication grants from Hurstville City Council, Oatley RSL and Community Club, and the Office of Environment and Heritage (the last facilitated by Mark Coure, MP for Oatley).

The Oatley Park Plan of Management (2004) has been reviewed by a sub-committee, and a report is being prepared on the steps needed to achieve effective long-term management of bushland and reduce bushfire risks in the Park,

Hurstville Council included Oatley Park and Baths as heritage items in its Review and Update of the 1988 Heritage Study. Water quality in the Georges River catchment is of great concern. Dedicated OFF members continue to undertake Streamwatch surveys in Myles Dunphy Reserve, and to monitor and publicise sewer overflows into Dairy Creek and Lime Kiln Bay wetlands, in consultation with other stakeholders.

OFF requested remedial action by Sydney Water and Hurstville City Council, and has just applied for a community awareness grant to highlight the valuable role of wetlands and identify ways to protect them.

OFF has affiliated with several groups that seek to protect Sydney drinking water catchments from threats, including longwall mining and exploration for coal seam gas. Our speaker in November provided graphic evidence of the damage to upland swamps in Sydney's catchment.

### SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2014

Sixteen members and friends stayed at Smiggin Holes Chalet this month. We missed the Dicksons, but welcomed the company of Janet Austin who regaled us with stories of previous OFF trips. Weather was fine and warm throughout, but on several mornings the valleys were blanketed with smoke from fires in Victoria. Starting with a stroll to Porcupine Rocks, most of the regular walks were undertaken. Our fittest members conquered Mt Kosciuszko before descending Dead Horse Gap to Thredbo River - a distance of 24 km.

Entertainment included nightly 'happy hours', jigsaws, listening to a DVD of Morricone's music, sharing photos taken on the walks, and sailing sardine tins on Spencer's Creek. There were sightings of a broad-toothed rat, wedge-tailed eagle, plenty of young flame robins, several copperheads, and mountain grasshoppers. Although many flowers were past their peak, it was the right season for gentians and leek orchids.

### PROTECTING ICONIC NATURAL AREAS



The Nature Conservation Council is calling on communities across the state to protest against current mining developments with the potential to threaten iconic areas. It has produced a short film highlighting some of the areas threatened by coalmines and gas

fields. It can be found at <http://nccnsw.org.au/icons-film>

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [near Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

## COMING EVENTS

**Feb 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting with Matt Mo speaking on "Frogs, Reptiles, and Timber Harvesting: the balance and the bright side".** The practices for timber harvesting in Australia are changing - and so too should our view of this industry. Public perceptions of native forestry are plagued with generalisations and the outdated legacy of a former era. Forest and wood products are used by all, and the ecological sustainability of forestry is being realised through scientific research. Come with an open mind for an exploration into the balance between [herpetofauna](#) and timber harvesting.

**Mar 1<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field trip to the Sydney Observatory.** It is now well booked, and some 18 attendees have paid the fees. Only a few places are still available; late comers [check with Alison] may not be with our group, and will have to book directly online [www.sydneyobservatory.com.au](http://www.sydneyobservatory.com.au) to get a ticket. We will travel by train, leaving Oatley 7.13pm / Mortdale 7.15, to arrive at the Observatory for the 8.15pm start. The viewing will be about 1½ hours, including 3D in the planetarium, even if it is cloudy. **Leader Alison Gilroy ☎ 9580 5557**

**Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sun) Clean Up Australia Day 2014.** The OFF registered site is at Jinna Rd Reserve, Peakhurst, from 8.30 to 1pm and meeting near the start of Jinna Rd. More details below..

**Mar 22<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) Field day Bird watching on Botany Bay mudflats.** **Leader Debbie Andrew ☎ 9570 2695**

**Mar 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting with Sandra Guy speaking on Friendly Flying Foxes.**

## CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY - MARCH 2<sup>nd</sup>

Help us clean up on *Clean Up Australia Day*. The OFF registered site is at Jinna Rd Reserve, Peakhurst. We will meet in the reserve near the start of Jinna Rd, starting at 8.30 and finishing 1pm. Details and "join this site" at [www.cleanupaustriaday.org.au/Jinna++Rd+reserve](http://www.cleanupaustriaday.org.au/Jinna++Rd+reserve)

### SO MANY CONSERVATION ISSUES

The Wilderness Soc. notes that the government and big business have kicked off the year with a series of terrible decisions relating to the environment.

In January the Minister for the environment started a process to axe World Heritage protection from Tasmania's magnificent, towering old growth forests that had been added to the World Heritage list only last year.

[www.getup.org.au/campaigns/save-our-forests/](http://www.getup.org.au/campaigns/save-our-forests/)

Coal miners continue to risk our water, land, and climate with their various projects and *The Australian* newspaper argues in their support. There are so many conservation issues under discussion [and threat] now that it is not possible to deal with them comprehensively here. A list of the problems and constructive discussion on them can be found on conservation websites e.g. [www.tec.org.au](http://www.tec.org.au)

<http://nccnsw.org.au/content/take-action-1> <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>

### EDO FACING RENEWED ATTACKS

The Federal Government has cancelled funding to Environmental Defenders Offices. EDO NSW will lose \$150,000 in 2014 and \$400,000 in the following years, severely limiting its ability to help communities address the many environmental issues they are facing. EDO is seeking our financial assistance. [www.givenow.com.au/edonsw](http://www.givenow.com.au/edonsw)

### MORE HEAT MORE POWER

Air conditioning during days or hours of extreme heat is placing severe stress on power supplies, and leading to calls for an expensive increase in power generation. Twelve years ago, Australia had half as many air-conditioners as it does today. In NSW 65% of homes are now air-conditioned, in Victoria and Queensland 75%, in Western Australia 86% and in South Australia more than 90%.

Queensland has introduced an approach that may help overcome the problem. Its electricity supplier offers customers cheaper electricity if they install remotely controlled "PeakSmart" air conditioners. As the heat rises, the electricity supplier sends a "ripple" down the line that can switch coolers off, or to a lower level of operation. The fan stays on so it still feels cool. The switch-off might last only a few minutes, not much longer than the automatic gap when the system is operated by a thermostat. PeakSmart reduces extreme power demand during heat peaks. [www.smh.com.au/comment/its-switch-on-time-to-cut-the-demand-for-power](http://www.smh.com.au/comment/its-switch-on-time-to-cut-the-demand-for-power)

### SAVING WATER

Water conservation is a critical factor in reducing overall water consumption, and the need for more dams. Surveys indicate our average water use is 200 litres per day, 5-10 litres for drinking and food preparation, and 190 litres for

showers, dishes, clothes, toilets, and the garden. Many <sup>[50%]</sup> spend six or more minutes in the shower daily, and waste even more water before entering the shower. We can all do our bit to help reduce water use, by not leaving taps running, avoiding unnecessary rinsing, fixing leaks, having shorter showers, and installing rainwater tanks. Water saving products work and, in the longer term, they save money and the environment. [www.savewater.com.au/how-to-save-water/](http://www.savewater.com.au/how-to-save-water/)

### AUSTRALIA DAY FESTIVAL: SUN 26<sup>th</sup> JAN

OFF had a stall at Hurstville City Council's Australia Day Festival and citizenship ceremony in Oatley. Council staff were welcoming and allocated us a prominent position next to their registration stand.

More than 10 OFF members operated the stall at various times, and we had plenty of visitors, including new citizens, nearby residents, and families from further afield. Many copies of our new brochures were distributed and elicited favourable responses.

### FOR NOTING

**C**lean Up Australia Day 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar. The Day inspires and empowers communities to clean up, fix up, and conserve our environment. Further details of OFF participation will be provided at the February meeting. [www.cleanupaustriaday.org.au/](http://www.cleanupaustriaday.org.au/)

**C**olong Foundation, the successor to Myles Dunphy's National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, continues the battle for the wilderness. <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>

**E**arth Hour 29<sup>th</sup> Mar between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. [www.earthhour.org/](http://www.earthhour.org/)

**L**ugarno Progress Association meets 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month, at St Stephen's Anglican Church Hall. [www.lugarnoprogress.org.au/](http://www.lugarnoprogress.org.au/)

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Feb 25<sup>th</sup>. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (☎0425 291 879).

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# OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.  
Protecting the local environment since 1955

## FROGS, REPTILES, AND TIMBER HARVESTING

At the 24<sup>th</sup> Feb monthly meeting local wildlife ecologist, Matt Mo spoke on *frogs, reptiles, and timber harvesting, the balance, and the bright side*, reflecting on his work with the Forest Science Centre. The FSC is the only research institution in New South Wales focussing on the sustainability and profitability of the state's forestry industry. Unbeknown to many, the practices for timber harvesting in New South Wales have been changing. Public perceptions of native forestry are often plagued with generalisations, and the outdated legacy of a former era. We all use forest and wood products, and the ecological sustainability of forestry is being realised through scientific research.

Matt explained how modern harvesting methods have moved into the age of selective logging, so that bushland remains post-harvest. He reflected on his experience with threatened frogs and reptiles in harvested native forests. He put the case that these lands are just as much a sanctuary for these species as are conservation reserves. The main point was that balancing biodiversity with timber harvesting can be a reality. [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/research/forestry](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/research/forestry)

## WORONORA RESERVOIR DRYING UP

As recently reported in the SMH and the Sutherland Leader, a group of academics and concerned community members visiting the Waratah Rivulet were deeply shocked by recent impacts caused by underground mining operations at the Metropolitan Colliery. The Waratah Rivulet



plays a critical role in delivering water to the Woronora Reservoir. Delivering more water than the Woronora River, it supplies some 30% of the inflow to the reservoir during good rainfall and 50% in dry conditions.

Most disturbing is the complete draining of a substantial permanent pool [pictured] referred to as Pool N by the mining company. With little recent rain, flow in the river is currently relatively low, but water still flows from upstream into the southern end of Pool N, normally some two metres deep. The water however is being lost through a crack in the bedrock of the river. Several substantial cracks are in the floor of Pool N clearly caused by underground mining.

"The loss of Pool N is deeply disturbing and emphasises the risks and consequences of mining beneath Sydney's drinking water catchment," said Dr Peter Turner, a representative for the Parks Association. "The mining company argues that the water lost from the Waratah Rivulet still makes its way into Woronora Reservoir one way or another, but the evidence shows this is incorrect."

Dr Turner commented, "There's an urgent need to update and improve water loss estimates; the government should ensure that the SCA has all the resources it needs to comprehensively assess the impacts of mining on Greater Sydney's water supply. To continue to allow mining in the absence of such knowledge is folly." [www.theleader.com.au/river-bleed-dry-from-mining](http://www.theleader.com.au/river-bleed-dry-from-mining)

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## CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA DAY: 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society supervised a site for Hurstville Council at Jinna Rd Reserve Peakhurst on the day.

In spite of the grey and showery weather, nineteen keen volunteers assembled. Equipped with Gumboots, and various long grabbers, they removed much waste from the foreshore area and the mangroves. In all 6 large bags of recyclables and 4 of general rubbish were collected.



An energetic group cleaned the storm-water run-off area at the bottom of the golf course around the mangroves, where there was a serious amount of rubbish. O.F.F. will be lobbying Hurstville Council and Sydney Water to install a Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT)

there to prevent this in the future.

## COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

Oatley Flora and Fauna members have participated in the Community Reference group formed to find a resolution to the Dairy Creek sewer overflows. The group has met three times since December, and at the last meeting noted that:

- 1) The option of a new overflow at Saltpan Creek was not an acceptable or effective measure.
- 2) Sydney Water has proposed to increase weir height at Dairy Creek increasing the storage capacity and preventing overflows. Sydney Water has undertaken that an environment Impact statement will be done before this is implemented. They will be required to monitor for effects. If there were any adverse effects in Dairy creek or Lime Kiln Bay from increased over flows at the northern arm of Lime Kiln bay the adjustment to the weir height can be reversed.
- 3) Sydney Water has agreed that the current overflow limit on their license of 40 overflows in 10 years is excessive for the wetlands. They are working with the EPA to reduce this to 20 overflows with requests from community group such as OFF writing to the EPA.
- 4) The group has requested that Sydney Water work with Councils towards the longer-term solutions of source control of storm water and treatment of sewer waste further upstream.

## PROTECT MARINE SANCTUARIES

The NSW Government is moving to reduce protection for our marine life and coastal habitats by weakening the marine parks that protect them. Daisy Barham, Marine Campaigner for the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, is asking member bodies and individuals to join an online petition to protect marine sanctuaries from fishing. [Take action today](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/take-action/marine). Please look at the website and share the petition with friends. [www.nccnsw.org.au/take-action/marine](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/take-action/marine)

## STUART MURRAY AND MARINE DEBRIS

Some members of OFF, and other community groups welcomed and, farewelled Stuart, on his stand up paddleboard (SUP) at Sandy Beach Oatley on Mar 12<sup>th</sup> as he neared the end of his 2-week circumnavigation of Sydney. He paddled north from Manly, to the Hawkesbury River, upstream to Penrith, 70km overland to Liverpool and downstream on the Georges River, through the heads of Botany Bay and up the coast back to Manly. His cause is to heighten awareness of the huge problem of marine debris in the world's oceans, the toll on damaged wildlife, food chain threats, and the contribution to the problem of rivers like the Georges. More at <https://www.facebook.com/Supexplore>

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [near Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

## COMING EVENTS

- Mar 22<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) Field day watching Botany Bay Shorebirds.** Meet at 9am at the corner of Riverside Dr and Napoleon St, Sans Souci. Bring binoculars hats and cameras, thermos, snacks (and lunch if you want). We could end up at Botany Bay NP for lunch. **Leader Debbie Andrew** ☎ 9570 2695 / 📞 0490 172 501
- Mar 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting with Sandra Guy speaking on Friendly Flying Foxes.** [See the note below\*]
- Mar 29<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Earth Hour 2014** This year the power of Earth Hour is aimed at helping save the Great Barrier Reef. [www.smh.com.au/environment/earth-hour](http://www.smh.com.au/environment/earth-hour)
- April 28<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting with Dr Tom Grant speaking on Studying the Platypus**
- May 3<sup>rd</sup> (Sat) Field day to Scotland Island, Leader: Julian Sheen -** ☎ 9594 4888
- May 10<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Rescheduled Field Day to Sydney Observatory** [see note below①].
- May 26<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting with Gary Schoer speaking on Red Rocks Blooming: Wildflowers in the Pilbara & beyond**
- May 31<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day to Kurnell, Whale watching. Leader: Graham Fry -** ☎ 9580 6621

### THE OFF ANNUAL DINNER

FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup> must be the time to CELEBRATE as no celebratory dinner for 18 months & we are returning to OFF's 50th ANNIVERSARY venue.

CELEBRATING 59 years of OFF.

Please join us for The OFF ANNUAL DINNER

FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2014

7pm - 10pm

THE GARDENS on FOREST  
764 Forest Rd Peakhurst

Canapés on arrival

Two course meal served at your table (bread on table)  
2 main dishes followed by 2 desserts served alternatively  
iced water & soft drinks for the duration of the function

Bar available for individual alcohol purchases

Coffee, tea & chocolate mints

Special dietary requirements - halal, vegetarian, diabetic, gluten-free catered for on request.

Cost \$55.00 per person

Book your seat now - payment in full or by instalments.

Contact Sue Howard ☎ 9579 1718.

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### GRAND RAFFLE

FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE will be lucky for some members as we hold our RAFFLE at the ANNUAL DINNER. Further donations will be gratefully received at meetings, picked up from your home or delivered to my home. Please check your cupboards for any unwanted gifts that you may like to contribute in addition to those donations kindly given last year. THANK YOU.

Again, contact Sue ☎ 9579 1718.

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### \* BATTY ABOUT FLYING FOXES

Sandra Guy, who will be our speaker at the March meeting, is batty about Flying Foxes. She understands first-hand the plight of these vulnerable flying mammals and her regard and affection for them is palpable. Sandra, amongst other things, is a wildlife rescue volunteer who takes in orphaned and/or injured flying foxes for rehabilitation before returning them (if possible) to the wild.

The life of a flying fox is fraught with fatality. Seen as noisy, smelly and a fruit grower's nightmare, many people have scant regard for them, but Sandra will convince the most ardent flying fox antagonist to grant them the respect they so truly deserve. [Note from Matt Allison]



### ① OBSERVATORY VISIT - MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup>

This was cancelled because of unfavourable weather. It is planned to rebook it for Sat night, May 10<sup>th</sup>. There are still some tickets available. Would those already booked please contact Alison, re their availability for that time. If they are unable to attend, there could be a refund if their tickets can be resold. **Leader Alison Gilroy** ☎ 9580 5557

### REGARDING THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

[The Linnean Society](http://www.linnean.org.au) has produced an informative new book "Field Guide to Royal National Park." Each chapter covers a different aspect of the Park and is written by an expert on the topic. A copy of the book will be at the desk at next meeting. You can purchase it for \$10.00 (or order it at the next meeting and we will more from the publishers).

### FOR NOTING

**Earth Hour** 29<sup>th</sup> Mar between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. "It is lights out for the Reef" [www.earthhour.org/](http://www.earthhour.org/)

**Myles Dunphy Streamwatch**, next meets 9am on Tues Mar 25<sup>th</sup>. Details: Sharyn ☎ 9579 1262, Heather 📞 0425 291 879.

**National Parks Association** South Sydney Branch Autumn Newsletter <http://branches.npansw.org.au/southern/sydney/>

**Oatley Park Walking Tracks:** OFF's walking guide to 7 walking tracks in the bushpark. <http://off.oatleypark.com>

**Powerful Owl Training Workshop** 10<sup>th</sup> May hosted by Menai Wildflower Group. Location: Illawong Rural Fire Brigade building on Old Illawarra Rd, Illawong. Time: 1.00pm to 3.30pm. Cost: Free. Register/questions [david.bain@birdlife.org.au](mailto:david.bain@birdlife.org.au) 📞 0421 337 545

**Renew membership** - Welcome New Members! Details of OFF Membership are on our [website](http://www.off.org.au).

**Volunteer Planters:** On Mar 30<sup>th</sup> volunteers are needed to add 2,100 plants at the Lysaghts Rd, Wedderburn edge of [Dharawal National Park](http://www.dharawalnationalpark.com.au). Please contact [GREA](mailto:GREA@off.org.au) members, Pat and Barry Durman, ☎ 4634 1359.

### Prejudice is not uncommon!





### FRIENDLY FLYING FOXES

At the 24<sup>th</sup> March meeting Sandra Guy, a wildlife rescue volunteer, spoke on flying foxes, and their key role in ensuring the ongoing health of ecosystems where animals are every bit as important as plants. Sandra showed that most types of native forests across the continent depend on flying foxes to do the heavy lifting, pollinating hundreds of species of trees and ensuring genetic diversity and survival of many different types of forest communities. They are a 'keystone species', with an essential ecological role without which the ecosystem will collapse.



Many native trees have blossoms that are only receptive to pollination at night, and the only significant nocturnal pollinators are flying foxes. Without them, we will lose the structure that provides the essential microcosms supporting thousands of other flora and fauna species; yet few realise their key role. However, flying foxes are in decline and the main species on the eastern seaboard, the Grey Headed Flying Fox, may be extinct within 20-30 years. It is time to examine Bats' roles to see what can be done to save them. They seem so foreign to us, inhabiting the night skies; a realm so diametrically opposed to ours; myths and misunderstandings dominate our attitudes, and misinformation about their disease risk can cause great concern. Only recently have studies led to some understanding of their important role.

They have existed for over 55 million years and are one of the most successful and abundant mammals. There are two main types: the microbats (Microchiroptera) and the megabats (Megachiroptera).

They are remarkably intelligent with highly sophisticated social structures. They are more intelligent than dogs and, in captivity, easily learn their own names and the routine of the house or aviary. They breed very slowly as mothers can only raise one pup a year. They form tight emotional bonds, teaching the pups grooming and social skills, until they become independent at about five months. If too long in human care, they become too dependent, and cannot be released into the wild.

They can travel up to 100kms a night foraging for food; returning each morning to an established campsite to rest, nap and socialise during the day. These campsites cause conflict with people, as they can be both odorous and noisy. Unfortunately, bats' preferred residence is similar to ours, a sheltered gully near fresh water with tall trees and rich soil, protected from disturbing winds. As people clear bat habitat for their homes and farms, flying foxes are quickly losing both food sources and campsites.

The problem of conflict with existing campsites is difficult. An experimental initiative to develop 'replacement' roost sites has recently commenced, aiming to entice the bats to leave problematic roosts in the middle of urban areas.

#### O.F.F MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2014

Have you paid your membership fee yet?

The fee is \$25 per family. One way to pay is by direct bank transfer to 062 206 901997 Oatley Flora and Fauna Con Soc, but if you do so, you must put your name on the transfer form.

### BIRD WATCHING AT BOTANY BAY - 22<sup>nd</sup> March

Fifteen gathered at Sandringham on a beautiful Saturday morning to view the Bar-tailed Godwits before they departed on their annual migration to their northern hemisphere breeding grounds in the tundras of Alaska. There were several godwits, including some beautifully coloured rufous-brown males in their breeding plumage, busily probing the sand flats for their food, including Soldier Crabs and worms, to power their amazing migration.

Bar-tailed Godwits have been implanted with satellite tracking devices in New Zealand and one, known as E7 flew directly from New Zealand, non-stop for 10,200 km over 7.5 days, to the Yellow Sea in Korea. E7 spent about 5 weeks at the Yellow Sea re-fuelling, and then set off across Japan and the Bering Sea for another 7,200 km over 6 days to Alaska. E7 spent 3.5 months on the breeding grounds in Alaska, and at the end of August set off across the Pacific on a 11,500 km non-stop flight of 8.5 days to New Zealand. Bar-tailed Godwits from eastern Australia are thought to take similar migrations to the Alaskan tundras.

Other migratory shorebirds seen at Sandringham were the Eastern Curlew, and through the telescope at Towra Point Nature Reserve, a Whimbrel. These species also migrate to the high latitudes of the northern hemisphere. We saw a Red-capped Plover, Masked Lapwing, Crested Tern, and Pied Oystercatchers on Carter Shoals next to Towra Point Nature Reserve.

A couple of us ventured out to Boat Harbour rock platform on Cape Solander and saw several Golden Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and Red-necked Stint coming into breeding plumage. They are about to depart for their northern hemisphere breeding grounds in the Arctic Circle. We will eagerly await their return from the breeding grounds next September/October. A few non-breeding migratory shorebirds will stay in Botany Bay over the austral winter.

[Report by Leader, Debbie Andrew]

### GARDEN TOUR

The Menai Wildflower Group has created a beautiful native garden at the Illawong Rural Fire Brigade building and has offered to take workshop participants for a tour on 10<sup>th</sup> May at 12 noon, prior to the [Powerful Owl Training Workshop](#).

[See below in For Noting]

### WILDLIFE FRIENDLY

To avoid harm to people, possums, birds, snakes, and flying foxes use only wildlife-friendly netting, and fencing.

[www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com](http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com)

### OFF CELEBRATION DINNER

Our Dinner will be on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June 7-10pm at *The Gardens on Forest* 764 Forest Rd Peakhurst. \$55.00 p/p. You are invited to join fellow members who have already booked their place. Payment in full is due at the May Meeting (26<sup>th</sup>). You may pay by instalments up until then. Please check menu selection at Monday Meetings.

Contact Sue Howard ☎ 9579 1718 for payment and menu details, if unavailable to attend meetings.

### THE GRAND RAFFLE

It will be held at the Annual Dinner on 13<sup>th</sup> June. Further items will be gratefully received at meetings, at my home or picked up from your home. Please check your cupboards for any unwanted gifts you may like to donate. Thank you.

[Sue Howard ☎ 95791718]

## COMING EVENTS

- April 28<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** with [Dr Tom Grant](#) speaking on **Studying the Platypus**
- May 3<sup>rd</sup> (Sat) Field day to Scotland Island.** Meet at Church Point Wharf to catch the 10.30 ferry. We expect to be back at Church Point by 3.15. It takes up to 1½ hours to drive to Church Point (UBD pages 117-118). There is a café at the wharf. **Leader: Julian Sheen** - ☎ 9594 4888 📞 0415428744 [note his mobile number in case!]
- May 10<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Powerful Owl Training Workshop** 1pm hosted by the **Menai Wildflower Group** [see note below]
- May 10<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Rescheduled Field Day to Sydney Observatory** [see note below].
- May 26<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** with **Gary Schoer** speaking on **Red Rocks Blooming: Wildflowers in the Pilbara & beyond**
- May 31<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day to Kurnell, Whale watching.** **Leader: Graham Fry** - ☎ 9580 6621
- June 13<sup>th</sup> (Fri) O.F.F. Celebration Dinner at the Gardens on Forest at 7pm.** [See the note above]

## RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

The [International Energy Agency](#) [IEA] notes that renewable energy is crucial to meeting future energy needs, and is already being integrated in a significant way in many countries. In Denmark, Italy, Germany, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal, wind and solar have captured between 10-30% of electricity generation. IEA finds that increasing renewable energy to 5-10% of the total poses no technical or economic challenges to the electricity system. There are however challenges ahead to enhance the reliability of renewable energy, and its growing part in energy production. [The Power of Transformation](#) [www.iea.org/publications/roadmap](http://www.iea.org/publications/roadmap)

## FAIRY POSSUMS FACE EXTINCTION

The Wilderness Society is [seeking support to protect](#) Victoria's gorgeous animal emblem. It is smaller than a human hand and notoriously shy. It is so elusive that it was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered in 1961 in the tall forests of the Central Highlands northeast of Melbourne. Mountain Ash forests there have existed for 60 million years, the Fairy Possum for 20 million. There is now a crisis in biodiversity in these forests, driven by the major change introduced in just the **last 100 years**. The global expert on the Fairy Possum, David Lindenmayer, has developed a suite of forest management prescriptions to help rescue the species. [www.wilderness.org.au/](http://www.wilderness.org.au/)



## KOALA CONNECTIONS

An initiative of the Tweed and Byron Shires aims to provide a secure future for koalas on the NSW far north coast, to increase the area, quality and connectivity of koala habitat. The \$3.5m program will protect koalas and many other species of endangered fauna and flora through tree planting, weed control, community engagement, invasive vertebrate pest, and fire management. It is funded principally by a \$2m grant from the Federal Government's *Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund*. [www.byron.nsw.gov.au/koala-connections](http://www.byron.nsw.gov.au/koala-connections). However, current road plans propose that an upgrade of the Pacific Highway is to pass through three Koala colonies near Ballina. [www.echo.net.au/ballina-highway-route/](http://www.echo.net.au/ballina-highway-route/)



Government's *Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund*. [www.byron.nsw.gov.au/koala-connections](http://www.byron.nsw.gov.au/koala-connections). However, current road plans propose that an upgrade of the Pacific Highway is to pass through three Koala colonies near Ballina. [www.echo.net.au/ballina-highway-route/](http://www.echo.net.au/ballina-highway-route/)

## NATIVE PLANTS OF OATLEY PARK

O.F.F has produced a photographic guide to the native plants of the Oatley Bushland Park. It is a tree-covered area at the junction of Georges River and Lime Kiln Bay, almost completely surrounded by water. Its 45 hectares is mainly of sandstone woodland with shrubby understory, and over 310 plant species have been recorded there. The park is an important regional sanctuary protecting a number of plant species not found elsewhere in the St George area. [native plants of Oatley Park](#) & [off.oatleypark.com/flora.html](http://off.oatleypark.com/flora.html)

## COAL SEAM GAS EXTRACTION

[Lock the Gate Alliance](#) is leading a move to protect Australia's cultural and agricultural resources from inappropriate mining. Governments and mining companies reject the claims, but there are [increasing indications](#) that CSG extraction may cause serious harm to the environment, farming land, water resources and human health; it may [even have some seismic consequences](#). Considering the warning signs, the lack of comprehensive research into its environmental and health impact is alarming. The law is currently in favour of coal seam gas expansion, and encouraging landowners to lock their gate may be the only way of slowing the pace of fracking until research is completed and effective safeguards are in place. [www.echo.net.au/bentley-2000-protectors-site/](http://www.echo.net.au/bentley-2000-protectors-site/) & [australianmuseum.net.au](http://australianmuseum.net.au)

## ①OBSERVATORY VISIT – MAY 10<sup>th</sup>

This has been rebooked for Sat, May 10<sup>th</sup> for an early session at 6.15pm with Saturn and Jupiter on view. Catch the 4.43 train from Oatley, 4.45 from Mortdale, arriving at Town Hall at 5.21, for a train to Circular Quay, and the 10-minute walk to the Observatory. We will meet any not coming by train outside the Observatory at 6pm. Session should take about 1½ hours. **Leader Alison Gilroy** ☎ 9580 5557

## FOR NOTING

**Myles Dunphy Streamwatch**, next meets 9am on Tues April 29<sup>th</sup>. Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather 📞 0425 291 879.

**Oatley Heritage & Historical Society's** next meeting will be on 23rd April, beginning at 10.30 am at the Oatley RSL, with Jack Gray speaking about his early days in Oatley. [www.oatleyheritagegroup.com](http://www.oatleyheritagegroup.com)

**Powerful Owl Training Workshop** 10<sup>th</sup> May hosted by Menai Wildflower Group. Location: Illawong Rural Fire Brigade building on Old Illawarra Rd, Illawong. 1.00pm to 3.30pm. Cost: Free. Register/questions [david.bain@birdlife.org.au](mailto:david.bain@birdlife.org.au) ☎ 0421 337 545. Early arriving participants can join the [garden tour](#) at 12pm.

## Wildlife Photographer of the Year Exhibition

Australian Museum Mar 29 - 1 June, 9.30am - 5.00pm. See 100 powerful images selected from more than 40,000 entries worldwide and discover the amazing world we live in. See curious lions, fighting vultures, dancing dolphins and baby crocodiles playing with their mother. <http://australianmuseum.net.au/event/Wildlife-Photographer>





# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 5/2014

May/June

### STUDYING THE PLATYPUS

Dr Tom Grant of UNSW spoke on this subject at the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, a research interest in which he has been involved for 40 years. [www.publish.csiro.au/](http://www.publish.csiro.au/) While the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](http://www.iucn.org) (IUCN) classifies the status of the platypus as a 'species of least concern', Tom argued that it is more probable that the platypus is vulnerable, particularly due to its dependence on water in which to feed.



Spread along eastern Australia from Cooktown and to Tasmania, more investigation is needed to determine the current platypus population. Large numbers were trapped and shot in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and there are remaining threats to their continued conservation. They are no longer found in the streams of the Adelaide Hills, Mount Lofty Ranges, and Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia, where they once occurred.

The Platypus is mobile, reclusive and active throughout the night but most often seen around dawn and dusk. The male has a poisonous spur that it may use in its defence, but is predominantly used against other males during the breeding season. Capture can be risky as they drown if caught and trapped underwater for too long. Radio-telemetry has been used to investigate platypus biology. When foraging, the platypus's main sensory organ is its bill, much more sensitive than its eyes and ears that are closed when underwater. It has receptors that detect touch, pressure, and electric fields from its prey.

Because platypus populations can be small or spread along rivers, and many animals are mobile, population numbers are difficult to determine accurately. [The Australian Platypus Conservancy](http://www.platypus.asn.au) encourages the public to report sightings of platypus as a way of determining population sizes at particular places.

The Platypus is protected, but threats to its survival include mortality in illegally set nets and traps, and habitat degradation. Natural and regulated high and low flows of water through rivers and creeks can damage nesting and feeding sites.

Fossils of ancient forms of platypus have been found in central Australia, but during the time when these species were there the areas were wet, not arid as they are now. The platypus is found in most areas where it was prior to European occupation of Australia, but its populations are probably lower.

Extreme weather events resulting from climate change are likely to decrease the size and distribution of platypus populations. They depend on a stable supply of water, and droughts can reduce current, distribution and numbers. Floods have a detrimental effect on juvenile platypus survival. Foxes are predators and some populations in Tasmania have been prone to a potentially fatal fungal disease causing ulcers and lesions. Use of illegal fishing nets is also a serious problem, as Platypus need to surface regularly to breathe. <http://www.platypus.asn.au> &

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/Platypus>

### SCOTLAND ISLAND TRIP - 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY

It was raining in Oatley but the faithful who headed out for Pittwater, and got as far as Homebush, saw sunny skies ahead.

We found a good autumn day, windy and cool with the air as clear as crystal and the water alive with wind washed waves. After coffee at Church Point, we crossed to Tennis



Court on [Scotland Island](http://www.scotlandisland.com) and then slowly circumnavigated the island's narrow lanes with houses perched on the bush-covered hillsides and views of the water. Some summited the 120-metre peak at Elizabeth Park.

In the afternoon, the intrepid nine took the ferry across to Elvina Bay at the base of Kuring-Gai Chase National Park, passing [Dorothea Mackellar's](http://www.dorotheamackellar.com) house, beautifully tucked away in the bush at Lovett Bay. After an hour's walk in which we looked for, and (some say) found Chips Rafferty's house- others said it was Rafferty's rules - a fine colonial residence with remnants back to the mid-1800s, we picked up the ferry again back to Church Point.

Windblown and fresh faced we headed for the cars and the easy return to Oatley. It was a very good, robust days outing. [Report by Leader Julian Sheen]

### SYDNEY OBSERVATORY FIELD DAY - 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY

Twenty-eight people took part in this event originally scheduled for March 3<sup>rd</sup> but postponed because of rain.

Unfortunately, it was cloudy so a view of the night sky was not possible, but there was much entertainment to be had in spite of the cloud cover. There were two short 3D films about Mars and the Universe, indicating the comparative sizes of planets and stars near us.

There was a very interesting viewing of the curved planetarium with timed movement of the stars, and various constellations. We saw the pattern of stars that were over our head at that time, but the clouds disappointed our hopes of viewing Saturn, Mars, and Jupiter. We then proceeded up to the old telescope, where we viewed the inverted and back-to-front image of the Balmain clock, and then moved over to the newer telescope, where the roof was opened briefly, but then shut because of light rain.

There is a very interesting little museum with various old timepieces, and telescopes, and we examined them outside the more formal presentations.

At the conclusion, some partook of refreshments nearby, before returning by train. In all it was a very entertaining evening. [Report by Leader Alison Gilroy]

### OATLEY RAILWAY STATION UPGRADE



The proposed upgrade was on public display for a month until 12<sup>th</sup> May. The plan includes construction of a new lift and stair access from Oatley Pde and Mulga Rd [as envisaged here], new forecourts, more accessible

for parking, taxis and buses. <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/>

A study of the plan by [Biosis](http://www.biosis.com.au) concluded that the overall impact on native flora and fauna would be low, unlikely to result in a significant impact on threatened species, populations, or communities, and that additional approvals would not be required. [www.transport.nsw.gov.au/assessmentpdf](http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/assessmentpdf)

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [cnr. of Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

## COMING EVENTS

**May 26<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with Gary Schoer speaking on Red Rocks Blooming: Wildflowers in the Pilbara & beyond.**

**May 31<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day to Kurnell.** Meet at 9 am at Kurnell, end of Captain Cook Drive near the entrance gate to Botany Bay NP. We will consolidate cars and drive to Cape Solander. From there it is an easy 4-5km return walk to Cape Baily. We will stop at various locations to observe whales and take in the scenery. If using public transport, a bus is available by route 987 from Cronulla station leaving at 8:18am and goes to the meeting point. Wear solid shoes; bring lunch, water, and binoculars (if available). **Leader: Graham Fry** – ☎ 9580 6621

**June 13<sup>th</sup> (Fri) O.F.F. Celebration Dinner at the Gardens on Forest at 7pm.** [See the note above.]

**June 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with Nell Schofield speaking on *Our Land Our Water Our Future*; and introducing two movies on the effects of coal mining and coal seam gas extraction [see 2\* notes below].**

**June 28<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day, Hoddle Track to Foxground viewpoint.** **Leader: Graham Lalchere** - ☎9580 3107

**July 28<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with Rodger Robertson speaking on Travelling the Silk Road**

**Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) Field day to Blue Track (near ANSTO, Lucas Heights).** **Leader J Cockayne** ☎ 9570 8559

## MARINE SANCTUARIES THREATENED

The [Nature Conservation Council](#) [NCC] is concerned that the marine parks protecting our most incredible ocean animals—turtles, weedy sea dragons, and schools of big fish are under fire from the governments, and piece by piece, protections are being eroded. NCC stated that in the face of the biggest rollback of marine protection Australia has seen,



they are launching a major new initiative to safeguard the future of our Marine Parks. We can become a friend of our [favourite in](#)

[this initiative to protect our marine parks.](#)

## COAL SEAM GAS [CSG]

The world is hunting for new sources of power generation not reliant on fossil fuel. While that search proceeds, gas is gradually replacing coal as our 'bridging fuel'. The mining industry is pursuing a vigorous campaign to expand CSG mining allegedly in the national interest, but [research suggests](#) that CSG may be hardly less environmentally damaging than coal.

[Nell Schofield\\*](#) is speaking to the [BMCS](#) on 1<sup>st</sup> June and to our meeting on 28<sup>th</sup>. Nell is the Sydney Campaign Coordinator with [Lock The Gate](#), and is currently working with several other environmental groups including the [Nature Conservation Council](#) and [Our Land Our Water Our Future](#) to get policy reform that protects land and water resources in NSW before next year's state election.

## CLEARING UP THE CLIMATE DEBATE

The [Conversation](#), a well-regarded academic publication notes that the majority of the world's climate scientists agree [climate change is happening](#) and that there is clear evidence of human contribution to the change. Despite the scientific consensus, Australia is still deeply divided about what, (if anything) should be done about it. Australia's science community notes that some of the media are consistently distorting the facts of the matter.

[theconversation.com/clearing-up-the-climate-debate](http://theconversation.com/clearing-up-the-climate-debate)

## O.F.F. CELEBRATION DINNER

**Our Dinner will be on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June 7-10pm at *The Gardens on Forest*, 764 Forest Rd Peakhurst. \$55.00 p/p. Payment in full is due at the May 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting. You may pay by instalments up until then. Please check menu selection at Monday Meetings.**

**Our grand raffle will be held at the Dinner. Further items will be gratefully received at meetings, at Sue's home or picked up from your home. Please check your cupboards for any unwanted gifts you may like to donate. Thank you.**

[Contact Sue Howard ☎ 9579 1718 for payment, menu details, and raffle gifts, if you are unavailable to attend meetings].

## \*OUR JUNE 23<sup>RD</sup> MEETING

Instead of the scheduled topic of Travels in Peru and Bolivia, it will now be a movie night. Our President, Graham Lalchere, attending a recent NPA meeting at Sutherland Environment Centre acquired copies of two new Australian movies from the *Lock the Gate Alliance* on the effects of coal mining and coal seam gas extraction. They are *Undermining Australia: Coal versus Communities*, and *Fractured Country: An Unconventional Invasion* (coal seam gas mining).

The movies will be introduced by Nell Schofield from *Lock the Gate*. Nell was going to speak about *Our Land Our Water Our Future* [OLOWOF] at the May meeting after Gary Schoer's presentation, but it seemed more appropriate that she also take us through the movies relevant to the many concerns about coal mining and coal seam gas. The two ground breaking ½ hour documentaries [if time permits] feature the personal stories of Australians whose lives have been changed forever, and their courageous efforts to protect the country we love.

## FOR NOTING

**Australia's first Repair Café** opened on 14<sup>th</sup> May at The Bower, 34/142 Addison Rd Marrickville with experts free to help you make repairs to any household broken items. More at: [repaircafe.org/about-repair-cafe/gm@bower.org.au](http://repaircafe.org/about-repair-cafe/gm@bower.org.au)

**Myles Dunphy Streamwatch**, next meets 9am on Tues May 27<sup>th</sup>. Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎0425 291 879.

**Oatley Heritage & Historical Society** Next meeting will be on May 30<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 10.30 am at the Oatley RSL, with Jack Gray speaking about his early days in Oatley. [Sorry about the error last time] [www.oatleyhistory.org.au](http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au)

**Urban Bushland a Refuge for Geckos**, a scientific paper by Matthew Mo has been published by the [Australian Zoologist](#). More details at [off.oatleypark.com/](http://off.oatleypark.com/)

**Wildlife Photographer of the Year Exhibition** *Australian Museum until 1<sup>st</sup> June, 9.30am – 5.00pm.* See 100 powerful images selected from more than 40,000 entries worldwide and discover the amazing world we live in. See curious lions, fighting vultures, dancing dolphins and baby crocodiles playing with their mother. [australianmuseum.net.au/](http://australianmuseum.net.au/)



"NO PLASTIC BAGS, PLEASE. I DON'T WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO GLOBAL WARMING!"



# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 6/14

June/July

### VAL BOYAN

**Sadly we note Valerie Joyce Boyan died on 11<sup>th</sup> June. Val was a very loyal and active member of OFF for 45 years, served on the committee for a record 33, was Field Officer for 12 and president in 1989-90. Val is remembered by many for her craft skills, and her untiring work raising money for the President's Fund. The funeral will be at 2.30pm Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June at West Chapel, Woronora Crematorium Sutherland. OFF members are welcome to attend.**

### GOVERNMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Colong Foundation is concerned with environmental policies of the Federal Government. It noted decisions to:

a) abolish the Climate Commission, b) appoint a climate change sceptic to head the renewable energy review, c) revoke the World Heritage listing for 74,000ha of Tasmanian forests, d) overturn a ban on cattle grazing in Victoria's Alpine National Park, e) scrap the COAG Standing Council on Environment and Water, and f) approve the world's largest coal port in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. [www.colongwilderness.org.au/bulletin\\_254](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/bulletin_254)



### SIGNIFICANCE FOR WORLD HERITAGE

[BMCS Hut News](#) notes that revoking the World Heritage listing of parts of the Tasmanian Forests is a crucial moment for World Heritage Areas globally. If the Australian Government is successful in removing the listing to allow for industrial exploitation, it sets a chilling international precedent.

Tasmania has the tallest flowering trees on Earth. In 2013, after decades of community campaigning, large tracts of forest were added to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Now, less than a year later, they are in danger of being destroyed by logging and firebombing.

[www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/) & [www.abc.net.au/news](http://www.abc.net.au/news)

Peter Hitchcock, a consultant who advised on last year's world heritage extension, described the government's application as "overly brief, inaccurate and quite misleading". He said the fundamental claim in the government's application that the areas to be removed had been significantly degraded by logging "seriously misrepresents the proposed de-listings because these elements are only a minor part [of the area proposed]".

### GOLD MINES

With the current fierce debate about coal mining and its polluting problems, it is noteworthy that there are similar problems with gold mines. As an example, the famous Mount Morgan gold-copper mine beginning in 1882 generated extraordinary wealth, but has left Queensland and Australia with a hideous polluting legacy.

Wealth continued to flow from the mine over the years, and its pollution problems were consistently ignored. In 1927, after a major fire, the company went into liquidation, but in 1933, it became an open cut mine remaining so until 1982.

>

In 1990, the Queensland Government took over ownership and responsibility for the site – by then notorious for its massive environmental pollution.

Recently some works have been undertaken to try to reduce the pollution, including seepage interception from leaking waste rock dumps, and a water treatment plant for the ten billion litres of highly acidic water accumulating in the open cut. The works have helped to reduce the pollution partially, but the burden remains intense, and there is a long way to go to restore the area to normal health, costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

[mines.industry.qld.gov.au/safety-and-health/](http://mines.industry.qld.gov.au/safety-and-health/) & <http://www.abc.net.au/>

### MIGRATORY SHOREBIRDS

*NSW Environment and Heritage* has an online video on the migratory shorebirds in Botany Bay. These birds were the focus of the OFF outing in March led by Debbie Andrew and reported in our April edition. See the video at

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp).

Shorebird Migration will be a theme of the [Australasian Bird Fair](#) on 25-26<sup>th</sup> Oct. at Newington Armory, Jamison St Sydney Olympic Park.

### RAIN FORESTS

Covering less than 2% of the Earth's total surface area, the world's rainforests are home to 50% of all plants and animals. Rainforests can be found on every continent, except Antarctica. They are threatened by unsustainable agricultural and logging practices, the constant demand for timber, and clear agriculture land.

Sustainable logging and harvesting, rather than clear-



cutting are among the strategies key to halting rain forest loss. If managed properly, the rainforest can provide the world's need for these natural resources on a perpetual basis. Originally, there was

15.5 million km<sup>2</sup> of tropical rainforest worldwide, but only 6 million remain. If current deforestation rates continue, these critical habitats could disappear from the planet within the next hundred years. <http://www.nature.org/>

### MAULES CREEK MINING

The Maules Creek Community Council [MCCC] notes that the Leard State Forest and surrounding farmlands, near Narrabri, are threatened by proposals for three new or expanded open-cut coalmines. Together they will form a mega mine-complex that will clear at least 5,000ha of land and produce 23 million tonnes of coal each year. It is estimated that the mines will collectively result in 18,000 tonnes of dust landing on adjoining farmland. The mines represent an enormous threat to the critically endangered forest, the health of the local community, and the future of our climate. The forest is home to the Koala and the Masked Owl and the farmland of Maules Ck to the north is productive grazing country on the rich, deep soils of the northern Liverpool Plains. Conservation and farming have reached a kind of equilibrium here that will be destroyed by open-cut coal mining. Our quiet rural community will be transformed into a gigantic industrial zone.

<http://www.maulescreek.org/>

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [cnr. of Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** with **Nell Schofield** speaking on *Our Land Our Water Our Future*, and introducing two movies on the effects of coal mining and coal seam gas extraction. [See note below\*]

**June 28<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day, Hoddle Track to Foxground viewpoint.** Meet 10 am at Saddleback Mountain Lookout, Hoddles Rd Kiama. Take 1<sup>st</sup> exit left into Kiama after Bombo station, Gipps St, go through Kiama, over railway, and right at High School onto Saddleback Mountain Road. Turn left onto Hoddles Rd and go to the end. Approx 1½ hrs driving from Oatley and 4 hrs walking. After views from the lookouts, we follow the steep and at times slippery fire trail to a rainforest track along the lower edge of the Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, and finish rising through heath on a bush track to a splendid view of Foxground. Bring solid shoes, walking poles (opt), morning tea, lunch, and water. **Leader: Graham Lalchere** - ☎9580 3107 📞 0430 968 260

**July 28<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** with **Rodger Robertson** speaking on *Travelling the Silk Road*

**Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) Field day to Blue Track** (near ANSTO, Lucas Heights). **Leader J Cockayne** ☎ 9570 8559

**Aug 25<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** - with **Leroy Gonsalves** speaking on Microbats taking on mosquitoes

**Aug 30<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day to Sphinx & Bobbin Head wildflower stroll,** **Leader: Alan Fairley** ☎ - 9570 8332

**Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** with **Chris Lloyd** speaking on *The Changing Ecology of the Georges River & Powerful Owls* and **Oct 9-11<sup>th</sup> Weekend at Capertee National Park.** **Leader: Debbie Andrew** ☎ 9570

## RED ROCKS BLOOMING

At our May 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, Gary Schoer delivered yet another tantalising presentation entitled *Red Rocks Blooming - Wildflowers in the Pilbara and Beyond*. Our sense of the colours was enhanced when, half way through the slide show, our technical officer corrected a projector cable malfunction, and we were presented with beautiful shades of red (instead of the vibrant blue until then).

Gary took us on a virtual tour from the dinosaur region of [Riversleigh](#) in northwest Queensland, and via the Kimberleys to the majestic [Pilbara region](#) of WA and beyond. His three month tour followed the rains that stimulated a flush of wildflowers best seen travelling from north to south.

Gary is an accomplished photographer with an eye for detail. He captured the unique beauty of the desert landscape resplendent with blue-sky, red mountains, and straw-coloured spinifex grass interspersed with Sturts desert pea, Ptilotus, Solanums, and many more WA wonders.

Wildlife encountered on the trip were dugongs in Shark Bay, humpback whales off Coral Bay, crocodiles and [perentie](#), and a myriad of birds ranging from flocks of budgerigars to bustards and finches.

Gary met up with his "skin brother" (a distant Aboriginal relative) along the trail and met a female aboriginal artist who had decorated roofs on Paris museums.

I think many in the audience of 40 people left the meeting with a desire to place the Pilbara and Beyond on their "to do list." [Notes by Program Officer Matt Alison]

## OUR JUNE 23<sup>rd</sup> MEETING\*

The program change has Nell Schofield, from [Lock the Gate Alliance](#) and [OLOWOF](#) as our speaker.

Coalitions of community groups across Australia are uniting to protect our common heritage - land, water, and future - from reckless coal and gas expansions.

## CELEBRATORY DINNER

A happy evening was had by those who attended the dinner at [Gardens on Forest](#) on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June. The participants declared the evening a great success. The meal was most enjoyable, the setting charming and relaxed, with the staff most attentive. The surprise musical interlude with vocals from Trevor Revis was enjoyed by all.

Thanks to all who donated prizes. The raffle raised \$189 for the President's Fund. [Note by Sue Howard, the event organiser]

## OUR HYPERLINKS

OFF News in its printed form has just two pages, but the web version has many more. All the underlined sections (and most of the pictures) are hyperlinked. These link directly to the Internet and expand on the precise matter being discussed. When you open the website version on your computer, try clicking the mouse on [an underlined spot](#) or on a [picture](#) to see what happens. We hope that this may encourage print recipients to turn to the web version, and coincidentally [help save postage and paper!](#)

## KURNELL WALK - 31<sup>st</sup> MAY

Fourteen (including three new members) turned up to see migrating humpback whales and enjoy the coastal heathland. The observation platform at Cape Solander was still under renovation although the official whale-watching season commenced that weekend.

By the start of our walk, the forecast showers had come and gone, leaving in their wake sparkling shrubs and spiders' webs. We saw some whales but as it was the start of the season, it is not surprising there were fewer than on some



previous OFF whale-watching walks. Fortunately, much of the lovely coastal heath was in flower (the warm weather convincing plants that spring has sprung!) with particularly good displays of banksias (3 species), darwinias, peas, and wattles. Such an abundance of flowers

naturally attracted birds, particularly New Holland Honeyeaters that were everywhere. Some less common species seen were a Peregrine Falcon and a Swamp Harrier, and a flock of about 20 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos feasting on banksia fruits.

The group enjoyed the day and marvelled how lucky we are to have such delightful parks so close to the city; we certainly are the lucky country. [Report by Graham Fry, walk leader]

## FOR NOTING

**Australasian Bird Fair** will be the first large-scale bird and wildlife event of its kind. Oct 25-6 at Sydney Olympic Park. [www.birdfair.com.au/australasian-bird-fair-venue/](http://www.birdfair.com.au/australasian-bird-fair-venue/)

**International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN]** is holding the World Parks Congress at Sydney Olympic Park in Nov. [worldparkscongress.org/news/](http://worldparkscongress.org/news/)

**Myles Dunphy Streamwatch**, 9am on Tues June 24<sup>th</sup> Sharyn ☎95791262, Heather 📞 0425291 879. [See Dairy Creek Rubbish audit](#)

**National Parks Association [SSB]** newsletter has very interesting information <http://tinyurl.com/m3x7bsb>

**Rockdale Opera Company** is operating again after 3 years. >[Pirates of Penzance](#) late June ☎1300306776





### 2014 MAY BE THE WARMEST YEAR EVER

Our exceptionally warm weather was egged on by an emerging El Nino in the tropical Pacific. Europe, Central Asia, Russia, Japan, Australia, Southern Africa, Brazil, Eastern Canada, and Western North America were warmer than normal last month. Besides shifting weather patterns worldwide, the extra El Nino-fuelled ocean warmth is supercharging the Earth's temperature. This could help make 2014 the warmest year ever recorded. El Nino's effects should peak by December and could continue into early 2015. [giz.com/147455/el-nino-may-make-2014-the-worlds-hottest-year-yet/](http://gizmodo.com/147455/el-nino-may-make-2014-the-worlds-hottest-year-yet/)

### KOALAS DISCUSSED IN CANBERRA

*Friends of the Koala* note that the state government has approved the proposed western route of the Pacific Highway's Ballina to Woolgoolga duplication to pass through the middle of the region's koala colony in the Blackwall Ranges. The Koala Carers thought they had the support of Ballina Council in asking the government to reroute the road to the east of the town; but Council decided against the alternative proposal. Now, because of the potential impact on koalas, the federal environment minister Greg Hunt must decide. [www.echo.net.au/2014/07/koala-carers](http://www.echo.net.au/2014/07/koala-carers)



### PEAK HOUR TRAFFIC

At least one in three drivers who commute to work during peak periods could significantly reduce traffic congestion by choosing a different time to travel, according to a University of Sydney [Business School survey](#). In Sydney, the number of peak hour drivers who said they could leave home at a different time to avoid traffic congestion was one in four.



The study concluded that a peak period charge of around five cents p/km on major roads could encourage up to 35% of drivers to travel at a different time, or shift to public transport. "A fall of about 6% of peak hour trips would make a significant difference to levels of congestion."

<http://sydney.edu.au/business/>

### CONSERVATION DINGO

Australia's very first conservation dingo is training for action at [Lithgow's Secret Creek Sanctuary](#). Fred, a one-year-old purebred dingo, is to become a pest control dog, and is showing a lot of promise in his initial training.

"The dingo is a natural enemy of foxes and cats," Secret Creek owner Trevor Evans said. "This gives the dingo an edge over more domesticated dogs in trying to detect feral pest animals." Fred is set to be the first of many conservation canines, with Secret Creek working to help create one of Australia's first conservation dog foundations. The new Australian Conservation K-9's Society, founded by Australian Ecosystems Foundation Inc. (AEFI), is designed to promote and facilitate the use of dogs in the conservation field to help in locating endangered species, finding pest animals and preserving the natural environment. <http://www.lithgowmercury.com.au/>

### SYLVAN GROVE NATIVE GARDEN VISIT

The East Hills Group of the Australian Plants Society has invited Oatley Flora and Fauna members to join them on a spring visit to [Sylvan Grove Native Garden](#), Picnic Point, on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September.

Sylvan Grove Native Garden was established in 1964 and is now under the authority of the Bankstown City Council and the Georges River Parkland Trust. This 1.5ha bushland area features the richly diverse flora of a typical Hawkesbury Sandstone outcrop while the Dry Rainforest forms a canopy over the fern understorey. There are over 1500 native plants there, including many orchids that bloom spectacularly in spring. [easthills.austplants.com.au/](http://easthills.austplants.com.au/). More details in next issue of OFF News

### OUR PARKS UNDER SERIOUS THREAT

The Colong Foundation notes that the Coalition parties are attempting to wreck our national parks. The Federal Government apparently considers that Australia has too many parks, and the NSW Government has put national parks on trial. The Game Council has been abolished, hunting of feral animals occurs in 12 national parks, and in 358 state forests, including Newnes and [Ben Bullen State Forest](#). Shooting in parks is subject to a three-year trial. In July 2016, the Natural Resources Commission will report on this trial, and it is likely to find in favour of hunting in parks. Depending on which party wins the NSW election in March 2015, hunting could then be allowed in up to 75 parks as previously announced under the Government's deal with the Shooters and Fishers Party. See more at [www.colongwilderness.org.au/news/2014/national-parks-trial](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/news/2014/national-parks-trial)

### NATIONAL TREE DAY: SUN 27<sup>TH</sup> JULY

This is Australia's biggest community nature-care event that aims to inspire, educate, and recruit carers for our land and to encourage committed environmental custodians. OFF members are encouraged to participate in these events, and to promote OFF activities in their area.

Hurstville [HCC] and Kogarah [KCC] Councils have events. HCC is hosting a native plant giveaway at Olds Park, next to Penshurst Branch Library in Forest Rd, from 8am to 2pm. To receive two free native plants, local residents just need to present their rates notice, and a small carry bag for the plants. In addition, there will be tree-planting activity at Riverwood Park (Coleridge and Mary St entrance) 9am to 1pm. Tools will be supplied. For information, contact HCC ☎ 9330 6222. KCC is hosting an event next to the playground in Poulton Park (corner of Morshead Dr and Rickard Rd, Connells Point). Come along from 9 - 11am to do something positive for the environment and reconnect with nature! Gloves and drinks will be provided. There will also be a Plant Giveaway on Sat 26<sup>th</sup> and Sun 27<sup>th</sup> July from 8am to 3pm at KCC Works Depot, 78 Planthurst Rd, Carlton. Residents who bring their Kogarah rates notices can collect two trees, shrubs, or perennials; stock is limited. For more information, contact KCC's Coordinator Parks and Recreation ☎ 9330 9476.

### DONATION TO LOCK GATE ALLIANCE

Following the audience's enthusiastic response to Nell Schofield's presentation on the problems relating to the dramatic expansion of coal mining and coal seam gas extraction, the OFF committee has donated \$250 to the Lock the Gate Alliance.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 28<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with Rodger Robertson speaking on Travelling the Silk Road**  
**Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) Field day to Blue track.** The Blue walk will commence across the road from the ANSTO car park (Rutherford Ave) off New Illawarra Rd. We will gather there and cross the road together as a group. It is approximately 2.6 kms long with reasonable gradients, although there is a long decent and ascent to the creek. Bring sturdy shoes for walking, morning tea, and lunch. **Leader J Cockayne** ☎9570 8559  
**Aug 25<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** - with the speaker to be announced. Unfortunately, **Leroy Gonsalves**, the scheduled speaker will not be able to speak on Microbats on this occasion.  
**Aug 30<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day to Sphinx & Bobbin Head wildflower stroll**, Leader: **Alan Fairley** ☎9570 8332  
**Sept 10<sup>th</sup> (Wed) Spring visit to Sylvan Grove Native Garden** [See note above.]  
**Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with Chris Lloyd speaking on The Changing Ecology of the Georges River & Powerful Owls**  
**Oct 10 -12<sup>th</sup> Weekend at Capertee National Park:** Numbers have already booked for the homestead and cottage. If you want to book, please do so quickly, and indicate if you wish to stay over Sun night 12<sup>th</sup> Oct. Contact **Liz Cameron** ☎9580 6621 or **Leader: Debbie Andrew** ☎9570 2695 [see more below\*]

### COAL AND GAS PROBLEMS

Our June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting was attended by more than 80 members and guests and featured film star, now environmental campaigner, Nell Schofield. Nell may be best known for her lead role in the Aussie cult classic *Puberty Blues* and later as a TV presenter with CNN, Channel 9, ABC, and Showtime.

Sydney Campaign Coordinator with [Lock the Gate Alliance](#), Nell spoke about problems communities are facing under siege from coal and gas companies, and about the coalition of community groups uniting to protect land, water, and future from reckless mining expansions. The coalition's primary goal is to ensure policy reform to protect land and water resources before the next elections.

Nell works with other the environmental groups, including the [Nature Conservation Council](#) and [Our Land Our Water Our Future](#), and speaks at a number of group meetings.

[Two documentaries](#) from Lock the Gate Alliance were shown. They were a) *Undermining Australia: Coal Versus Community*, & b) *Fractured Country: An Unconventional Invasion* [on CSG]. [Report from Matt Allison - OFF Program Officer]

### HODDLIES TRACK FIELD DAY 28<sup>th</sup> June

In the 1830s Robert Hoddle, assistant surveyor under Surveyor General John Oxley, was charged with finding a route from the Southern Highlands to Kiama so that agricultural produce could be shipped to Sydney. The walking track from Saddleback Mountain Lookout to the lower edge of Barren Grounds Nature Reserve is a remnant of that route, now derelict after a better way over the escarpment was found.

On Sat 28<sup>th</sup> June, under clear sunny skies 14 walkers assembled at 10am at the lookout at the end of Hoddles Road to tackle this steep, sometimes slippery track. We were rewarded with magnificent views up and down the coast along the track and at its end. The first and steepest portion was on fire trails, while the second portion flattened somewhat as the track wound along the perimeter of Noorinan Mountain in Barren Grounds. On looking closely, we could see the over-grown formation that had been formed to allow access, probably for pack animals. Nature has reclaimed much of it now, with the rocks covered in moss and lichen and re-growth popping up on the unused parts. This section was also over-looked by impressive cliffs and interesting rock formations, and we marvelled at the effort that must have gone into making the track.

The early portion of the track led through patches of sub-tropical rainforest containing Sassafrass and Lillypilly trees, while the later sections in Barren Grounds Nature Reserve passed through beautiful rainforest with Coachwoods and lianas. At the very last section, we climbed up into quite different vegetation with Grass Trees, Banksias and other heath species. These forests also contain many birds most of which we could only hear, not see. Lyrebirds, which are now in their breeding season, were very vocal, and Lesley alone was privileged to see one. Other birds seen were



Brown Gerygones, Topknot Pigeons, and Red-browed finches. Finally, near the end of the walk we saw a Wedge-tailed Eagle harassed by a suicidal Grey Goshawk.

At the very end, we lunched on a large rock overlooking Foxground, with brilliant views and the ocean in the background. We could also see the lookout where we started. We then returned the way we came, again enjoying the landscape and panoramas, so different in the afternoon light. As we arrived back at the lookout, the wind sprang up, clouds arrived, and we appreciated the timing of our splendid walk. [Report by Graham Lalchere, walk leader.]

### \*O.F.F. CAPERTEE WEEKEND, 10- 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

The [Capertee National Park](#) is situated in the picturesque Capertee Valley north-west of Lithgow. It protects poorly reserved temperate eucalypt woodlands, and is renowned for its woodland birds, including the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater, and unique and interesting flora.

The Capertee River flows through the national park immediately adjacent to the Port Macquarie homestead and cottage. Activities undertaken over the OFF weekend are likely to include some easy graded walking along the Capertee River and Ulumbra Creek, bird watching, plant spotting, spotlighting for nocturnal mammals and birds, micro-bat trapping, possibly some frog searching, and perhaps swimming.

### FOR NOTING

**Australian Plant Society** [APS] invitation to OFF members to a Sylvan Grove Garden visit on 10<sup>th</sup> Sept.

**Myles Dunphy Streamwatch**, next meets 9am on Tues 29<sup>th</sup> July. [Info: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎0425 291 879]

**National Tree Day** Sun 27<sup>th</sup> July & **Schools Tree Day** Friday 25<sup>th</sup> [see note page 1]. <http://treeday.planetark.org>

**Native Plants Hassans Walls Reserve** This 160 page book, on sale for \$20, has 870 colour photos, 390 featured Wildflowers, Orchids, Grasses, Rushes, Sedges, Eucalypts, Ferns, Liverworts and Mosses, and a sample of 40 Fungi and Lichens. Details on the launch in Lithgow on 24<sup>th</sup> July from [suzalol2@bigpond.com](mailto:suzalol2@bigpond.com) or ☎0417899796.





### WATTLE DAY 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, patriotic Australians in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney formed associations to promote wattle as a national emblem and to advocate the recognition of a National Wattle Day. The first Wattle Day celebrations took place in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 1910.



Wattle Day enthusiasm soon spread to the other states and reached a peak during World War I, when the day was used as a focus for raising money for Australia's war effort. After the war, Wattle Day continued to be associated with fundraising for charitable causes. Following World War II, the tradition tapered off, and it was not until the 1980s that a campaign to revive Wattle Day began, led by Maria Hitchcock of the Australian Plants Society.

In 1988, the Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) was made Australia's official floral emblem, and in 1992 the Commonwealth Government formally designated 1<sup>st</sup> Sept as National Wattle Day. [www.australiangeographic.com.au/](http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/)

### FAUNA SUPPORT

The [Australian Ecosystems Foundation](http://www.australianecosystems.com.au/) has supported breeding programs for native fauna species beginning at the Secret Creek Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is located on the edge of Lithgow, in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area. The primary focus of the Sanctuary is breeding for the conservation of threatened and declining species of the region.



It also provides an opportunity for public education and engagement; for visitors to see and learn all about regional native species and their habitats, all within a 2 hour drive from Sydney. Tours are only available from Thurs to Sat evenings, as part of a dining experience at Secret Creek Café. Bookings can be made only through Secret Creek Cafe [www.secretcreekcafe.com](http://www.secretcreekcafe.com)

### OATLEY PARK'S FLOWERS IN AUGUST

The August list can be found on our website. An example for this month is this Purple Twining Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*), a twiner with veined leaves and violet pea flowers, commonly scrambling over shrubs or up small trees. <http://off.oatleypark.com/>



### WATTLE

There are over 600 different species of Wattle found all over Australia with shapes varying from low, spreading shrubs to large, upright trees, often called 'Mulga'. Whilst most flower in early spring and summer, there are wattles that bloom all year. [Wattles](http://off.oatleypark.com/) are the most widespread of all Australian plants, some inhabiting the most remote and inhospitable areas, growing in parched sand in the desert under the scorching sun, spiked, hard and leafless. In the rainforest gullies, they have soft feathery foliage with pale golden heads.

### HELP REDUCE ENERGY DEMAND

Appliances left plugged in can add up to 10% of our power bills: an easy way to save is by switching appliances off at the wall. Turn lights off when not required; only run the dishwasher when full, let the machine clean the dishes on its own, and use eco-settings when possible.

If heating a room, use an appropriately sized heater for the area. Place it away from windows, where heat can be lost, and do not heat unoccupied rooms. Make the most out of the sun's natural warmth by opening blinds and curtains during the day, but keep them closed when your heater is on, and in the evenings.

The best way to [save power and money](#) is to research ways to become more energy efficient. By doing your homework, you can become energy wise. Did you know that fridges and freezers use more electricity when they are nearly empty than when they are full? Passing tips to other members of your household may help foster good energy habits.

### ALTERNATIVE ENERGY RESOURCES

In Australia geothermal energy is a natural resource which is not utilised as a form of energy. However there are known and potential locations near the centre of the county in which geothermal energy is detectable. Exploratory geothermal wells have been drilled to test for the presence of high temperature geothermal activity and such high levels were detected. As a result, projects will eventuate in the coming years and more exploration is expected at potential locations.

South Australia has been described as "Australia's hot rock haven" and emission free and renewable energy forms could provide an estimated 6.8% of Australia's base load power needs by 2030. According to an estimate by the Centre for International Economics, Australia has enough geothermal energy to contribute electricity for 450 years.

[Renewable energy in Australia-](#)

### POWERFUL OWLS BREEDING IN THIS AREA

Understanding the habitat requirements of breeding [Powerful Owls](#) (*Ninox strenua*) in Sydney is an important step in improving species management in urban areas. The lower Georges River is under surveillance; a study by Birdlife Australia focusing on the population dynamics, breeding success and requirements of owls in the Greater Sydney Area is in its third year.



In addition, the owls of the lower Georges River are under surveillance for a study led by Chris Lloyd, who is speaking to the Society at our 22<sup>nd</sup> September meeting.

For reasons that are still unknown, the breeding season in 2014 has been later than previous years, with many breeding pairs commencing nesting in July. Two breeding pairs in Oatley and surrounds are leading the charge, having laid eggs in June. In an achievement for the St George area, chicks from these owls have been heard at both sites, and seen in one. According to David Bain of Birdlife Australia, these are the first of the season.

The photograph above is of a juvenile owl at one of the Oatley sites on the day after fledging. [Report by Matt Mo, Bev Pedder, and Peter Hayler].

### COMING EVENTS

**Aug 25th (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting-Gary Schoer speaking on NPA proposal for a Sydney Marine Park.**

**Aug 30<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day** involving the [Sphinx Memorial](#) to **Bobbin Head wildflower stroll in the [Ku ring gai Chase National Park](#)**, walking along Old Bobbin Head Service Track. It will be an easy stroll identifying plants. Weather and energy permitting, we will head down to Bobbin Head for lunch and continue the circuit along Cowan Creek and back up steep 150m to the Sphinx (Total 10 km). Meet 9.30am at National Park gates North Turrumurra. Park outside NP if you wish to avoid entry fee. The drive is about 1hr 20mins from Oatley. Car seats are available. **Leader: Alan Fairley ☎- 9570 8332**

**Sept 10<sup>th</sup> (Wed) Spring visit to [Sylvan Grove Native Garden](#).** meet 10am for a cuppa before the guided walk. Car seats available - phone after 6<sup>th</sup> Sept. **Leader: Liz Cameron ☎ 95806621**

**Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with Chris Lloyd speaking on The Changing ecology of the Georges River & Powerful Owls.**

**Oct10-12<sup>th</sup> (Weekend) Field trip to [Capertee National Park](#):** If you still want to book, please try quickly but there may not be any vacancies. Contact **Leader: Debbie Andrew ☎ 95702695** [Details of meeting arrangements in next OFF News].

**Oct 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45 pm monthly meeting with Jim Vickery speaking on Rainwater Harvesting in Oatley.**

### TALK: TRAVELLING THE SILK ROAD 28<sup>th</sup> July

Rodger Robertson started his talk by exploring the history of Silk and the Silk Road. The name was coined in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century by the uncle of the Red Baron- Ferdinand Von Richthofen.

The Silk Road was a trading route between China and Europe and commenced around 200BC and ending when the sea routes were found around



Africa. The trade included many items not only silk. The talk then went to the 11000km train journey from Beijing to Moscow via the west of China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The wealthy cities of the Silk Road had fallen when the trade stopped and they fell into ruin. However, the Russian conquest in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the rebuilding by the Communists to win over the locals had seen past glories restored. Magnificent and elaborate mosques, minarets, and madrassas are now found all through the old Silk Road route. The talk finished with some impressions on the "Stans" and their people and societies. It was a very favourable impression of three nations who are just like us in their basic desires.

### WALK: BLUE TRACK NEAR ANSTO August 2<sup>nd</sup>

The weather was kind to the 33 early morning risers who participated in this combined OFF and Menai Wildflower Group Field trip. The walk was along the Blue Track adjacent to the ANSTO restricted zone at Lucas Heights. There was an early start to flowering for some of the [Gynea Lilies](#) that decided to show their stunning red petals. Generally, the spring flowers appeared to be getting ready to bloom, and we were pleased to see [Epacris microphylla](#) and some showy wattles in flower.

The walk took us from open forest along Barden Creek to see the King Ferns ([Todea barbarus](#)). There was a wide variety of communities within this reserve including upland swamp with Sword Rush ([Gahnia sieberiana](#)) and coral ferns ([Gleichenia dicarpa](#)). This walk, approx. 2.6km long, was a fairly graded walk which could be lengthened or shortened with the aid of the '[Bardens 'n' Bush](#)' guide, a worthwhile text to use on the day.

More Information regarding this area is available on [Menai Wildflower Group's](#) website. [Report by Leader Jason Cockayne]



*Doryanthes excelsa* - Gynea Lily *Grevillea sericea* - Pink Spider Flower

### FOR NOTING

**Australian Bird Fair** will be the first large-scale bird and wildlife event of its kind on Oct 25-26<sup>th</sup> at Sydney Olympic Park. [www.birdfair.com.au/favicon.ico](http://www.birdfair.com.au/favicon.ico)

**Australian Plant Society** [APS] provides great information about our native flora. Details from the East Hills Group of the Society are available by just clicking the hyperlink. [easthills.austplants.com.au/](http://easthills.austplants.com.au/)

**Myles Dunphy Streamwatch**, next meets 9am on Tues 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept. [Info: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎ 0425 291 879] [Streamwatch-in-Action](#)

**The International Union for Conservation Of Nature** [IUCN] is holding the World Parks Congress at Sydney Olympic Park in November. [IUCN](#)





# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 9/14

Sept/Oct

### WORLD HABITAT DAY 7<sup>th</sup> Oct

The UN has designated the first Monday of October of every year as *World Habitat Day*. First celebrated in 1986, it is now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year. It is a global awareness day to reflect on the state of our towns and cities, everyone's right to adequate shelter, and our responsibility for the future of our own habitats. For more than half a century, most countries have experienced rapid urban growth, urban sprawl, and ever-higher demand for motorized travel, with environmental, social, and economic consequences. More at <http://unhabitat.org/world-habitat-day/>



### IUCN WORLD PARKS CONGRESS

On 12-19<sup>th</sup> November, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Parks Australia, is hosting the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's World Parks Congress at Sydney Olympic Park. It will bring together over 3000 participants from 160 countries to plan for the future of some of the planet's most valuable places - world parks, the cornerstone for biodiversity conservation, and a major contributor to human health.

Held once every ten years, the Congress provides a unique opportunity to bring about change and to help find inspiring solutions for parks, people, and the planet. [www.worldparkscongress.org](http://www.worldparkscongress.org)

### POWERFUL OWLS [POWLS]

As noted in our last edition, the [Powerful Owl Project](#) run by David Bain and Holly Parsons for *Birds-in-Backyards* includes a study of POWLS (*Ninox strenua*) of the Georges River. The Project is gathering data for all the pairs living along the River. [\[Note sightings in Moore Reserve\]](#)



Co-incidentally, the first POWL was found in the Sydney Basin in 1853, apparently from Cabramatta Creek, where the species is still reported. The finding was only a decade after [John Gould](#), father of bird study in Australia, described the species to the Royal Society. [Note from Chris Lloyd, our speaker on Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>]

### OATLEY PARK'S FLOWERS IN SEPTEMBER

The September list on the website has fourteen flowers including this Waxlip Orchid (*Glossodia major*), a mauve-blue ground orchid with a solitary hairy leaf, to be found in open woodland down from the oval. See all 14 at [off.oatleypark.com/](http://off.oatleypark.com/)



### MIGRATORY SHOREBIRDS

There is now an online video on the migratory shorebirds that Deb Andrew has been monitoring in Botany Bay. These birds were the focus of the OFF outing that Deb led in March. The video and additional information on the Endangered Shorebird Community Botany Bay is on [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/).

Shorebird Migration will be a major theme at the Australasian Bird Fair at the Armory in Sydney Olympic Park on 25-26<sup>th</sup> October. [www.birdfair.com.au](http://www.birdfair.com.au)

### DEFENDING ENDANGERED SPECIES

The September [Hut News](#) notes that Deb Andrew, who spoke at BMCS's *Threatened Species Day* event, is involved in the projects to restore habitat for critically endangered [Regent Honeyeaters](#) in Capertee Valley, and [Swift Parrots](#) elsewhere. She has studied [Spotted-tailed Quolls](#) for many years, and seen how competition from feral predators threatens their existence.

### BUSHFIRE PROTECTION PROBLEMS

The NSW Nature Conservation Council [NCC] is concerned that the new rules in NSW allowing people to clear trees and bushland around their homes will threaten thousands of mature trees and hectares of bushland in suburban Sydney.

The new *Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice* allows landowners to clear trees within 10m of their homes, and other vegetation within 50m, without the expert Rural Fire Service approval previously required.

NCC notes, "If everybody exercised their rights under this rule, some parts of Sydney would lose more than 50% of tree canopy, and there will be a radical change the character of entire suburbs."

The vulnerable LGAs include Hurstville, Sutherland, Pittwater, Hornsby, Warringah, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, The Hills, Blacktown, Penrith, Blue Mountains, Liverpool, Camden, and Campbelltown. This rule overrides years of carefully crafted [environmental protections](#) for which we have fought for years.

<http://www.nature.org.au/news/2014/>

### OATLEY LIONS FESTIVAL - 18<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in October, the streets and parks of Oatley are transformed into a sea of stalls, entertainment, rides, and music. Roving entertainment will include the St George Scottish Pipe Band, the Riverwood Squadron Drum Corp, and The Hot Potato Band.



Enjoy a motorbike ride for \$5 with the proceeds going to Children's Cancer Research. Second hand bargains are on offer in the vacant block behind the Oatley RSL. You are encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport, and to hop on the free Festival Courtesy Bus.

OFF runs a stall each year, and is looking for volunteers for the day, or part thereof. Please contact Liz ☎95806621 closer to the time. For more information, see <http://www.oatleylions.org.au/>

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [cnr. of Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at all meetings and excursions.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** with Chris Lloyd speaking on **The Changing Ecology of the Georges River & Powerful Owls**

**Oct 10-12<sup>th</sup> Weekend at Capertee National Park:** Meet at Capertee NP at the [Homestead](#) on Friday. Check in with the caretakers Neville and Doris Eather. Bring your own linen and pillows. If you have any questions please contact **Liz Cameron** ☎9580 6621 or **Leader: Debbie Andrew** ☎[h] 9570 2695 [w] 95856915 📠 0490172501

**Oct 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting** with **Jim Vickery** speaking on **Rainwater harvesting in Oatley**

**Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sun) Field day - Illawarra Fly & Illawarra region.** Maps and directions provided closer to the date. Please indicate interest on the clipboard at next OFF meeting or email [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com). **Leader: Melina Amerasinghe**

**Nov 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting and social supper** with **Shauna Chadlowe** speaking on **Australian Wildlife Conservancy.**

**Nov 29<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day -On Five Ferries** **Leader Jennifer Whaite** ☎9580 7343

**Dec 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas Picnic / BBQ** [Details later]

**Then for 2015, we have Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> AGM, and Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 7.45pm regular monthly meeting.**

### A MARINE RESERVE IN SYDNEY WATERS

The 25<sup>th</sup> August meeting saw a change in speakers. OFF member and NPA stalwart, Gary Schoer presented the case for a Marine Reserve in Sydney waters and the link between no-fishing areas and healthy populations of marine biodiversity. The promotional video "Tale of Three Bays" was shown highlighting the aquatic reserve in Cabbage Tree Bay, Manly. This sanctuary of some 20 ha covers the entire bay, rocky shores and beaches from the southern end of Manly Beach to the Shelly Beach Headland. It provides protection for fish and marine vegetation/habitats with a "no take" policy, while maintaining current access, minimising user conflict, and enhancing enjoyment of the diverse marine environment.

Underwater footage of other "paper marine reserves" in Sydney, that are not formally protected, shows absence of marine life and the need for greater protection. Establishing more marine reserves around Sydney has widespread support (including Oatley MP Mark Coure) but since the last election, the political influence from Shooters and Fishers Party portrays marine sanctuaries as an infringement to personal freedom. The ocean may seem limitless from the surface, but life beneath reveals a completely different story.

[Summary from Matt Allison - Program Officer]

Leroy Gonsalves will be a speaker next year.

### SPHINX & BOBBIN HEAD WILDFLOWER WALK

Predictions of bad weather on 30th Oct kept many away, but six defied the showers to complete the 10 km stroll.

Starting at North Turramurra, we followed the original Bobbin Head Trail 4½ km along the ridge and down to Cowan Creek. Plenty of wildflowers were noted and ticked off from the leader's Top 30 list. Notable were the [Boronia](#), [Eriostemon](#), and [Calytrix](#). We had lunch at the very quiet Bobbin Head marina before walking the narrow track along the shores of Cowan Creek. The wet weather had many side creeks overflowing, but the trees and ferns looked magnificent in the wet. The uncommon [Darwinia procera](#) and [Leionema dentatum](#) were conspicuous. The most strenuous part of the walk was the 1km ascent from the creek to the ridge top, up a series of stairs. The interesting and historical [Sphinx Memorial](#) (carved from sandstone rock in the 1920s) was inspected before we ended our hike and returned to our cars. [Report by Alan Fairley - leader]

### SYLVAN GROVE NATIVE GARDEN

On Wed 10<sup>th</sup> Sept, some seven OFF members and friends accepted the invitation of the East Hills Group of Australian Plants Society (APS) to join them on a visit to Sylvan Grove. The warm sunny morning attracted over 40 people and we were treated to a spectacular display of flowering native plants including long sprays of creamy rock orchids. Jim Mackay, Horticulturist at the Garden, led an informative tour along the gently winding paths through the garden, and the visit concluded with a convivial picnic lunch. We encourage you to visit this overlooked gem in Bankstown. It is open weekdays between 7 am and 3 pm throughout the year and, from mid-August to November, on weekends as well. Admission is free. <http://www.bankstown.nsw.gov.au/>

### RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET [RET]

The Australian Solar Council [ASC] is holding a Public Forum at the Ramsgate RSL 6-8pm Wed, Sept 17<sup>th</sup> to promote the retention of the RET in its original form. The Forum will give representatives of all Federal political parties the chance to state their policy on the RET, and for the public to air their views and ask questions. ASC asks as many as possible to attend. <http://solar.org.au/save-solar/>

### OFF LIBRARY

The Society has purchased a number of books that are available for loan to OFF members. Just ask at the back desk at Monday meetings. Titles include:

*The Biggest Estate on Earth* (Bill Gammage) – investigates the land management of Aborigines.

*A History of the Blue Labyrinth* (Bruce Cameron) - a beautifully produced book with lots of photos and many references to our former Treasurer Harry Whaite.

*Sustainable House* (Michael Mobbs) – what one person has done to be self-sufficient in energy, water, and waste disposal in his Sydney house.

*Sustainable Food* (Michael Mobbs) – the sustainable use of water and energy associated with growing and processing food.

*A Natural for World Heritage* (Geoff Mosley) - the argument for granting World Heritage Listing for Royal National Park.

*The Green Corridors of Southern Sydney* (NPA Southern Sydney) – a DVD outlining the importance of protecting the green areas south of Sydney.

### FOR NOTING

**A**ustralasian Bird Fair at the Armory in Sydney Olympic Park on 25-26<sup>th</sup> October. [www.birdfair.com.au](http://www.birdfair.com.au)

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (📠 0425 291 879).

**M**embership renewal for 2015 can be by direct bank transfer – [more info when the renewal notice is sent out]. New members are welcome. Click here for [details](#).

**O**atley 2015 Calendar [Nature in the Suburbs](#) Retail price \$10 at the Lions Festival. \$8 for members at OFF or OHHS stalls.

**S**peakers: Our Program Officer is looking for interesting speakers on subjects related to flora and fauna for our meetings next year. Please contact Matt ☎ 9570 8271.

**W**alks: Our Field Officer is looking for people to lead interesting walks next year. Contact Graham ☎9580 6621





# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 10/14

Oct/Nov 2014

### PLANNING FOR PEOPLE

The *Community Charter for Good Planning in NSW* lists principles for a better fairer planning system and more accountability. It is a response to widespread community disillusionment with recent planning decisions and developments. It was prepared by a working group of community organisations, and endorsed by over 60 community groups, [including OFF], and by individuals and some Parliamentarians.

The Charter is designed to put the need for good planning on the agenda of voters and candidates. We encourage OFF members to consider endorsing the Charter after reading it and associated information at <http://thecommunitycharter.org>

### CONSERVATION OUR RESPONSIBILITY

OFF News in its 1970 May edition noted that *"in the 200<sup>th</sup> year since Cook's arrival there is a growing awareness of past mistakes. The conservation bandwagon, well supported by worldwide concern over pollution, ill advised planning, and wildlife destruction, is running more smoothly. Since major issues are now receiving attention, it seems that small societies such as ours can serve best by taking an active interest in local problems - land usage, pollution of our waterways, parks, and reserves."*

The 1970s local problems included the battle for the bays along the Oatley section of the Georges River. The natural beauty and environmental values of these waterways and wooded foreshores were severely threatened by the shortsightedness of Hurstville and Kogarah Councils. [See *battle for the bays* in [Being Green](#) by Alan Fairley.]

In view of today's problems, it is interesting to note that in 1970 *The Leader* reported that the Water Board decided sewage overflow should be diverted into Oatley Bay.

### THREATENED SPECIES & PLANNING LAWS

The [Environmental Defender's Office](#) notes that the report commissioned by the [Places You Love Alliance](#), finds that many state and territory laws do not meet the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This is of concern with the move towards 'one-stop-shop' assessment, and approval of developments likely to affect the environment.

The Federal Government's handover of environmental approval powers to the States will wind back 30 years of legal environmental protection, and put at risk Australia's World Heritage Areas such as the Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu and the Tasmanian forests.

<http://www.edonsw.org.au/federalhandover>

### COAL SEAM GAS - GOOD OR BAD

Deciding whether coal seam gas is good or bad is wholly dependent on the individual's definition of the words "good" and "bad". The industry wants to make us believe that coal seam gas is good for Australia, but their claim is the subject of heated debate.

NSW Chief Scientist Mary O'Kane says the technical challenges and risks posed by the coal seam gas industry could be addressed by limiting extraction to areas where geology and land use was appropriate.

The role of scientists, and organisations such as the CSIRO, is to act as honest brokers and to bring some clarity to the debate. Coal seam gas can be used as a source of energy and Australia has vast reserves, but its [unmitigated](#) development can have [environmental](#) and [socio-economic impacts](#) on communities. CSIRO's aim is to inform the community, governments, and industry about the risks and opportunities that stem from developing our gas resources. It is a complex and divisive issue. [theconversation.com/](http://theconversation.com/) & [smh.coal-unintended-consequences](http://smh.coal-unintended-consequences)

### COAL MINE AT CULLEN BULLEN

The [Colong Foundation](#) notes that the [Department of Planning & Environment](#) recently recommended approval of a Coalpac modified open-cut coalmine at Cullen Bullen. It had rejected a larger proposal by the company in 2013. The Gardens of Stone Alliance, opposed to this mine, were surprised and dismayed by the recommendation that it now go to the [Planning Assessment Commission](#) for final determination.

Tara Cameron, spokesperson for the BMCS, states, "Coalpac is now insolvent. It has demonstrated a very poor record of corporate due diligence. "If the government is endorsing Coalpac's current proposal, it is basically saying that mines should be approved irrespective of any corporate record and at any social or environmental cost." [www.colongwilderness.org.au/](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/)

### INCREASING RENEWABLE ENERGY USE

As international agreements fail to address increasing greenhouse gas emissions, the way is opening for renewable energy to be perceived differently.

An article published in the science journal [Nature](#) notes that China, the world's largest power producer and source of carbon emissions through burning coal, is expanding its renewable-energy systems faster than its fossil-fuel and nuclear power. China is now leading the world in the production and use of wind turbines, solar-photovoltaic cells, and smart-grid technologies. It is generating almost as much water, wind and solar energy as all of France and Germany's power plants combined. By boosting markets in water, wind and solar power, it is driving down costs and accelerating the uptake of renewable energy. It is consequently contributing more than any other country to addressing greenhouse gas issues. It may also contribute to reducing our coal exports.

### AUSSIE BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 20-26<sup>TH</sup> OCT

Join the inaugural *Aussie Backyard Bird Count* organised by Birdlife Australia where you are invited to go to your local patch, to count the birds, preferably for about 20 minutes, and to record the information. The app is now available for download on iphones and android devices. Just search for 'Aussie Bird Count'. You can also enter data on the website:

<http://www.aussiebirdcount.org.au>



### NOMINATIONS FOR COMMUNITY AWARDS

OFF nominated two people for awards this year, one for Hurstville City Council Volunteer Recognition and one for the St George Community Award.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St Oatley [corner Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with Jim Vickery speaking on Rainwater Harvesting in Oatley
- Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sun) Field day: Illawarra Fly & Illawarra region. Meet in [Robertson](#) at the Pie Shop for morning tea at 9.30 am. Estimated travel time 1½ hours. If travelling on Hume Hwy, turn off at Mittagong to Bowral, if on Princes Hwy turn off at Albion Park to join the [Illawarra Hwy](#) [A48]. We will visit nearby [Illawarra Fly](#) around 2pm. Maps and directions will be provided closer to the date. Need to have firm numbers by 28<sup>th</sup> Oct to get the discount rate of \$18 Adults & Seniors (normal \$25/\$21) Child \$8. Leader: **Melina Amerasinghe**
- Nov 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting and social supper with Shauna Chadlowe speaking on Australian Wildlife Conservancy.
- Nov 29<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day on Five Ferries. Leader Jennifer Whaite ☎9580 7343
- Dec 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas Picnic / BBQ [Details later]
- Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) AGM followed by members' photos and a social supper
- Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting and social supper.

## GEORGES RIVER AND POWERFUL OWLS

The 22<sup>nd</sup> September meeting was exceptional with Chris Lloyd, Powerful Owl (POWL) study co-ordinator for the Georges River, giving an educational and thoroughly entertaining presentation on the changing ecology of Georges River and its relation to POWLS.

Chris provided so much interesting detail dating back 10,000 years when the climate and ecology around the Sydney Basin was completely different to present day conditions. Aborigines hunted the ringtail possum, the favoured prey of POWLS, thus reducing available food for their sustained population.

When Europeans arrived, the tall forests of turpentine and blackbutt around the Georges were felled by a thriving timber trade over a century or more. This resulted in loss of habitat and, more importantly, very few suitable nesting holes. POWLS are particularly choosy about the dimensions of nesting holes and only certain large trees are suitable.

Urbanisation again changed the environment, and remnant bushland tended to occupy gullies where housing was not suitable. Lack of bushfires changed the floristics leading to an increase in such trees as pittosporum and privet – a favoured habitat for ringtail possums. The advent of bush regeneration and the popular movement of planting of native plants provided a ready supply of nectar for ringtails and they thrived.

The extensive bush fires of 1994 that burnt out the Royal National Park correlated with the first sightings of POWLS on the Georges River. The POWLS found the ringtails delicious and plentiful and have since settled in to delight local nature lovers. [Report by Matt Allison]

CAPERTEE NP WEEKEND – OCT 10 - 12<sup>TH</sup>

Fourteen headed to Capertee NP for the weekend. The Valley looked stunning as usual and the Park was picturesque with its Eastern Grey Kangaroos and Wallaroos feeding on the river flats, many with pouch young. Common Wombats and young were seen just below the homestead. The River was flowing and birdsong filled the air with many summer migrants - the Rufous Whistler, Rainbow Beeater, Rufous Songlark, and Cicadabirds about. The Double-barred Finch, Superb Blue Wren, King Parrots, Pied Butcherbird and White-winged Choughs were seen about the homestead and the cheery Willie Wagtails sang enthusiastically, day and night, to the discomfort of some guests.

Graham Fry provided us with some close encounters of the feathered kind, seeing Willie Wagtail, Pied Butcherbird, and White-plumed Honeyeater in the hand. Two nights trapping with harp traps for microbats produced over fifty individuals of five species, including the Eastern Free-tail Bat (*Mormopterus ridei*), a new species recorded for the Capertee NP. [A full list of fauna observed will soon be on the [OFF](#) and [NPWS Wildlife Atlas](#) websites].

We had a beautiful walk along the Ulumbra Creek with its crystal pools and elfin glades among the River Oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*) with some terrific views of two large Red-bellied Black Snakes, Eastern Long-necked Turtle (formerly Tortoise) and the Superb Lyrebird. Sharyn Cullis did some invertebrate sampling in the creek, educating us on freshwater aquatic invertebrate life and noted that the invertebrates present indicated high water quality. At a sunset, viewing from the Valley Lookout in the north of the Park, we watched the crimson light fall on the cliffs of Genowlan Point and Black Mountain in adjacent Muggie Murum-ban State Conservation Area, and Graham Lalchere had a close encounter with a grazing wombat. We were all impressed with the quality of the accommodation and gave NPWS full marks for the renovations to the homestead and cottage. We look forward to our next visit. [Report by Leader Debbie Andrew]

## OATLEY PARK FLOWERS IN OCTOBER

The list includes this Flaky-barked Tea-tree (*Leptospermum trinervium*) a medium to spreading shrub with flaky bark. Leaves are narrow elliptic and pointed, but three veins not always prominent. Flowers white, five petalled, often with a red ring.



[See the whole October selection on the website.](#)

## FOR NOTING

**A**ustralasian Bird Fair at the Armory in Sydney Olympic Park on 25-26<sup>th</sup> October. It will be the first large-scale bird and wildlife event of its kind in Australasia. [www.birdfair.com.au](http://www.birdfair.com.au)

**C**ommunity CSG forum on Sun Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>, 11am in Mortdale RSL organised by [Stop CSG Network](#).

**G**eorges River Project: The Australian Government's *Your Community Heritage Program* supported the Georges River project to include additional material about the Georges River in the Dictionary of Sydney in 2014 [dictionaryofsydney.org/contributor/your\\_community\\_heritage\\_grant](http://dictionaryofsydney.org/contributor/your_community_heritage_grant)

**M**igrant Information Day, St George 10am - 1pm Wed 29<sup>th</sup> Oct at Rockdale Town Hall. [community event](#)

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues 28<sup>th</sup> Oct. Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎0425 291 879.

**O**atley 2015 Calendar designed by OFF, features many local natural attractions. [See below and [www.facebook.com/OatleyFloraandFauna](http://www.facebook.com/OatleyFloraandFauna)]

**W**orld Park Congress 12-19<sup>th</sup> Nov at Sydney Olympic Park, - the theme "Parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions", with original approaches for conservation and sustainable development.





### MINES KNOCKED BACK

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] has rejected the application to extend the Coalpac mines near Lithgow, in the environmentally sensitive area adjacent to the Blue Mountains World Heritage area. Advocates for the mines, Energy Australia, told NSW Planning that the mines would help them expand electricity supply and reduce prices, and told the federal government that they wanted to reduce supply and increase prices because of the Renewable Energy Target.

PAC was not convinced that this small coal resource was particularly significant for the electricity market, and considered the economic benefits claimed were outweighed by environmental costs and impacts. [The](#)

[Australia Institute & BMCS](#)

300 hectares of ancient stone pagodas and forest, part of the Gardens of Stone in the Ben Bullen State Forest, have also been spared. Anglo American's Drayton South coalmine has been knocked back by PAC because it is 'not in the public interest'. If approved the open-cut coalmine would have changed the face of local communities in the Hunter.

<http://www.hcec.org.au/aggregator/sources/1?page=1>

### AUSTRALIAN BIODIVERSITY

Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) notes that ours is one of the most important nations on Earth for biodiversity. It is one of only 17 "mega diverse" nations and home to more species than any other developed country. 87% of our mammal species, 93% of reptiles, 94% of frogs and 45% of our bird species are found only in Australia.

Sadly, however, Australia is facing a crisis, with the worst mammal extinction rate in the world. 29 native mammals have become extinct since European settlement, and 1/3 of all mammal extinctions in the last 400 years have occurred in Australia. More than 1,700 species of animals and plants are listed by the Australian Government as being at risk of extinction. Nearly 1/4 of our mammal species and 1/7 of our bird species are listed as threatened. <http://www.australianwildlife.org/>

### ENVIRONMENT versus ECONOMY

The [Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists](#), noting that the community is taking more from the environment than natural systems can replenish, recently issued a report entitled [Blueprint for a Healthy Environment and a Productive Economy](#). This considers the magnitude of the environmental challenges we face. [Ross Gittins](#), commenting on the report, noted that the heated climate-change debate is distracting us from addressing many significant environmental problems.

Air pollution and water pollution controls have helped restore the health of the environment. However, the destruction of native vegetation, over extraction of water from rivers and aquifers, introduction of weeds and pests, stripping soils of carbon and nutrients, and poorly planned urban development, are some of the factors driving the continuing decline in the condition of Australia's natural assets. Related item re [danger of feral cats/](#)

### STATE OF THE CLIMATE - 2014

An interesting item for the climate debate is [State of the Climate-2014](#) - the third in a series of reports from the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO showing further warming of the atmosphere and oceans.

SoC-2014 reports that the change is occurring against the background of high climate variability, but that the signal is clear. Air and ocean temperatures across Australia are now, on average, almost a degree Celsius warmer than they were in 1910, with most of the warming occurring since 1950.



This warming has seen Australia experiencing more warm weather and extreme heat, and fewer cool extremes. There has been an increase in extreme fire weather, and a longer fire season, across large parts of Australia.

Rainfall averaged across all of Australia has slightly increased since 1900. Since 1970, there have been large increases in annual rainfall in the northwest and decreases in the southwest. Autumn and early winter rainfall has mostly been below average in the southeast since 1990.

Atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations continue to rise and continued emissions will cause further warming over this century. Limiting the magnitude of future climate change requires large and sustained net global reductions in greenhouse gases. More at <http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/Climate/> & <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/>

### POWERFUL OWLS WORKSHOP

Chris Lloyd has organised a small workshop for Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup> on the POWLs on the Georges River, and would like to hear from anyone interested in participating. It will involve an outline of what has emerged so far from the project, working through pellet material collected to find the most common prey, going through the observation data for trees used for breeding, roosting, and the associated vegetation and landscape and planning for the next breeding season [if you are interested contact Chris Lloyd <mailto:pezoporos@bigpond.com>]

### SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2015

Our annual trip to Smiggin Holes Chalet will be from Sat 7<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Feb. Costs per night are \$119 double or twin room; \$98 single room, \$48 per child 6-18. We need to book a minimum of 10 rooms but we do not have to finalise until 31<sup>st</sup> Jan and you do not have to stay for all 7 days. For information and bookings, Liz Cameron ☎ 9580 6621 or [lizc@pacific.net.au](mailto:lizc@pacific.net.au)

### 2015 OFF MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members will shortly receive a personal letter from Robin Dickson, our Membership Officer, reminding us that the annual \$25 membership subscription is due by 1<sup>st</sup> January. It is also an appeal for us to update our contact details if they have changed recently.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Nov 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting and social supper.** Please bring a plate. **Shauna Chadlowe** sends her apologies, and will be replaced by Leah Royle, speaking on **Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC)** protecting endangered wildlife, mammals, animals, ecosystems, and biodiversity.
- Nov 29<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day on Five Ferries.** Catch the 9:07AM Rivercat, Circular Quay, wharf five, to Rydalmere; I will meet people on the wharf. We return to the city, walking between ferry stops and catching ferries, about 13 kms of mainly flat walking on paths. I suggest the train leaving Oatley at 8.13am and Mortdale at 8.15; change at Town Hall. If not on Seniors' Card, suggest a Day Pass. **Leader Jennifer Whaite** ☎ 0403921685
- Dec 1<sup>st</sup> (Mon) OFF Picnic in the Park,** our annual Christmas get-together, in Oatley Park at the Steamroller from 5.30pm. **BYO** food, drinks, picnic chairs, table etc. Barbecues if no fire alert. Info Liz Cameron ☎9580 6621.
- Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm Annual General Meeting** with the election of officers followed by members' photo slides and a social supper. Members are encouraged to bring a plate, and to display interesting photos. Twenty is the recommended photo limit! **Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting.**

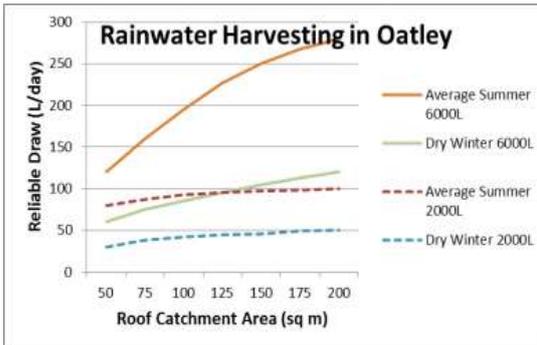
**RAINWATER HARVESTING IN OATLEY**

Jim Vickery, OFF member and retired Environmental Engineer, spoke on this topic at the 27<sup>th</sup> Oct meeting.

Jim is determined to capture as much life-giving rain falling on his roof as possible by storing it in water tanks around his home. This reduces his reliance on town water supply and the erosive impact of excess storm water on our local streams.

He provided guidelines and graphs showing the relationship between tank size and roof area based on rainfall records. In drier times, the *Reliable Draw* [water drawn every day without emptying tank] is between Average Summer and Dry Winter levels shown in this chart. It is a useful guide relating storage volume and roof catchment area. A 2000L tank provides 50 - 100 L/day

[if catchment is 100 sq m or more], sufficient to supply a toilet in a small household and some water for the garden. A 6000L tank needs at least 200 sq



m of catchment to supply water to a washing machine, toilet, and garden. Techniques for the collection, storage and delivery of rainwater were reviewed along with uses for the water that overflows the tank. Jim runs his excess water into a swale in his backyard providing a bog that can recharge the water table. Running excess into a pond is another excellent method of harvesting rain water.

**ILLAWARRA ESCARPMENT FIELD DAY 2<sup>ND</sup> NOV**

In the best OFF tradition, our day started with morning tea at the Robertson Pie Shop. Twenty enthusiastic participants gathered for the Illawarra escarpment experience.

Our first stop was Buddaroo National Park, 15-minute drive from Robertson, where we walked the 500m Carrington Falls loop. It was wonderful to see many flowers in bloom, Isopogon, Oleria, Lambertia, Epacris, Callistemon, and Iris to name a few. The Telopea (Waratahs) were outstanding. The approach to the falls along the ridge allowed us many different views of the spectacular twin falls as the Kangaroo River plunges over 50m to the valley below.

Our lunch stop was Nellies Glen, near a large rock pool and waterfall. Some of the energetic members sacrificed their lunch break to walk the 4km round trip to Missingham lookout. The walking track leads along the western edge of the escarpment and shows off Kangaroo Valley in all its glory.

After lunch, we made our way to [Illawarra Fly](#), a 10-minute drive from Carrington Falls. The award-winning walk is one of Australia's leading treetop walk experiences. The 1.5km return walk takes in native rainforest and Illawarra escarpment. The steel walkway features two gently swaying cantilevered arms, and a central tower raised nearly 50m from the forest floor. Positioned 710m above sea level, the stunning views take in everything from the rainforest floor into the canopy, and out to Lake Illawarra and Port Kembla beach. The tree top walk truly gave us a bird's eye view enabling us to have a close encounter with a pair of Tawny frogmouths snoozing close to the walkway. [See [website](#) for photo gallery].

**THE OATLEY CALENDAR**

Oatley Flora and Fauna, the Oatley Heritage and Historical Society and Oatley Lions have launched this calendar for 2015. Its theme is nature and history in the suburbs. Each page has a description of the photo and information relating to the scene featured in it. There are dates for important events, school holidays, public holidays, and dates for various groups in the area such as OFF and OHHS. [Available at meetings for \$10 <http://off.oatleypark.com/>]



**FOR NOTING**

- Buy Nothing Day** on Sat 29<sup>th</sup> Nov: Spend a day without spending! <http://www.buynothingday.co.uk/>
- Community CSG forum** on Sun Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>, 11am in Mortdale RSL organised by [Stop CSG Network](#).
- Myles Dunphy Streamwatch**, next meets at 9am on Tues 25<sup>th</sup> Nov. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (☎ 0425 291 879).
- Oatley Heritage & Historical Soc** 28 Nov: Presentation at the RSL by Julian Sheen speaking on Oatley in 1938. [www.oatleyhistory.org.au](http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au)
- Oatley Park November Blooms** are listed on our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>
- World Park Congress** 12-19<sup>th</sup> Nov at Sydney Olympic Park, - the theme "Parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions", with original approaches for conservation and sustainable development.

