



### AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY (AWC)

At our 24<sup>th</sup> Nov meeting, Leah Royle, Development Executive of AWC, gave an interesting presentation on the Wildlife Conservancy's role protecting endangered wildlife, animals, ecosystems, and biodiversity.

AWC was formally established in 2001 by [the late Martin Copley](#) to help address Australia's problem with its worst mammal extinction rate in the world. AWC is developing a new conservation model to reverse the wildlife decline. With [23 properties](#), the largest private owner of land for conservation in Australia, it is protecting endangered wildlife across more than 3 million hectares in regions such as the Kimberley, Cape York, Lake Eyre, and the Top End. It protects a very high proportion of Australia's terrestrial biodiversity - 67% of terrestrial mammal species, 83% of terrestrial bird species, and 50% of reptile and frog species. AWC protects some of the largest remaining populations of many of Australia's endangered species including Bilbies, Numbats, Woylies, Bridled Naitail Wallabies, Gouldian Finches, and Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens. <http://www.australianwildlife.org/>

### FIVE FERRIES WALK

On 29<sup>th</sup> Nov, ten OFF members met at Circular Quay for this field day event. Ferry 1 was the 9am to Rydalmere, and from there we walked to the Silverwater Bridge, and crossed the Parramatta River, heading for Olympic Park. We had morning tea at Blaxland Park, with, for some, a much-needed caffeine charge, and then moved on to Olympic Park to catch Ferry 2 to Meadowbank. On the way to Kissing Point, we paused at Bennelong's grave in Putney. We lunched at Kissing Point, and then travelled on Ferry 3 to Abbotsford. Walking along the foreshore to Chiswick, we took Ferry 4 to Huntley's Point. Six of the party then decided to stay on board and return to Circular Quay. The remaining four walked across the Gladesville Bridge, for a great view of Sydney, then down to Drummoyne Wharf, catching Ferry 5 to the Quay. Overall, it was a pleasant walk; the day was fine, sunny, and not too hot. [Report by Leader Jennifer Whaite]



[www.walkingcoastalsydney.com.au/](http://www.walkingcoastalsydney.com.au/)

### EXPECT MORE HEATWAVES

The CSIRO notes that the duration, frequency and intensity of heatwaves have increased across many parts of Australia, based on daily temperature records since 1950. Days where extreme heat is widespread have become more common in the past twenty years. Some recent instances of extreme summer temperatures experienced around the world, including record-breaking summer temperatures in Australia over 2012-2013, are very unlikely to have been caused by natural variability alone. [www.csiro.au/Outcomes/](http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/) & <http://www.cawcr.gov.au/projects/climatechange/> & <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/>

### RISE IN SEA LEVELS

The Pacific Island nation of Kiribati has 100,000 people living on less than 320 square miles. It is a "frontline nation" facing a serious threat of permanent inundation from rising sea-levels. At low tide, one can



glimpse how the once-fertile soil has been transformed into thick clay of mud, sewage, and stagnant water. Stumps of dead coconut trees and car parts slowly rusting in the harsh Kiribati sun give a post-apocalyptic feel.

During "[king tides](#)" the ocean engulfs living spaces; previously only twice a year, now more than twenty times a year. Communities suffer from coastal erosion, and face the threat of contamination of their fresh water supply. It is now a question of when they will have to leave. [mashable.com/kiribati-last-generation/](http://mashable.com/kiribati-last-generation/)

### A HUNDRED PERCENT RENEWABLES

There were several instances in 2014 when wind energy accounted for all electricity demand in South Australia. On one day, the combination of wind energy and rooftop solar provided more than 100% of the state's electricity needs, for the whole working day. <http://reneweconomy.com.au/2014/>

### THREAT OF FERAL CATS

Feral cats have caused the extinction of some ground-dwelling birds and small to medium-sized mammals, and are a major cause of decline for many animals. Control is difficult as they are spread thinly over large ranges, are shy and difficult to locate. The most effective and available form of feral cat control over large areas is poison baiting. The [Curiosity@bait](#) for feral cats is a long-term \$4.1 million project to develop humane, broad-scale toxic bait in conservation areas. [www.environment.gov.au/](http://www.environment.gov.au/) & <http://www.australianwildlife.org/>

### 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 you do not have to stay for all 7 days. **Please confirm your booking by 24<sup>th</sup> January.** Information and bookings, Liz Cameron ☎ 9580 6621 or [lizc@pacific.net.au](mailto:lizc@pacific.net.au)



Nearly 900 calendars have been sold with profits of around \$600 to each of OFF, OHHS and Oatley Lions. Sales continue at special rates of \$4 each or three for \$10.

### Earth Hour 2015 March 28<sup>th</sup> 8.30PM

During Earth Hour, hundreds of millions of people around the world turn off their lights for one hour to show their commitment to helping the planet. It is a symbolic reminder that the world's environmental issues do not have to overwhelm us. Small things we do every day will make a better future and make change happen. So whether you reflect under the stars or celebrate by candlelight, turn off your lights and show you'll do your part to protect our planet. Turn out your lights for one hour on Sat Mar 28 at 8:30 p.m. to show your commitment to a better future. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/earth-hour>

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- 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 a recommended photo limit!
- Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting.** Our speaker is **Dr Cameron Webb**, Medical Entomology, University of Sydney, and Pathology Westmead Hospital, speaking on mozzies and mosquito-borne disease. <http://cameronwebb.wordpress.com>
- Feb 28<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field Day:** Dharawal NP - Stokes and O'Hares Creeks. Medium to good fitness required; trails are steep and rough in sections but with cool clear streams at the end. Bring walking poles, drinks, morning tea, lunch, and swimmers. Finish about 2pm. Meet 9.30am [around 45 mins driving time] at western entrance to Dharawal National Park, end of Victoria Rd, [Wedderburn](#). [For more details, car-pooling etc. contact Leader: Sharyn Cullis, [go\\_river@hotmail.com](mailto:go_river@hotmail.com) ☎ 9579 1262, 📠 0421 714 391]
- Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) 10:00am Liverpool Waste Water Treatment Plant** guided tour by Sydney Water Corp for OFF.

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DEC 2014

Rodger Robertson - Treasurer

#### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Income	2014	2013
Subscriptions	\$3,650.00	\$3,691.00
Donations	\$1,445.00	\$2,011.00
Sales Stalls etc.	\$301.00	\$259.85
Oatley RSL donation	\$0.00	\$500.00
Hurstville Council Grant	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
NSW Government Grant	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Misc. Income	\$200.00	\$19.00
Interest(chèque acct)	\$1.27	\$1.56
Annual dinner	\$2,534.00	\$0.00
Calendar sales	\$9,834.50	
Capertee trip	\$1,100.00	
Sydney Observatory visit	\$336.00	
Total income	\$19,401.77	\$9,982.41
<b>Expenses</b>		
OFF Newsletter printing postage	-\$838.69	-\$831.49
Insurance	-\$275.00	-\$290.00
Mail box rental	-\$107.00	-\$99.00
Church Hall hire	-\$432.60	-\$408.60
Dept Fair Trading	-\$52.00	-\$51.00
Oatley Lions stall	-\$130.00	-\$120.00
Sydney Observatory trip	-\$16.00	
Print programs	-\$272.80	-\$266.20
Bushcare Day	-\$202.40	
Donations and membership	-\$3,390.00	-\$3,230.00
Annual dinner	\$2,290.00	
Calendar expenses	-\$8,390.50	
Capertee expenses	-\$960.00	
Brochures printing		-\$5275.75
Misc. Expenses	-\$407.43	-\$552.30
Total expenses	-\$17,763.82	-\$11,124.34
Net Profit/Loss	\$1,637.95	-\$1,141.93

#### BANK RECONCILIATION

	2014	2013
Balance as at 1 January 2014	\$5,847.53	
Transfer from Fixed Account	\$2,837.03	
Profit on year	\$1,637.95	
Cheque account balance 31/12/14	\$10,322.51	\$5,847.53
12 month term deposit (net)	\$8,000.00	\$10,392.30
Total balance at bank 31 Dec	\$18,322.51	\$17,847.48

DONATIONS	2014	2013
Nature Conservation Council	\$310.00	\$300
Environmental Defenders Office	\$600.00	\$600
Colong Foundation	\$400.00	\$400
Wilderness Soc	\$300.00	\$300
WIRES	\$0	\$300
Kuringai Bats	\$300.00	\$300
Total Environment Centre	\$150.00	\$300
Blue Mountains Conservation Soc	\$300.00	\$300
Sydney Wildlife	\$200.00	\$200
Friends of Royal	\$30.00	\$30
Lithgow District Community Nursery	\$0.00	\$200
Better Planning Network	\$250.00	\$0
Sydney Metro Wildlife	\$100.00	\$0
Lock the Gate	\$250.00	\$0
NCC PSW donation	\$100.00	\$0
Australian Institute	\$100.00	\$0
Total	\$3390.00	\$3230.00

#### NOTES

1. NCC and Friends of Royal membership with donations
2. Accounts included advance subscriptions and donations for 2014.
3. Interest from Term Deposit account was \$444.73 and is not included in above P/L accounts.
4. 2015 Calendar expenses and income includes Lions Club seed money. It has been repaid in full.
5. Profit from Calendars yet to be distributed to Lions, OHHS--- approx \$500 to each as at 31 Dec.
6. Fixed balance is at August so transfer to working account includes \$15.57 of interest post 30 June

#### AGM FIRST MEETING OF 2015

Best wishes for 2015 to all our members and friends. The first meeting of the year will be the Annual General Meeting on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb when the 2015 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

**A**ustralia Day Festival - Hurstville City Council in Oatley Park Mon 26<sup>th</sup> Jan from 10am. OFF will have a stall - helpers welcome. [Australia-Day-Festival.html](#)

**C**elebration Dinner - **OFF's 60<sup>th</sup>** Thurs May 14<sup>th</sup> at The Gardens on Forest.

**C**lean Up Australia Day 01/03/2015. Details of OFF participation will be in next News and at the February meeting. [www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/](http://www.cleanupaustaliaday.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 28/03/2015 between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. [www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour](http://www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour)

**L**iverpool Waste Water Treatment Plant guided tour Sydney Water Corp for OFF Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> March 10:00am.

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Feb 24<sup>th</sup>. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (📠 0425 291 879).

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

**S**nowy Mountains Trip Note the Jan 24<sup>th</sup> booking deadline.

#### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2015

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 Act no 901997 Oatley Flora and Fauna Con Soc, **AND put your full name on the transfer form.**



### OUR 59<sup>th</sup> AGM HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY

Congratulations to Graham Lalchere re-elected President, and to our elected committee members. Vicki Bolling and Peter de Beuzeville were elected to the committee. Chris Tyler was appointed Auditor and Sue de Beuzeville joined the Welcome & Hospitality team.

The Presidential address and the Secretary's Report can be found on our website. The quotes below seek only to summarise the highlights of the two addresses.

#### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Graham Lalchere talked about indirect effects on environmental issues, particularly emission and climate issues, citing the Chinese quest for clean air, financial imperatives, and advances in battery storage technology.

He noted that the use of coal has gone down substantially recently, and the conjecture about whether this reduction is cyclical or structural. The coal companies say it is cyclical, but Chinese demand for thermal coal generation falling while their electricity demand is rising would indicate otherwise.

Studies of coal companies in Australia show many are showing signs of financial distress and may soon face bankruptcy, also exacerbating the problem of mine-site remediation, which already sees tens of thousands of abandoned mine sites left for taxpayers to clean up. There is "an urgent need for federal and state government planning to prepare for the economic and social impacts of the structural decline of coal."

Australian electricity companies are also parties to the story of coal. They deny that electricity demand is dropping, and, until recently, were still forecasting increasing use, more expenditure on the grid and subsequent higher prices.

Increasing penetration of solar and wind, and efficiency improvements have contributed to the reduction in coal use. Other technological developments, including electric cars and improved battery performance will also have a significant impact.

While these are positive signs, Graham called on us to keep on campaigning and to remember the logo on our banners – Think Globally, Act Locally.

He then stressed the need to focus locally on:

a) **Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands:** Council is now regularly cleaning out the GPT, and has recently cleaned out the ponds, but should not dump it in Oatley Park.

b) **Sewage problems:** Sydney Water has just completed the raising of the weir in Dairy Creek, and we need to monitor the effect of these changes, particularly on Myles Dunphy Creek.

c) **Street trees:** Council is currently preparing a street-tree management plan, and we will lobby council to be consulted on the new plan.

d) **Oatley Park PoM and bushcare:** We will continue to work with council on the implementation of this plan

e) **Membership:** Our initiative of linking membership with our calendar at the Oatley Village Festival and other events has resulted in a number of new members joining up. He welcomed these new members and hoped they gain from their association with us.

"It looks like we will have another busy year in 2015, but I am sure that in its 60th year OFF is up to the task. We must continue to fight for the causes that we believe in.

As members of one of the oldest environment organisations in the State, I invite you to join in the activities that our committee has put together for your education and enjoyment, and celebrate our anniversary in a suitable manner."

#### SECRETARY'S REPORT

Liz Cameron outlined OFF activities in 2014, in accord with its objectives focussing on the natural environment.

1. **Impact of mining on water catchments:** OFF spoke to State and Federal MPs, made submissions on changes to legislation, addressed an inquiry into expansion of coal mining in a catchment, and promoted a Stop CSG meeting in Mortdale. Nell Schofield's address and films on coal mining and CSG extraction had an audience of 80.

2. **Local Area:** Members acted to improve the health of Georges River by monitoring local water quality and reducing pollution in Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands. They did monthly Streamwatch surveys and **rubbish audits**, liaised with Sydney Water to report and reduce sewer overflows, and recommended changes in sewerage licences to the EPA. The Wetlands was OFF's site for Clean Up Australia, we recommended priorities for the Green Army project there, and lobbied Hurstville City Council to increase maintenance funding in its Delivery Program and Operational Plan (DPOP) re stormwater in Dairy Creek.

We urged Hurstville Council to include Oatley Park in its DPOP and complete its 2004 Action Plan for the Park and we pressed Council for more accountability regarding tree removals. We maintain good relations with our local Members of Parliament and appreciate their ongoing support for some of our priorities.

3. **The 2015 calendar *Oatley – Nature in the suburbs*** was financially successful. The calendars and Oatley Park brochures were popular at our four stalls in 2014. David Coleman's office translated the membership brochures into Chinese in time for *St George Migrant Information Day*.

4. **Field outings** organised by Alison Gilroy and overseen by Graham Fry had an average of 15 participants (70% were OFF members). Best attended were Sydney Observatory (28) and Blue Track walk in Lucas Heights (33).

5. **Speakers:** Matt Allison engaged entertaining speakers whose topics ranged from the Platypus to rainwater harvesting in Oatley; average attendance was 46.

6. **Annual Dinner:** After a lapse of 18 months a very convivial Annual Dinner and raffle was organised by Sue Howard at *Gardens of Forest* on June 13<sup>th</sup>. This will also be the venue for our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Dinner on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2015.

7. **Membership:** Robin Dickson has looked after our membership well; 28 new members in 2014 bring the total close to 300. Sadly, she had to report the deaths of three members during the year - Bill Monaghan, Sheila Sansom and Val Boyan. Two former long-term members, the late Graham Austin and Harry Whaite, were honoured by a **tree-planting ceremony** in November.



**Walk4Water** says no to coal mining and CSG. On 21<sup>st</sup> Feb a walk will commence at Cataract Dam and finish in Hyde Park on 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. Join other

OFF members who will be taking part at 10am to launch walk4water; or consider attending wherever you can along the route over the next 7 days. Contact Kim Wagstaff ☎ 0437 791 988 for latest information on OFF Member Participation.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting with Dr Cameron Webb**, Medical Entomology, University of Sydney, and Pathology Westmead Hospital, speaking on mozzies and mosquito-borne disease. <http://cameronwebb.wordpress.com>

**Feb 28<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field Day:** Dharawal NP - Stokes and O'Hares Creeks, led by **Sharyn Cullis**. Medium to good fitness required; trails are steep and rough in sections but with cool clear streams at the end. Bring walking poles, drinks, morning tea, lunch, and swimmers. Finish about 2 PM. Meet 9.30 AM [around 45 mins driving time] at western entrance to Dharawal National Park, end of Victoria Rd, [Wedderburn](#). [For more details, car-pooling etc. contact Sharyn, [go\\_river@hotmail.com](mailto:go_river@hotmail.com) ☎ 9579 1262, ☎ 0421 714 391]

**Mar 1<sup>st</sup> (Sun) Clean Up Australia Day** OFF's site this year will be Poulton Park (Kogarah LGA). Alison Gilroy will be the site co-ordinator; more details at February meeting.

**Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) Liverpool Waste Water Treatment Plant Guided Tour** by Sydney Water for OFF. Starts at 10am for 1.5 hours showing how the sewage collected from Georges River catchment is treated and recycled. Meet at the Plant, 32-40 Scrivener St, Warwick Farm by 9.45. Wear long pants, long sleeve shirt, and flat, closed toe shoes, well-fitting hat and sunglasses. Other protective equipment will be provided. Walking is on uneven surfaces and stairs. Children over 12 welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. **Transport** best by car (35-40 mins from Oatley); train would require changes and 20min walk. Car-pooling can be arranged. **Leader:** Kim Wagstaff ☎ 0437 791 988.

## OATLEY FROGS HOLLOW

OFF has expressed concern to Council over some five years about the dumping of silt at Frogs Hollow in [Oatley Park](#). The grassy basin was so named because it had been a breeding site for native frogs. The continuing dumping has made the area quite unsuitable for frogs, and the weeds on the silt dumps are spreading to surrounding areas and degrading the park.

The area is a well-known landmark for walkers, cyclists, and pet owners. Oatley Park has been proudly described as "one of Hurstville Council's most popular parks – with its tranquil setting and hectares of natural bushland." However, the continuing silt dumping at Frogs Hollow presents a significant threat to the grassy basin, and to the Park as a whole.

## SAVING THE KOALA

The number of koalas on the east coast of Australia plummeted by more than 40% from 1990 to 2010. [Surveys](#) conducted by ecologists in 2013 in the Pilliga forest, once a stronghold for the species, found that there could be as few as 50 Koalas left in the area, and they are "highly endangered."

The Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrading of the Pacific Highway has been on the drawing board for years; the proposed route would devastate a nationally significant Koala population. Community members are [joining forces](#) to have the route moved from the area occupied by koalas. As Nature Conservation Council CEO Kate Smolski stated, "We must do everything we can to ensure extinction does not happen. Given the koala's status as a national icon, we hope that all parties will support the koala national park proposal." [www.nature.org.au/news/](http://www.nature.org.au/news/)



## NORTH HEAD WILDLIFE

Due to its geography and history, North Head is relatively isolated despite its proximity to Sydney. The North Head Sanctuary is home to a diverse array of flora and fauna. Notable species include the Long-nosed Bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*), the Eastern Bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*), Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) and Barking Owl (*Ninox connivens*).

However, like the rest of Australia, North Head has suffered local extinction of a suite of species since European settlement. The reintroduction of locally extinct species, and the resumption of ecological processes in which these species participate (e.g. seed and spore dispersal, pollination, herbivory, predation) is an important component of the ecological restoration of North Head. Click here for more at North Head: [Mammals List](#) | [Birds List](#) | [Reptiles List](#) | [Amphibians List](#) | [Threatened species List](#) & <http://www.australianwildlife.org/>

## MORE WATER THREATS

Anti-fracking advocates want AGL Energy's licence for its Gloucester gas project revoked after the detection of dangerous chemicals in a water storage tank. Testing work at the project near Gloucester has been suspended after [benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene and xylene \(BTEX\)](#) were detected in flow backwater from four drilling wells and in a water storage tank. The chemicals can have harmful effects on the central nervous system, and benzene is a known carcinogen.



Steve Phillips of LTG commented, "AGL's alarming pollution monitoring results in Gloucester highlight the risks fracking poses to our precious water resources. Chief scientist Mary O'Kane warned that many unanswered questions remain about the risks to our land, water, and communities. But the government allowed drilling to continue in Camden, Gloucester and

Narrabri, and pushed ahead with a flawed Gas Plan that failed to implement many of the O'Kane [recommendations](#)." <http://www.echo.net.au/>

## THINK AND ACT LOCALLY

**Street Lights left on / left off** – Ring Ausgrid ☎ 131388 with the pole number and cross street reference.

**Plastic bags etc.** *Clean Up Australia* notes that we dump 7,150 recyclable plastic bags into landfills every minute or 429,000 bags every hour. Plastic bags and many types of plastic packaging are recyclable, but are not being recovered through conventional recycling channels.

**Coles** with recycler [REDGroup](#) and manufacturer [Replas](#) have developed a [program](#) to give customers a responsible way to dispose of household soft plastics, many types of food packaging and reusable shopping bags.

[More at: <http://redcycle.net.au/redcycle/how-to-redcycle> & [redcycle program-partners](http://redcycle.net.au/redcycle-program-partners)]

## FOR NOTING

**Anniversary Dinner** – OFF's 60<sup>th</sup> You are invited to attend Thurs May 14<sup>th</sup> at *Gardens on Forest* 7-10pm \$65pp. Menu choices at Feb to April meetings. [Contact Sue Howard ☎ 9579 1718]

**Clean Up Australia Day 1<sup>st</sup> March.** OFF's site this year will be Poulton Park (Kogarah LGA). Alison Gilroy is the site co-ordinator; more details at next meeting. [www.cleanupaustrialiaday.org.au/](http://www.cleanupaustrialiaday.org.au/)

**Earth Hour** on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. [www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour](http://www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour)

**Knitting Nannas** [Echonetdaily](#) reports that on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb the gas industry was "needled" by a group of activist nannas who knit as part of their fight against unconventional gas mining on the north coast. <http://www.echo.net.au/> & <http://www.echo.net.au/tag/knitting-nannas/>

**Myles Dunphy Streamwatch**, next meets at 9am on Tues Feb 24<sup>th</sup>. Details: Sharyn ☎ 9579 1262, Heather ☎ 0425 291 879.

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



# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 3/15

Mar/April 2015

### NSW ELECTION 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

Concern for the natural environment is important for many (if not most) electors. A questionnaire has been sent by O.F.F. to the three candidates for the seat of Oatley to gain insight into their position and/or opinion on a variety of environmental issues. The questions and their answers are published on the website as they become available.

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

### ABORIGINAL RIVER KEEPER TEAM

The Georges River Combined Councils Committee [GRCCC] launched its Aboriginal Bush Regeneration team in September to restore bushland and establish ecological connectivity across 150 hectares of the Georges River catchment. The team is supported through Federal Government funding for the next three years. It has a project manager, a supervisor and four trainees, who will work towards TAFE qualifications in Conservation Land Management. The team will work at Myles Dunphy Reserve to control invasive weeds and undertake bush regeneration. Work has started at the southern end of the reserve close to Waratah St, and on the eastern side of the wetland. It will extend the good bushland border along the weedy wetland edge. This will happen for 3 weeks a year over 3 years with an impact on the Privet population. [Note from Heather Stolle, Bushcare Officer, Hurstville City Council]. More at:

<http://www.georgesriver.org.au/Aboriginal-Riverkeeper-Team.html>

### FIRE FIGHTING LYREBIRDS

Recent research has shown that the iconic lyrebird reduces the risk of bushfire by spreading dry leaf litter and digging safe havens that help other species survive fires. They have reduced forest litter by up to 1.6 tonnes/ha in nine-months. Researchers have found the lyrebird's foraging reduces forest fuel loads, and risk of life-threatening fires. <http://www.theage.com.au>



### WARMER WEATHER AND HABITAT CHANGE

The *Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife* notes that record breaking heat, and the increasing frequency and severity of bushfires in some areas, and torrential rainfall and floods destroying lives in other areas, is impacting on biodiversity. Some habitats will alter so much that they will be unable to sustain species that have called them home.

If a species cannot migrate to better habitats, its future is bleak. The Foundation has identified expensive conservation works, including wildlife corridors, to connect and improve remnant and fragmented habitats, and is seeking donations in support. [www.fnpw.org.au](http://www.fnpw.org.au) Susanna Bradshaw, CEO FNPW [mailto:fnpw@fnpw.cminteractive.net](mailto:mailto:fnpw@fnpw.cminteractive.net)

### HOW MUCH GAS DO WE NEED?

Gas developers have been ominously warning of impending gas shortages in New South Wales, with [official forecasts](#) from planning authorities pointing to steady or rising demand. Yet an [Australia Institute](#) analysis suggests that these forecasts are well off the mark, that gas demand in NSW will fall, and that NSW is facing an inevitable price shock, not a gas shortage. A report on gas usage by TAI shows that demand for gas in NSW could halve within a decade, and questions the need for a gas network. + [More](#)

### DHARAWAL NATIONAL PARK

Our first walk of the year on 28<sup>th</sup> Feb was a pleasant stroll exploring some of the features of our newest national park. Sharyn Cullis, who was very instrumental in getting Dharawal National Park declared, was our leader. and the 13 participants readily appreciated the very detailed knowledge she has of the park. The weather was cloudy but very warm and humid, which made for some trying conditions; fortunately, there was relief at the magnificent water hole at the end of the Jingga walking trail where some of us had a lovely swim while the remainder of the group had lunch in the shade of the lovely cool gorge. Even though it was still summer (just!) we were surprised by how many wildflowers were in flower, with at least four species of banksia in blossom. The flowers were attracting honeyeaters as they darted amongst the bushes after their little hit of nectar. Dharawal NP is very interesting because



although its bedrock is sandstone, much of the flora is different from the coastal parks we are familiar with, and so worth a visit, particularly if you like flowers. It

is very accessible and [NP&WS](#) has done a good job creating tracks and installing facilities for walkers.

### MORE EFFICIENT ELECTRICITY

The *Intelligent Grid Research Program* is an Australian collaboration between the CSIRO and five universities investigating technologies and practices to make our electricity networks more efficient. "Grid" includes all items that transport electricity from power plants to users. In all networks, some energy is lost as it travels, making distribution inefficient. An "intelligent" electricity grid has a minimal amount of waste and a highly efficient use of power, distributed energy resources, advanced communication, and control technologies to deliver electricity more cost-effectively, with lower greenhouse intensity. Distributed energy resources could involve wind turbines, solar panels, micro turbines, fuel cells and cogeneration (combined heat and power) - all closer to the users. Advanced control systems and smart electricity meters show real-time use and costs, and can respond to remote communication and dynamic electricity pricing.

<http://igrid.net.au/> & <http://www.csiro.au/org/>

**YOUR INVITATION**  
**60th ANNIVERSARY DINNER**  
**Thursday 14 May 7-10pm**  
**Gardens on Forest**  
**\$65 pp.**  
**Menus choices at March & April meetings**  
**PAYMENTS due APRIL MEETING**  
**Contact Sue Howard 95791718**

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

**Mar 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting** with Crocdoc **David Kirshner** speaking on "**Crocodylians**," celebrating his recent book launch - a comprehensive review of current knowledge about the world's largest and most famous living reptiles.

**Mar 28<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Earth Hour 2015** between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time [see note below].

**Mar 29<sup>th</sup> (Sun) Field Outing Royal NP.** Meet at Upper Causeway picnic area 4:30 pm (enter via McKell Ave from Waterfall). Leisurely birdwalk followed by picnic tea (sunset is 6.54 pm) then a wander along Lady Carrington Drive looking for nocturnal wildlife. Wear hat and sturdy shoes and bring picnic meal, binoculars, torch, insect repellent, jumper, or raincoat (depending on forecast). NB There is an entry fee if without Park Pass; car-pooling can be arranged. An OFF Child Risk Waiver form must be completed for any children; please ask in advance for details. **Leader: Elizabeth Cameron** ☎9580 6621 ☎0419 280 473.

**April 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting** with Birder, environmentalist **Graham Fry** speaking on "**Bhutan: balancing conservation with development**."

**May 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) Field day: The Spit to Manly walk** - spectacular Sydney Harbour foreshore. **Leader: Erica Buzo.**

**May 25<sup>th</sup> Monday Meeting - 7.45pm** with OEH Officer **Ben Hope** speaking on **Vertebrate fauna of North Sydney reserves 'trapped' on camera.**

### SMIGGIN HOLES: 7 - 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

This year fourteen members and friends stayed at Smiggin Holes Chalet and we were very pleased to have the company of Rob and Robin Dickson. Happy hours brought everyone together in the lounge where we were kept snug with the Dicksons' fireside DVD (G classification) flickering away. A 1500 piece jigsaw was completed thanks to Alison Gilroy's dedication, and Robin taught us to make monks' cords by finger knitting.

Michael and Manuwai Korber completed the Mt Kosciuszko Summit circuit from Charlotte's Pass, returning via Blue Lake. Shorter walks included Porcupine Rocks (Jan Douglas' snow gum was full of small birds and looking very healthy), Mt Stilwell and Waterfall Track and the Sawpit Creek walk. There were drives to Adaminaby, Thredbo, and the Man from Snowy River Museum in Corryong and visits to Jindabyne and Alpine Eyre kiosk for coffee. Everyone gathered at Wild Brumby Distillery on Thursday for lunch followed by schnapps tasting and a stroll around sculptures in the landscaped grounds.

Flora and fauna sightings included big clusters of gentians, deep pink trigger flowers, and lingering daisies, Emus, Kangaroos, Raptors, Wedge-tailed Eagles, a young Peregrine Falcon, Highland Copperheads and White-lipped Snakes, and Mountain Galaxias in the streams.

### MOSQUITO RESEARCH FEBRUARY 23<sup>rd</sup>

Dr Cameron Webb was our first speaker for 2015 regaling the audience of 60+ members and guests with warm-blooded facts and anecdotes on mosquitoes and diseases associated with these pesky ankle biters.

Cameron has received quite a lot of airplay over the last 6 months coinciding with the mosquito season here in Sydney that (with dogged determination on the part of leaflet distribution from our president and others) may have helped to explain such a vibrant audience turnout.

Cameron cut his teeth in the saltmarshes around Homebush Bay prior to the Sydney Olympics; and by all accounts, the blood, sweat, and tears associated with his persistence in mosquito research showed more stamina and determination than a gold medal-winning athlete did.

We learnt of the many types of mosquitoes, their lifecycles, the conditions they thrive under, the diseases they carry, their possible role in the ecosystem, efficacy of mosquito repellents and so much more.

Cameron's over-riding desire as an environmental scientist turned entomologist is that his work will provide a better understanding of mosquitoes leading to better methods of control without harming the natural environment.

### CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA DAY: 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH

OFF collected rubbish around Poulton Park for Kogarah Council this year. There were 7 of us hardy souls doing our bit for a cleaner environment on the bright clear Sunday morning. 12 bags of rubbish were collected, of which 3 were recyclable. On a positive note there was only about half the rubbish collected in past years, which we attributed to the work of the River Keeper team. [Note from Alison Gilroy- site supervisor]

### LIVERPOOL WATER RECYCLING PLANT: 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH

15 members attended the Sydney Water guided tour of its *Liverpool Water Recycling Plant* showing how sewage collected from the upper Georges River catchment areas is treated, recycled, or discharged to protect river health.

We started with coffee, muffins, and a comprehensive briefing on the treatment processes, and the Plant's place in the overall wastewater network, in particular the Georges River basin. The interest shown and questions asked meant this briefing extended for nearly an hour. The Plant serves a population of about 200,000 and can treat up to 46 Megalitres of sewage per day (= 20 Olympic pools!).

We were then guided around the plant starting at the inlet, and following each step in the treatment process, noting the birdlife (including black swans) on the holding ponds, to the point of discharge of the treated water. Normally this is pumped to the North Georges River Submain, which flows through Oatley on its way to Malabar, for discharge to the ocean. Occasionally, treated water is supplied to the Liverpool/Ashfield recycled water pipeline for use by businesses along the way. During wet weather, when flow into the Plant can be 5 or 6 times greater, under specifically licensed conditions, the diluted effluent can be discharged straight into the Georges River.

With modern technology the Plant can be operated largely from the control office on a 24/7 basis by a small team. 40% of the plant's energy needs are sourced from onsite cogeneration systems with gas emerging from the sludge digestion tanks generating electricity. Biosolids resulting from the treatment process are all recycled and ultimately sold for use as compost, fertiliser or on mine rehabilitation sites. One particular problem brought to our attention was the widespread use of "wet wipes," incorrectly assumed flushable; toilet paper breaks up as required, but other materials cause problems for machinery and treatment.

We were very impressed, and we thank the staff for the warm welcome and their obvious dedication and passion for their work. More at: <http://www.sydneywater.com.au/> on Sydney wastewater systems; & [www.sydneywater.com.au/SW/](http://www.sydneywater.com.au/SW/) re Liverpool WRP.

### FOR NOTING

**E**arth Hour Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. [www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour](http://www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour)

During Earth Hour, hundreds of millions of people around the world turn off their lights for one hour to show their commitment to helping the planet. It is a symbolic reminder that the world's environmental issues do not have to overwhelm us. Please turn out your lights for one hour! <http://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/earth-hour>

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Mar 24<sup>th</sup>. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (☎0425 291 879).

**R**enew membership Details of OFF Membership and means of joining are on our [website](http://www.off.org.au/).

**New Members always welcome!**





# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 4/15

April/May 2015

### GAIN FOR NATIONAL PARKS

The Drip gorge, a spectacular sandstone rock formation on the Upper Goulburn River, northeast of Mudgee, has been removed from the coal lease to Yancoal. The 50ha area will be added to the Goulburn River National Park. <http://www.nature.org.au/media>



### WILDERNESS THREATS

The Colong Foundation notes that appreciating the value of wilderness dates back to at least the Bible, and probably much earlier. The Aborigines in Australia from long ago had their 'quiet areas'. Great progress has been made with wilderness conservation in Australia, but now some of our best-known wilderness is under the threat of extinction. The most startling example is the Tasmanian Government wanting to extinguish six wilderness areas, of over 1.3 million ha in the *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area*. [www.colongwilderness.org.au/](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/)

### HAVOC IN SEWAGE AND WATER SYSTEMS

As mentioned at our Sydney Water Guided Tour on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Australians are flushing thousands of kilograms of "wet wipes" down their toilets every year, causing havoc in water and sewage systems. This is apparently a common problem throughout the world.

Many of these wet wipe items are advertised as "flushable," but the [Water Services Association of Australia](http://www.waterservices.org.au/) strongly disagrees. "We know 'flushable' wipes, despite what the manufacturers may claim, do not break down by the time they reach sewer infrastructure." The wipes cause expensive and disruptive blockages, posing an environmental risk with sewerage overflows. Wet wipes are also disrupting the production of [biogas](http://www.biogas.com/), which has been an adopted at most major sewage plants. Sydney Water has removed about 1 million kg of wet wipes from its wastewater systems over the past two years. Labelling on products must be consistent and accurate; and people must be encouraged to put wet wipes in the rubbish, not the toilet. Some blockages cost up to \$1000 to clear. [www.theage.com.au/wet-wipes-causing-havoc](http://www.theage.com.au/wet-wipes-causing-havoc)

### LISMORE TO INVEST IN FOSSIL FREE FUEL

Lismore City Council is refusing to back institutions investing in fossil fuels such as coal seam gas. The decision makes it the fourth council in Australia, and the second in NSW to take such a stand. Lismore has been at the forefront of the recycling and recovery field, and through its [Renewable Energy Master Plan](http://www.renewableenergy.com.au/) is committed to self-generate all its electricity from renewables by 2023. <http://www.echo.net.au/>

### MORE CLEAN ENERGY

Scientists have developed a highly efficient oxygen-producing electrode for splitting water with the potential to be scaled up for industrial production of hydrogen, clean energy fuel. The new technology is based on an inexpensive, specially coated foam material that lets the bubbles of oxygen escape quickly. Unlike other water electrolyzers that use precious metals as catalysts, the electrode is made entirely from two non-precious and abundant metals -- nickel and iron. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/)

### CONSERVATION FUND GRANT

OFF is to receive a Conservation Fund Grant of \$4550 from the Environment Minister for its *Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands Community Education & Engagement Project*, aimed at raising community awareness and involvement with the wetlands, and helping to reduce environmental impacts.

### POPULATE AND PERISH?

OFF News Sept 1995 published an article under this heading, questioning whether continuing population growth, long regarded as essential, should be reviewed. It noted that in 1992, the NSW Dept of Planning requested comments on Sydney's future, only to be swamped by responses that Sydney was already too large. A Federal Inquiry into [Australia's Population Carrying Capacity](http://www.population.com.au/) (1994) showed that 95% of respondents opposed further increase. Australia's population has grown by almost 5 million in the last 15 years, and [critics](http://www.critics.com.au/) continue to express concern about the pressure this places on resources, social and environmental costs. The debate continues.



China's population is now 1.372 billion [World=7.28 billion]. Tokyo, the world's largest city has 36.9 million; its < beaches do get crowded! Estimates of the world's long-term human carrying capacity vary widely. There is a long way to go before consensus.

### PREVENT DUMPING

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) noting illegal dumping as an eyesore and a potential hazard to the environment, has dedicated \$58 million over five years to address the problem as part of *Waste Less Recycle More*. This is the second round of Clean Up and Prevention grants, with more than \$1.6 million awarded last year to 15 projects across the state. The initiatives included the clean-up of dumping hotspots and the installation of preventative infrastructure, such as fencing, lighting, signage, and CCTV cameras, to try to stop dumpers. [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/)

### MAY BLOOMS IN OATLEY PARK



Sweet-scented Wattle (*Acacia suaveolens*) is early flowering, commencing in April and lasting until November. A slender shrub with flat phyllodes to 12cm long, with the buds enclosed by brownish bracts falling to expose yellow flower heads. It is widespread and common. The whole list of May blooms is at <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=2032>

## SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 7-10pm

GARDENS ON FOREST

PAYMENT DUE APRIL 27<sup>th</sup> at OFF Meeting

\$65 pp

Lucky Door Prize Songs from Trevor

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

**April 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm** with Birder, environmentalist **Graham Fry** speaking on "Bhutan: balancing conservation with development."

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**May 14<sup>th</sup> (Thurs) OFF's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner at Gardens on Forest**

**May 25<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm** with [OEH](#) Officer **Ben Hope** speaking on Vertebrate Fauna of North Sydney Reserves "trapped on camera".

**May 27<sup>th</sup> (Wed) Field day: Kemps Creek SAWT Facility Tour** - see waste turned into a resource. **Leader: Alison Gilroy**

**June 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm** with Alan Fairley, featuring "A trip around [Gujarat, Western India](#)."

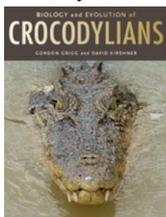
**June 27<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day: Cowan to Taffys Rock via Jerusalem Bay**, with stunning views of Hawkesbury River. **Leader: Adrian Buzo.**

CROCODYLIANS: MARCH 23<sup>RD</sup>

At our March meeting, David Kirshner, PhD [in crocodile studies] spoke to an audience of 40 about crocodiles, alligators, caimans, and gharials, known collectively as [crocodylians](#), the world's largest living reptiles.

He noted that the largest of them, probably the estuarine or saltwater crocodile, [Crocodylus porosus](#), could grow to almost 6m and weigh more than 1 ton. Crocodylians are creatures of great contrast. They can remain patiently still for ages, yet can also move like lightning to snap up a meal. They are formidably strong, active predators, with jaws that can tear apart large prey items, yet mothers can gently assist hatchlings out of the eggs, and carry them to the water between their teeth. Because large crocodylians can (and do) eat people, they invite fear and loathing, but they also inspire curiosity and admiration.

The book *Biology and Evolution of Crocodylians* co-authored by Gordon Grigg and David is a comprehensive review of current knowledge about the world's largest and most famous living reptiles. David is also an accomplished artist, and he produced all the illustrations, and most of the photos in the book. [www.bookdepository.com/](http://www.bookdepository.com/)



## BIRDWATCHING AND SPOTLIGHTING IN ROYAL NP

Many thanks to Deb Andrew for her expert help with identifying fauna on this outing on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Eighteen gathered at the lower causeway in the late afternoon and searched for the rather elusive birds. Highlights were a little Azure Kingfisher skimming along the Hacking River, a male Golden Whistler, and an abundance of Eastern Yellow Robins.

As we had our picnic tea in the glade in dwindling light, the robins drew closer, piping softly and pouncing on insects in the grass. The spotlighting after dark illuminated only towering trees and spider eye shine, but Deb's keen ears alerted us to the calls of Boobook, Sooty Owl, and Sugar Glider in the distance, and a chorus of Green Stream Frogs by the river. The bright moonlight probably kept the mammals away, but it was a beautiful balmy evening for strolling through the forest.



## EARTH HOUR 2015

On Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup>, 172 nations, territories, and around 1400+ iconic landmarks of the world switched off their lights as a symbol of their commitment to the planet. This was the ninth year of Earth Hour that famously started as an event in our Sydney, in 2007. Since then it has grown to engage more than 7000 cities and towns worldwide.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth\\_Hour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Hour)

## VALE MAMIE CLARK

Our long-time members will well remember Mamie Clark who died on 9<sup>th</sup> March in her 88<sup>th</sup> year. Mamie often expressed the pleasure and fulfilment she found in being an O.F.F. member for 23 yrs. Although never on the committee, she was very active and involved in Society activities. In the 1980-90s she represented O.F.F. on numerous occasions, including the long term National Parks bitou bush management project in the Kurnell area, and tree preservation meetings with Kogarah Municipal Council.

## GEORGES RIVER 'SOURCE TO SEA' EVENTS

Greater Sydney Local Land Services are organising a number of events during National Volunteer Week (May 11-17<sup>th</sup>) for bushcare and other conservation volunteers to see what is happening on other sites, and what it is like upstream and downstream. The thought was to make this part of a large media event about the communities' investment in catchment health, water quality for recreation and fisheries, pest species management, bio-security, our urban bushland, and National Parks.

One event will be at the Georges River on 11&12<sup>th</sup> May, starting at Dharawal NP and finishing downstream on day 2, possibly at Towra Point.

An event is planned for Oatley Park around lunchtime on Day 2. This will be a gathering of Bushcare Volunteers, OFF and Oatley Swim Club members, with a BBQ and walk around to [Lime Kiln Bay](#) for an inspection, and discussion of bushcare activities, projects, and issues. All welcome and encouraged to join in. [facebook.com/pages/Hurstville-Bushcare-Volunteers-Network/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hurstville-Bushcare-Volunteers-Network/)

## HURSTVILLE FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Hurstville City Council has commissioned an [Overland Flow Flood Study](#). Mayor, Cr Con Hindi said its purpose is to define flood behaviour under historical and existing floodplain conditions, and to address possible future variations in flood behaviour. Council is seeking feedback on the completed draft on public exhibition until 15<sup>th</sup> May at Council Chambers, the Library and on <http://www.hurstville.floodstudy.com.au/>

## FOR NOTING

**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/>

**M**embership of OFF Have you renewed yet? Details of Membership and means of joining are on our [website](#).

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

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. April 24<sup>th</sup> 10.30am at Oatley Library with old photos and movies of Oatley.

[www.oatleyhistory.org.au/](http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/)





# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 5/15

May/June 2015

### OFF's SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY

The Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society began on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1955 with a meeting at the home of Rafael and Moyia Kowron. On May 14<sup>th</sup> a great celebration of this 60<sup>th</sup> year was held at *Gardens on Forest*. Invited guests from NCC, the Menai Wildflower Group, and Lock the Gate Alliance joined fifty members for a very happy evening to celebrate this significant milestone. More on the history is in Alan Fairley's [Being Green, The First 50 Years 1955-2005](#) and in OFF News 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition in 2005. [offnews05novdec.pdf](#)



President Graham Lalchere talked of the continuing threats, and the current work and achievements of OFF in response to the challenges to the natural environment.

Past president Julian Sheen entertained us with a peep into the history of wilderness, the development of Oatley and the iconic Oatley Park. He began with the untouched wilderness stretching across the land with change, sometimes slow as sea levels rose and fell, sometimes quick and severe with fire and flood. Moving through the years, he spoke briefly of the contribution of the Aborigines, the impact of the colonialists, and ending with factors in the development of Oatley Park. He concluded, "Oatley Flora and Fauna is now a strong society ready to continue the guardianship of our natural environment; as we work to sustain our bushland, we also sustain ourselves. The need is apparent and people have proved over the generations to be ready for the task."

Our thanks go to Sue Howard who organised the celebration. The service was attentive, the meal delicious and the company jovial. At the end of the evening, Trevor Revis entertained us with his singing. [More and photos on the website](#)

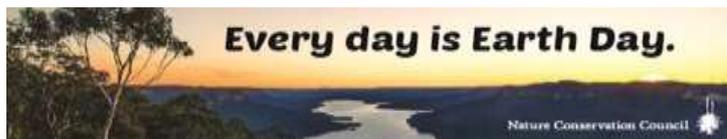
### SUNSHINE STATE SWITCHES ON SOLAR ARRAY

Queensland has flicked the switch on its largest solar array outside Gatton, 90km west of Brisbane, to harness the state's annual 2700 hours of sunlight.

Built on a former 10ha airstrip at the University of Queensland's (UQ) Gatton campus, the 3.275 MW Gatton Solar Research Facility has some 37,000 thin-film photovoltaic (PV) panels.

The PV modules from project partner *First Solar* will produce enough clean energy to power more than 450 average sized homes, according to UQ's Global Change Institute, and will displace the equivalent of 5600 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

*First Solar* managed the facility's engineering and construction and supplied the panels. For the first time in Australia; multiple PV mounting technologies including fixed-tilt, single-axis and dual-axis tracker technologies will operate side-by-side in the same field. [www.engineersaustralia.org.au/](http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/)



Each year, Earth Day -- April 22 -- marks the anniversary of what many consider the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970. <http://www.nature.org.au/> & <http://www.earthday.org/>

### THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT

The Wilderness Society [TWS] notes that 80-90% of all oil spills happen during the exploratory drilling phase. Where BP wants to drill in the Great Australian Bight, the waters are remote and wild – making it even more complicated than usual. This means we may face a higher chance of an oil spill in our waters. Kangaroo Island is a jewel in Australia's crown of natural wonders. This gem of an island



has pristine water and some of the best beaches in Australia. The currents that flow from Antarctica and through the Bight give Kangaroo Island a unique mix of ocean life and have a greater diversity of

marine life than the Great Barrier Reef.

<https://www.wilderness.org.au/campaigns/>

### AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST NATIONAL PARK

TWS also notes that Rio Tinto and Alcoa have decided to hand back bauxite-mining leases that threatened the spectacular Mitchell Plateau. This enables the Western Australian Government to proceed with plans to create Australia's largest national park. Wilderness Society campaigners and members, together with other environmentalists and Traditional Owners, have campaigned since the 1980s to protect the Mitchell from bauxite mining. <http://wilderness.org.au/articles/>

### THE EASTERN DWARF TREE FROG



One of the items in *Backyard Buddies April B-mail 2015* is about this very common frog, so small you might miss it if you're not looking—they're about the size of a thumbnail. Luckily they will be making some noise this month to help you spot them. The Eastern Dwarf Tree Frog has no trouble

spotting you. They have amazing eyesight to help them find and catch fast moving food like mosquitoes and moths, and to keep a lookout for predators. <http://www.backyardbuddies.net.au/>

### CHINA CLOSING COAL-FIRED GENERATORS

China is closing the last of Beijing's four major coal-fired power plants to curb pollution rates averaging more than twice the country's national standard.

The plan is to replace the coal-fired power plants with natural gas facilities with twice the capacity. Across China, the government has shut down more than 2000 small coal mines since 2013, and it is leading the world in renewable energy production, mainly hydroelectric and wind power.

In 2014, China's electricity consumption grew at its slowest pace for the first time in 16 years. The country's carbon dioxide emissions fell by 2% last year, the first drop in 12 years. <http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/> & <http://www.nature.com/>

### OFF LENDING LIBRARY

Available for borrowing at meeting nights

1. A History of the Blue Labyrinth
2. A Natural for World Heritage - the First National Park
3. Michael Mobbs' Sustainable Food
4. Michael Mobbs' Sustainable House

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 25th (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm** with [OEH](#) Officer Ben Hope speaking on Vertebrate Fauna of North Sydney Reserves "trapped on camera".

**May 27th (Wed) Field day: Kemps Creek SITA ADVANCED TREATMENT facility [SAWT] tour** - see waste turned into a resource. Leader: Alison Gilroy

**May 31st (Sun) Field day: The Spit to Manly Walk**, one of the most spectacular walks around Sydney, through [Sydney Harbour National Park](#). Bring morning tea and drinks; refreshments available at the Clontarf Kiosk. Morning tea will be a picnic at Grotto Point. The walk is 10km, about 3-4 hours. We will lunch at Manly, and then ferry back to the city. Catch the 8.13am train at Oatley [8.15 Mortdale]; change at Town Hall for Wynyard. At Wynyard walk to bus [Stand D](#) for no 180 bus to Collaroy Plateau [prepay only]. Leave the bus at Parriwi Rd stop before Spit Bridge. Leader: Erica Buzo. ☎8920 0926; 📠 0400 481 806

**June 22nd (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm** with Alan Fairley featuring "A trip around Gujarat, Western India."

**June 27th (Sat) Field day: Cowan to Taffys Rock via Jerusalem Bay**, with stunning views of Hawkesbury River. Leader: Adrian Buzo.

**July 27th (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm** with Chris Lloyd speaking on Seabirds.

**Aug 1st (Sat) Field day: Maddens Creek and Bulli Tops**, view the source of the Georges River. Leader: Sharyn Cullis

**Aug 24th (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm** with Leroy Gonsalves speaking on "Microbat predation on mosquitoes"

BHUTAN – THE DRAGON KINGDOM: APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>

Graham Fry's talk about this intriguing Himalayan country drew an audience of 57. In April 2013 Graham and Liz visited Bhutan during a tour of the 'wrinkled edge of the sub-continent'. Their group flew into Paro near the capital Thimphu and drove east in a small bus. Their route traversed a series of high passes and deep valleys that challenge road builders and divide the largely rural population into many ethnic and linguistic groups.



It was spring; rhododendrons and primulas were flowering in the montane forests, and apple, and peach blossom was appearing on farms along the snow-fed river valleys. In the eastern lowlands lemongrass, mandarins and bananas were under cultivation. All tour groups must be accompanied by a licensed Bhutanese guide and theirs was a forester expert in locating rare and spectacular birds including Satyr Tragopan, Beautiful Nuthatch, and Rufous-necked Hornbill. Bhutan is a biodiversity hotspot and its constitution requires 60% of the country to remain forested.

It is developing rapidly, but strives to maintain its traditional cultural, spiritual, environmental, and ethical values, towards improving Gross National Happiness. The constitution states, "It is the fundamental duty of every citizen to contribute to the protection of the natural environment, conservation of the rich biodiversity of Bhutan and prevention of all forms of ecological degradation."

The major sources of income are export of hydroelectricity to India, and tourism. Tourism is controlled by limiting visas and setting a high threshold for daily expenditure; a tourism royalty contributes to social services for disadvantaged citizens. Of thirteen traditional crafts practised in Bhutan, the most famous is weaving; Graham and Liz displayed examples during their talk, and the website describes some of the techniques, equipment, and fibres used:

<http://www.craftrevival.org/>. The map will open up more as well.

## SYDNEY HARBOUR WALK

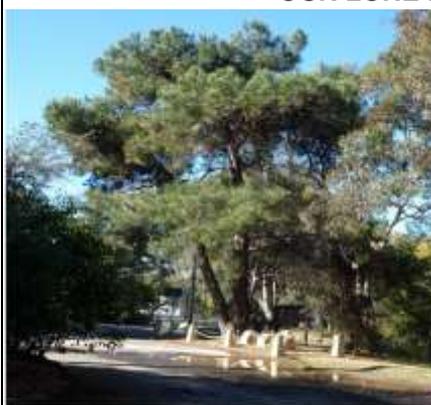
The Walk scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup> was postponed because of the bad weather forecast, and is now set for May 31<sup>st</sup>.

## AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOC NSW AGM

The AGM and quarterly gathering is on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May. East Hills Group will be hosting the event at the Lugarno Uniting Church, 909 Forest Road Lugarno, opposite the Chivers Hill shopping centre. Those attending need to bring their own lunch or purchase it locally.

In the morning, guided walks will be available in Oatley Park in conjunction with OFF. Access to the park is from Oatley Park Ave, Oatley. In the afternoon, after the AGM, the guest speakers will be Jeremy Smith, from the Wildflower Farm at Somersby, and a representative from Neutrog Fertilisers.

## OUR LONE PINE



The Pine Tree in Oatley Park.

There is a history of collecting cones with seeds from the original Lone Pine tree at Gallipoli and returning them to Australia for planting. The best-known planting in southern Sydney is the tree at the entry gates of Oatley Park. It apparently was planted in 1920, grown from cones collected by Owen John Davies. Owen's ashes are scattered at the base of

the tree. [From an article by Alan Fairley in the May edition of Doryanthes\*] See also [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lone\\_Pine\\_\(tree\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lone_Pine_(tree))

## PROTECTING THE HABITAT OF THE PYGMY POSSUM

EDO notes that the threatened Eastern Pygmy Possum on the NSW central coast will be protected after the High Court rejected an appeal by a developer against Gosford Council rejection of an application to build a waste recovery facility on a possum habitat site. Gosford Council argued that the proposed facility would have an irreversible impact on the pygmy possum, a threatened species. <http://www.edonsw.org.au/>

## FOR NOTING

**D**oryanthes\* Details about this Southern Sydney Journal of Art, Heritage and Natural History at: [doryanthes.info/](http://doryanthes.info/)

**M**embership of OFF Have you renewed yet? Details of Membership and means of joining are on our [website](#).

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

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. May 29<sup>th</sup> 10.30 Oatley ORSL Cliff Crane will present further research into Queen's Hall.



Cat & mouse



# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 6/15

June/July 2015

### MORE ON COAL MINES: NORTH AND SOUTH

The National Trust has joined the debate on mining, opposing open-cut coal mining proposals within listed Landscape Conservation Areas or that impact on those areas. It notes that proposed new coalmines and extended coal mining areas in the Upper Hunter Valley would have major impacts on the Muswellbrook/Jerry's Plains Landscape Conservation Area. The National Trust recognises that economic factors tend to dominate any considerations relating to mining activities; but it argues that if the only way mining can be profitable is by utilising environmentally or socially unacceptable practices, then these industries are simply unprofitable.

[www.nationaltrust.org.au/nsw](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/nsw)

The Australian Institute notes that mining plays a small role in the economy of the Southern Highlands. The major employing industries are service, manufacturing, and construction. While tourism is not separately counted in most statistical publications, it employs around six times more Southern Highlands residents than mining. Mining in the Southern Highlands makes modest contributions to state government royalties - some \$24 million, or 0.04% of state revenue, while the State provides millions of dollars of assistance to the mining industry every year.

Over a six-year period, state governments in Australia spent \$17.6 billion supporting the mineral and fossil fuel industries. <http://www.tai.org.au/content/coal>

### GASFIELD FREE CAMPAIGN

Echonetdaily reports that filmmakers on the north coast are launching a crowd funding appeal to help bring the story of the Bentley Blockade to the big screen. They want to create a feature length documentary that tells the story of the blockade, and the social movement that led to it. The film's director, Brendan Shoebridge, from Lismore, has been following and filming the fight against unconventional gas mining since early 2011. <http://www.echo.net.au/>

### A UNIQUE ROSELLA

Tasmania has its very own endemic Rosella known as the Green Rosella, Tasmanian Rosella or Mountain Rosella. They can be found from wet forests in the mountains to dry forests near the coast and in gardens, but not in cleared areas which lack trees.



They are charismatic birds with an adult body size up to 36 cm, making it the largest sized Rosella in Australia. Their upper body is mottled dark green and black, with the neck and underparts of the body are lemon-yellow. Their head is bright yellow with blue cheek patches and a bright red band across the forehead.

<http://www.backyardbuddies.net.au/b-mail>

### ROADS OR PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Dr Tim Williams, CEO of the [Committee for Sydney](http://www.committeeforsydney.com.au), has called for a transport revolution, condemning the \$15 billion WestConnex project. In his view there is no strategic or structural planner for Sydney at present, apart from Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), and RMS needs to be reconstructed. It has got it wrong on transport priorities, with no ambition to promote public transport. Tim considers we have a road transport upheaval here, not happening in other cities in the world that are reducing their highway capacity, not increasing it. <http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/>

### OUR LAND, OUR WATER, OUR FUTURE

A coalition of activist groups, *Our Land, Our Water, Our Future*, notes that in 1993 the NSW Government approved a massive coal seam gas licence stretching from the Illawarra, across suburban Sydney and north to the Central Coast called "PEL 2." It covers the water catchments that supply our drinking water. It has been renewed twice — first by Eddie Obeid, and later by Ian Macdonald. Now this CSG licence is up for renewal again, without public consultation. We are encouraged to demand that our objections be taken into consideration. See more and sign on at <http://www.landwaterfuture.org.au/pel2action?>

### PROTECTION OF PUBLIC LAND

The EDO notes that the NSW Land and Environment Court has overturned a plan to build a function centre in a Newcastle park, setting a precedent for the protection of public land from private development.

The court overturned the development consent granted by Newcastle City Council for *Annie Street Commercial Pty Ltd* to build a function centre, public kiosk, and car park on the site of an old bowling club in Newcastle's King Edward Headland Reserve, overlooking the ocean.

The community group, Friends of King Edward Park, challenged the project's approval on the site reserved for 'public recreation' under the Crown Lands Act. [Read judgment](#)

### NATIONAL TREE DAY 26<sup>th</sup> JULY

Planet Ark is celebrating 20 years of planting trees and urging Australians to participate for National Tree Day on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> (and Schools Tree Day on Friday 24<sup>th</sup>) July. They are looking for coordinators from councils, schools, national parks, Landcare, Bushcare, environmental and nature care organisations, community groups, businesses, faith and sporting groups to organise a tree planting or nature-care event in their local area.

Those taking part in National Tree Day will be contributing to Australia's largest community tree planting and nature-care event, and joining thousands in making a difference, connecting people with nature, and inspiring positive environmental change. <http://treeday.planetark.org/>

### DRAFT HURSTVILLE TREE MANAGEMENT STUDY

Hurstville City Council has placed the Draft Tree Management Study on public exhibition until Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June. It can be viewed at Council's Customer Service Centre, Hurstville City Library, and on the Hurstville Council website <http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/>. The aim of the Tree Management Study was to document every Council Street Tree within the Local Government Area and identify the



key characteristics of those trees. The community can submit feedback on documents Council has placed on formal public exhibition

### NOTE RECENT ARTICLES ON THE WEBSITE

- a) Seasonal birds in Oatley by David Waterhouse.
- b) The SAWT Facility\* [Site of Field Day May 27<sup>th</sup>].
- c) *Source to Sea* – Nepean; OFF members participated in activities organised by Greater Sydney Land Services to celebrate Volunteers in Bushcare along the Sydney Rivers.

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

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

**June 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Alan Fairley speaking on "A trip around Gujarat, Western India."**

**June 27<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day: Cowan to Taffys Rock via Jerusalem Bay.** This walk is for those who would like a more adventurous outing. It is classed as medium/hard and around 16km; one section of the walk is rugged and slippery. It is great walk, with stunning views of the Hawkesbury River, and the beautiful wildflowers that abound in the area. As it is an all-day walk, bring lunch, snacks, and drinks. For those coming by train, catch the 7:45am Wyong train from Central, platform 11 (travel in the rear 4 cars for the short platform at Cowan) arriving at 8.36am. There is track work on the Illawarra line that day, and we have to travel by bus to Central. Meet at Oatley at 6:45am to ensure the connection at Central. On the return, catch the 3:47pm train from Cowan. **Leader: Adrian Buzo** ☎ 0406 860 628.

**July 22<sup>nd</sup> (Wed) Field Day: Macleay Museum** (Natural History, Ethnography, & Historic Photo Collections) and **Nicholson Museum** (Antiquities) University of Sydney <http://sydney.edu.au/museums/> **Leader: Liz Cameron.** ☎ 9580 6621 (After 30<sup>th</sup> June).

**July 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Chris Lloyd speaking on Seabirds.**

**Aug 1<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day: Maddens Creek and Bulli Tops,** view the source of the Georges River. **Leader: Sharyn Cullis**

**Aug 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Leroy Gonsalves speaking on "Microbat predation on mosquitoes"**

**Sept 19<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Bus trip to Camden Park open day, Macarthur** home and garden. **Leader: John Davoren**

**Sept 26/ 27<sup>th</sup> Weekend Field trip Mt Bushwalker and other walks** on mid-south coast. **Leader: Deb Andrew**

**Sept 28<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Jennifer Whaite speaking on "Travels through Ethiopia"**

## VERTEBRATE FAUNA OF NORTH SYDNEY RESERVES

At the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting Ben Hope, Threatened Species Officer of [OEH](http://www.oe.gov.au/), gave an informative presentation to an audience of 50+ on the current use of motion detecting cameras in the Garingal and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Parks. The cameras are placed in strategic positions to detect wildlife, and provide insight into the variety of species and frequency of numbers. Ben scrutinises every image from the thousands of stills, to find, and to decipher the species for detailed information on the biological diversity of the reserves. The result is a literal snapshot of the health of the reserves, but this technique cannot totally replace experienced field officers utilising sight and hearing to detect the presence of the more elusive members of the threatened species club that, under our watch, has an ever-expanding membership.

KEMPS CREEK SAWT FACILITY\*: May 27<sup>th</sup>

Ten people boarded the OFF bus at Oatley station at 09.30 on a beautiful sunny autumn morning. We travelled out to the SITA Resource Recovery Park at Kemps Creek where an eleventh person joined us.

The Education Officer, Kristal Dilucchio gave a very interesting presentation, fielded many question from us, and then kitted us out in high vis vests, hard hats, and safety goggles. We then boarded the bus for the other side of the resource park, and after fitting bright pink earplugs, we entered the [SAWT](#) Facility.

The rubbish is processed in two different lines, one for green organics and kitchen waste (green bin) from Penrith council, and one for general and kitchen waste (red bin) from Liverpool Council.

Most of the processing occurs under cover in a huge hangar like building. The red bin waste has several stages of processing and sorting, by large magnet, a process to take out the aluminium, and manually, at this stage. The green bin waste does not need these steps. There are 14 tunnels for storing rubbish for the first 3-4 weeks (with air and water put in) where the decomposition is started. The material is then sifted and processed again before being put outside in long lines, in various stages of decomposition, mostly covered with tarps (especially in the cold weather, to speed up the decomposition).

The whole process takes from 14-16 weeks. Both products are very rich in organic nutrients, but the red bin waste is contaminated with some metal and glass fragments, and is only used for mine reclamation, while the green bin waste produces very high-grade compost for all general purpose landscaping uses.

It was evident that plastic bags are a significant problem for the managers of our waste, as are old VHS tapes. We resolved to lobby our respective councils to include kitchen waste for recycling (either the red bin system or the green bin system) as it cuts down the amount of waste going to landfill by about 60%.

After leaving SITA, we visited a nearby coffee shop, for delicious liquid refreshment, before the return journey. [Report from Alison Gilroy field day leader]

## WALK FROM SPIT BRIDGE TO MANLY

May 31<sup>st</sup> was the day for the rain-delayed walk originally scheduled for early in the month. Despite the unpromising weather, nineteen set out on the walk through the Sydney Harbour National Park. It was a largish group with a variety of walking capabilities. The walk around the northern harbour foreshores has a range of interesting flora, helpfully identified with signs. Because of the erratic weather, some unexpected species were in flower. Some of us enjoyed using a new and inexpensive app "Wildflowers Australia." With the spectacular scenery, photo ops, aboriginal rock carvings and abandoned fishermen's shacks to speculate about, we took rather longer than planned; finally signing off at Manly wharf at 2.10pm. Most enthusiastically continued

for a convivial lunch in a pub over-looking the ocean; there were not one but two different styles of band playing at us from different sides. We finally made it back to Circular Quay on



the ferry by 4.30pm with some hardy types still expressing interest in checking out the "Vivid" light festival! [Report by Erica Buzo walk leader]

## FOR NOTING

**D**oryanthes – Details about this Southern Sydney Journal of Art, Heritage and Natural History at: [doryanthes.info/](http://doryanthes.info/)

**L**and management workshops for Sydney-based landholders. Details for this and others at <http://eepurl.com/bo93Cr>

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

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. The next meeting will be a "coffee and chat" meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> July at the Library.





# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

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Issue 7/15

July/Aug 2015

### SEEKING POWERFUL OWLS

The Powerful Owl [POWL] breeding season is now in full swing on the Georges River, and there are volunteers from Campbelltown to Connell's Point following up to 20 pairs of POWLS. This is the easiest time to find them but, as with the fledglings in a few months, it is also one of their most vulnerable periods, as too much disturbance can lead to abandoning the eggs. If you see a POWL or evidence such as pellets, whitewash etc., or you want to get involved, please send an email off to [chris.lloyd@wivanga.com.au](mailto:chris.lloyd@wivanga.com.au)

### THIRLMERE LAKES UNDER THREAT

Rivers SOS [an alliance of over 40 environmental and community groups] notes that water has gone from the Thirlmere lakes and what were once vibrant wetlands have disappeared, leaving mud and very little else.

The Lakes are special because they have survived 15 million years without being fed by an active river system. They are sourced from surface water and register the local water table. They should have recharged by now, as after previous severe droughts, but the water levels continue to drop. Something other than drought is causing the loss.

Mining has possibly caused fracturing of the local aquiclude (rock barrier) beneath the lakes, facilitating hydraulic connectivity between the lakes and the deeper aquifers affected by mine impacts. Water may now be migrating through a fracture network (permeability paths) extending both vertically and laterally to the level of the mines.

The NSW Government appointed a committee of four independent scientists and a community representative to evaluate possible causes for the low water levels in the lakes. Their overall finding, delivered in 2012, hid behind the usual apology for inaction - more research must be done. [More at <http://riverssos.org.au/> & <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>]

### POPULATION GROWTH

The Australia Institute [TAI] notes that we have the fastest population growth among the major developed countries. Announced new infrastructure spending needs to be seen in the context of the population growth, as reduced per capita spending on infrastructure amounts to a cut in services, and puts huge pressure on major cities. We are now adding 400,000 people - more than a new Canberra - every year. ABS predicts population will be around 40 million in 2061 and 70 million by 2101 <http://www.tai.org.au/>.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF BIG TREES

Australia's largest trees of each species are recorded in a [National Register](#). Points are awarded based on a formula that includes circumference, height, and crown spread. The Register is an integrated list of Australian native trees, and naturalised exotic/alien trees. It is constantly changing as people nominate trees they have found. It is assembling an integrated list of Australian native and naturalised trees with the objective of locating and recording the largest specimen of every species.

[www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au/](http://www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au/)



Big tree, Royal National Park, Sydney, Australia

### HEALTHIER ASPHALT

Engineers Australia notes that Renewable asphalt is being pioneered in Australia using items such as toner from print cartridges and used tyres. Current best practice in Australia is for asphalt to include 30/40% renewable materials. These contribute to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and the recycled materials, innovative product mix, and design increase the life of the asphalt. <http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/news/>

### BACKYARD BUDDIES

There is a free education program run by the [Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife](#) giving simple tips to make your backyard safe and inviting for native animals. Backyard Buddies are the native animals that share our built-up areas, waterways, backyards and parks. Backyard Buddies value native animals and plants and want to protect them.

You can [sign up](#) to receive a free email newsletter about "buddies" you are likely to see in your backyard. B-mail is emailed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Look up [July B-mail](#)

### GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS

[The Conversation](#), an impressive academic website, notes that Australia could reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% of 2005 levels by 2030, using existing technology and while still growing the economy. This follows an analysis by [ClimateWorks](#), an independent, research-based, non-profit organisation. The Federal Government is [considering](#) what Australia's post-2020 emissions target should be. Many other countries have made their [pledges](#), and groups in Australia are calling for commitment to a strong target. <https://theconversation.com/new-analysis>

### PROPOSAL TO MOVE MEETINGS TO OATLEY RSL

It has been suggested that OFF monthly meetings be moved to Oatley RSL, and we want to know what you think about the proposal.

On the positive side [pros], the Club has better acoustics, a clearer sound system, a better projector and screen, and an easy Internet connection. There is no charge to use the meeting room, more comfortable seating, and air-conditioning. Many of us are already RSL members; it has a large car park and few activities on Monday nights.

On the "cons" side, the carpark is rather steep, attendees need to be RSL members, the Club closes at 9.30pm, but we could start earlier. We would not have exclusive use of the club, but the meeting area is enclosed.

Members are urged to speak to a committee member or email [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com) about their response to the proposal, and to do so by 30<sup>th</sup> September.

**LAND USE IN ROYAL NATIONAL PARK**  
 Friends of Royal National Park Inc.  
 Invite you to attend a Seminar  
 to be held in the Environmental Education Centre  
 159 Farnell Avenue AUDLEY HEIGHTS  
 Cost \$30 1pm - 5pm  
 Sunday 26th July 2015

Speakers: Dr Bob Young - *Views of Nature: what do we see in RNP*  
 Author of 'Understanding the Scenery RNP & IINP'  
 Judith Carrick - *Military History in RNP*  
 Author of 'History of Royal National Park 1879-2015'  
 Dr Ian Willis - *The Military and the Red Cross on the homefront*  
 Author of 'Ministering Angels: The Camden District Red Cross, 1914-1945'  
 Darren Robertson - *History of Youthworks*  
 Anglican Youth Camps, Port Hacking

RSVP before 20/7/2015 limited seating  
[jcarrick@ihug.com.au](mailto:jcarrick@ihug.com.au)  
 Ph. 4267 4380

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

**July 22<sup>nd</sup> (Wed) Additional Field Day: Macleay Museum and Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney**  
<http://sydney.edu.au/museums/> Macleay Museum has a temporary exhibition, Dhaga Ngiyahni Ngan.Girra (Where We All Meet), with kangaroo-skin cloaks, headdresses, belts, and a possum-skin blanket made by two Indigenous artists:  
<http://sydney.edu.au/museums/exhibitions-events/where-we-all-meet.shtml> . Catch 9.28 am train (2<sup>nd</sup> carriage from the front) from Oatley to Redfern Station, and walk to Macleay Museum near University quadrangle (about 1 km). Or alight at Town Hall Station and catch bus to Footbridge on Parramatta Road (very short walk but some stairs). Meet in Science Road outside Macleay Museum at 10.30 am. Bring lunch or buy it on campus (it will be university vacation). **Leader: Liz Cameron** ☎ 9580 6621 (any time); 📠 0419 280 473 (only on the day)

**July 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Chris Lloyd speaking on Seabirds.**

**Aug 1<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day: Dharawal NP and the Illawarra Escarpment.** Meet at the eastern entry point Darawal NP, opposite the Apple Shack (Orchard) Darkes Forest Rd, Darkes Forest at 9.30am. Allow 50 mins from Oatley. Our first walk is a gentle stroll of 2kms, mainly on a boardwalk through a flowery swamp to the Maddens Creek waterfall, headwaters of the Georges River. We will then drive 8kms to Sublime Point lookout, with beautiful views of the northern Illawarra coastline. Bring thermos and snacks for morning tea - picnic or a cafe for lunch. A second optional challenging walk of 2 hours is over the cliff-top, and deep into the rainforest behind Austinmer, with some steep stairs and ladders. **Leader: Sharyn Cullis** [For more info and car-pooling options ☎ 9579 1262, 📠 0421 714 391, [emailgo\\_river@hotmail.com](mailto:emailgo_river@hotmail.com) ]

**Aug 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Leroy Gonsalves speaking on "Microbat predation on mosquitoes"**

JUNE 22<sup>nd</sup> TALK: A TRIP AROUND GUJARAT

Alan Fairley reflected on the trip he and his wife Chiew had around the West Indian State of Gujarat last January. The State is a curious mixture of coastal subtropics, with crops of sugar cane, bananas, rice and cotton, and barren flat salt plains running endlessly to Pakistan. Around the edges of the plains are traditional villages famous for their colourful dress and traditional crafts, especially embroidery. Reports of abundant migratory birds were not disappointing; especially interesting were the sightings of Painted Stork, Damosielle Crane, and Lesser Flamingo. Other natural highlights were a Blackbuck reserve, the last group of Asian lions left in the wild in Gir National Park, and the herds of Wild Ass out on the salt plains. The pictures shown reflect the diversity and variety that make this State different from any other in India.

JUNE 27<sup>th</sup> FIELD DAY: COWAN TO TAFFY'S ROCK

The walk had 12 participants and was probably the most challenging OFF walk in many years. Weather was very good and walkers were rewarded with fantastic views of Lion Island and Pittwater.

It started in the dark for some as they took the bus from Oatley Station to Central for the 7.45 train to Cowan. It was a pleasant, smooth trip with picturesque views of mist in the valleys after Berowra. The walk began on the eastern side of the station, over the freeway, and then into the bush and steady downhill towards Jerusalem Bay, with a short detour to visit some Aboriginal carvings. Luckily, our leader, Adrian Buzo, knew where they were! The walk down to Jerusalem Bay followed a creek line, passing some wonderful rock overhangs and large gnarled trees. The view at Jerusalem Bay was beautiful and the water very clear. We encountered many walkers going in the opposite direction who seemed to be in training for the 100km Oxfam Walk from Brooklyn to Balgowlah.



A steep and rough ascent took us to a ridge; then we took a sidetrack to a rest stop of tessellated rock, and continued to our lunch stop at [Taffy's Rock](#). [Report by Vicki Bolling] More at <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=4351>

OATLEY PARK WALKING TOUR: TUES 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPT

The Tour is on Wattle Day, from 10am to 12noon. Hurstville City Library Museum & Gallery will host this special event to enjoy the spring wildflowers in Oatley Park. The event will celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society's commitment to protecting the Park. Bookings are essential; visit the Hurstville City Library Museum Gallery webpage: [www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/img](http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/img)

## ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTROVERSIAL PROJECTS

*Engineers Australia* notes that [RepRisk](#), a global data provider on matters of environmental, social, and corporate governance, has issued a list of the most controversial projects in 2014.

First on its list was a Metal Production factory in China, with a dust explosion that killed 146 workers and injured 114 others. A mine in Mexico came in second, with a major spill of sulphuric acid into the Sonora and Bacanuchi rivers.

Australia's Abbot Point Port Expansion made equal third, with ecosystem and community impact, waste, and pollution linked to the project.

RepRisk screened data from a range of public sources in order to measure [ESG](#) risks and rate them using a [Reputational Risk Index](#). [www.engineersaustralia.org.au/](http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/)

## USED STAMPS - FUND RAISING

Many Churches now collect used postage stamps for fund raising, selling them overseas.

As you enter the hall for our monthly meetings there is a box where used stamps can be placed. Please cut the stamps from the envelope leaving at least 3mm outside the perforations. Stamp collectors want the perforations.

If you have an old stamp collection, Jim Nicholson (☎ 9580 4458), who attends OFF meetings, is happy to collect them and deliver them to the Uniting Church.

## FOR NOTING

**C**oastal Integrated Forestry Operations. Three reports have just been released. Much more at [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/forestagreements](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/forestagreements)

**D**orvanthes – Details about this Southern Sydney Journal of Art, Heritage and Natural History at: [dorvanthes.info/](http://dorvanthes.info/)

**G**reater Sydney Landcare Network is a network of community groups working to protect, restore and improve the natural environment. [Much more at <http://greatersydneylandcare.org/>]

**I**llawarra Aborigines before Colonisation, 1-2<sup>nd</sup> Aug Conference at the University of Wollongong <http://iabc2015.blogspot.com.au/>

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

**N**ational Tree Day Sun 26<sup>th</sup> July – HCC - planting at Peakhurst Park, tree giveaway at Old's Park near Penshurst Library.

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. Next meeting 31<sup>st</sup> July "coffee & chat" at the Library. <http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/>

## A CONSERVATIONIST DILEMMA





# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 8/15

Aug/Sept 2015

### WATTLE DAY - WHY 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER?

If you are of my generation, you might remember celebrating Wattle Day at school on 1<sup>st</sup> August, an appropriate date in Sydney when the local wattles are in flower in our bushland. These include *Acacia longifolia*, *A. linifolia*, *A. terminalis*, *A. suaveolens*, *A. floribunda*, and *A. decurrens*. Wattle Day was held in NSW on 1<sup>st</sup> August as early as 1916. So, why is it now celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> September?



NSW was steam-rolled by Victoria for a common national day of celebration. In Melbourne, wattles flower later as the weather is cooler, and Victoria had a tradition of Wattle Day on 1<sup>st</sup> September. There was a Wattle Club in Victoria as early as 1899 and 1<sup>st</sup> September was their day of commemoration. Wattle as our national floral emblem was proclaimed on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1988, but it was not finally agreed to be the national date until 1992. NSW lost out to Victoria, and to make matters worse, the proclaimed national floral emblem is Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*), not occurring in the Sydney region. [Alan Fairley]

### BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY

[EDO](#) notes the Federal Government is seeking comment on a review of the first five years of Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. The review will assess its operation and implementation since 2010, its alignment with domestic and international biodiversity conventions and agreements, and examine ways to improve reporting, monitoring, and durability. Submissions are invited until 11<sup>th</sup> Sept.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/conservation>

### THE CLIEFDEN CAVES

The NSW government is currently planning to build a dam on the Belubula River near Canowindra, which would flood and destroy the [Cliefden Caves](#).

The many natural treasures found there include ancient caves with pristine formations, habitats for endangered bat species, and over 100 species of fossils found nowhere else in the world; to this can be added a rare thermal spring. The *Save Cliefden Caves Association* is working to protect the Caves for future generations from these rushed proposals, [www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/) [www.savecliefdencaves.org.au](http://www.savecliefdencaves.org.au)

### CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

The Citizens' Climate Lobby [CCL] beginning in the U.S. in 2008 now has members in Queensland and Western Australia. George Carrard, an OFF member, is helping spread it in NSW, and in particular in the St George area. He is organising meetings in Oatley (dates yet to be arranged) and he hopes that members of OFF will attend.

More at <http://au.citizensclimatelobby.org/>

### EL NINO 2015

The El Nino continues to strengthen in the Pacific, more than the monster event of 1997-98, according to the Bureau of Meteorology [BoM]. All the key regions of the equatorial Pacific used to monitor El Ninos have recorded sea-surface temperatures of 1°C above average for 10 consecutive weeks. That is two weeks longer than the previous record set in 1997, the bureau notes in its [fortnightly El Nino update](#). The climate models surveyed by BoM indicate El Nino is likely to strengthen, and persist into 2016, possibly until April. <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/weather/> <http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/>

### COPPER MINERS TURNING TO SOLAR POWER

The DeGrussa copper mine in Western Australia is soon to construct Australia's largest off-grid solar power and energy storage facility. The project is expected to have a significant impact on diesel consumption and carbon emissions at the site, saving 12,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. The solar panels will be spread over 20 ha, with 6 MW of battery storage. Once completed, it will be one of the world's largest integrated solar installations providing peak load power to a mining operation. <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/>



### PROTECT FAIRY POSSUM HABITAT

*The Wilderness Society* notes that the tiny Fairy (Leadbeater's) Possum needs the magnificent Victorian Mountain Ash to live in. It is the tallest flowering plant on Earth, over 100 metres.



In May, the Fairy Possum was rated as [critically endangered](#), or one-step away from extinction in the wild. Yet its valuable forest habitat is being logged, mostly to make cheap copy paper. A Forest Industry Taskforce is convening

to consider the best options for future management of these forests, but as the gears of government grind forward, the Mountain Ash continues to fall. [See more at: <http://www.wilderness.org.au/>]

### THE LIME KILN BAY WETLANDS

This recently released brochure is part of OFF's *Lime Kiln Bay Wetland Awareness Project*, designed to raise awareness in the local community of the importance of the wetland, to promote increased involvement and behavioural change, and to reduce detrimental environmental impacts.



Then Matt Mo's latest publication on The Lime Kiln Bay Wetland provides the first comprehensive description of the amphibians and reptiles at the site from

observations made between 2006 and 2014. 23 species were detected: 6 frogs (Hylidae, Limnodynastidae, and Myobatrachidae), 1 freshwater turtle (Cheluidae), 12 lizards (Agamidae, Carphodactylidae, Scincidae, Varanidae), and 4 snakes (Colubridae, Elapidae, Pythonidae). More at [off.oatleypark.com/LIME-KILN-WETLANDS](http://off.oatleypark.com/LIME-KILN-WETLANDS) & <http://off.oatleypark.com>.

### OATLEY PARK WALKING TOUR: TUES 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPT

The Tour will be on Wattle Day, from 10am to 12noon. Hurstville City Library Museum & Gallery will host this special event to enjoy the spring wildflowers in Oatley Park. The event will celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society's commitment to protecting the Park. OFF will provide morning tea in The Castle afterwards.

Bookings are essential. Visit the Hurstville City Library Museum Gallery webpage: <http://img.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/>

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

Aug 24<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with [Leroy Gonsalves](#) speaking on "Microbat predation on mosquitoes"

Sept 19<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day to [Camden Park House and garden](#). Originally the home of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, the home is open only one weekend a year, on Sat Sept 19<sup>th</sup> from 12 noon to 4pm. To get there, follow signs from Elizabeth Macarthur Ave, South Camden. House and Garden Tour - adults \$15, concession \$12 and family \$40; garden only -\$10. It is not readily accessible by public transport so those who would like to go but lack transport contact Leader: **Graham Fry** ☎9580 6621 who will try to arrange a lift for you. **NB** This is an informal OFF outing; there will be no central meeting point and no signing on or off, which means people can arrive and depart when they wish.

Sept 26/7<sup>th</sup> Weekend Field Trip Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances we have had to cancel this field activity.

Sept 28<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with [Jennifer Whaite](#) speaking on "Travels through Ethiopia"

Oct 26<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with [Dr Ian Wright](#) speaking on "Coal mining & water pollution in the Sydney Basin"

Oct 31<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day Rose Bay to Watsons Bay - explore the southern side of Sydney Harbour. Leader Julian Sheen

Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) Meeting & Social Supper 7.45pm with [Dr Arthur White](#) speaking on "Ghost Bats & Cane Toads"

Nov 28<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field day Brooklyn - [The Riverboat Postman cruise](#) up the Hawkesbury River. Leader: **Graham Fry**

Dec 7<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Christmas Picnic / BBQ

JULY 27<sup>TH</sup> TALK ON SEABIRDS

44 members and guests braved the chills and attended Chris Lloyd's talk. We were treated to another night of information peppered with Chris's down-to-earth humour. The title: "Real birds eat squid" was a clue that we were in for a bit of fun. The Albatross featured highly in the talk, and we learnt about their lives, partnering, prey, and most alarming, their vulnerability to long-line fishing practices, profusion of plastics and, of course, climate change. Without a huge change in human activity, the albatross, like so many of earth's magnificent species, faces extinction.

Chris' hands-on involvement with the iconic albatross has its up and downs; gentle natures can turn abruptly and leave a well-meaning scientist reeling from a close encounter with a specimen's large beak.

We learnt about the Five Islands off Wollongong and their importance in providing nesting sites for thousands of seabirds. Unfortunately, the suitable habitat on these islands is under threat from weeds such as kikuyu, coprosma, and bitou bush. Bush regeneration work is ongoing, but more volunteers are required to improve conditions for threatened birds. If you have experience, time on your hands and harbour a thirst for ocean adventure do let Chris know.

## MADDENS CREEK AND BULLI TOPS WALK

This walk of the 1<sup>st</sup> Aug was the second led by Sharyn Cullis this year, exploring sections of Dharawal NP. 26 members and friends enjoyed a very satisfying day divided into two sections. In the morning, we walked to Maddens Creek, one of the sources of the Georges River, and explored the area with a small waterfall. We lunched at Sublime Point enjoying sublime views of the south coast. Some of our party left after lunch, while an intrepid 10 continued on the second part - a steep descent of the escarpment to Austinmer. While only a 1km, it was a drop of 350m and most had very wobbly knees at the bottom. A former president of OFF had a lift waiting for him at the bottom while the rest of us tackled the climb back up. After 1146 steps and a number of stops, we eventually arrived, very satisfied with our achievement, albeit with tired legs and ankles. Great day, thanks Sharyn!

## MACLEAY AND NICHOLSON MUSEUMS, SYDNEY UNI

Eighteen gathered at the University on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July. Many were fortified by a coffee enroute, and some had already attended a rally against further mining by Wollongong Coal beneath Sydney's water catchment.

At the Macleay Museum, Curatorial Assistant Rob Blackburn gave an introductory talk on the history of the Museum and led us to explore it. The main attraction was a temporary exhibition of finely decorated kangaroo-skin cloaks and feathered headdresses and belts made by two Wiradjuri women artists; a video demonstrated the techniques they used to create the works. The Macleay collections include natural history specimens, ethnological articles, historic photos, and early scientific equipment. The diverse objects in the cedar display cabinets elicited many questions.

After an hour at the Macleay, the group strolled through to the Nicholson Museum housing the largest collection of antiquities in the Southern Hemisphere. The [50 Objects 50 Stories](#) display describes the intriguing, sometimes bizarre history of items selected from the collection of over 30,000 artefacts of artistic and archaeological significance, from Egypt, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, and the Near East.

The extent of the exhibits warrants a second visit. The outing concluded with a leisurely lunch in the Courtyard Café and shared reminiscences of the University.

Both museums and the Art Gallery are free; and open Monday to Friday and the first Saturday of the month. [Report by Leader Liz Cameron, more at <http://sydney.edu.au/museums/>]

## FAST RAIL - NOT ANOTHER AIRPORT!

Ross Coster has a very interesting article in BMCS latest [Hut News](#) on High Speed Rail [HSR]. He notes that the [Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development](#) has released reports on HSR, detailing the route, stations, speeds, costs, and patronage of the proposed network. These show that HSR can reduce travel times, noise impacts, promote development in Regional areas along the route, and allow people to travel in comfort. The HSR can be run on electricity from renewable sources, with little or no pollution, or greenhouse gas emissions.

**The time to build the HSR link to Canberra and Melbourne is now.** If the Western Sydney Airport is built, no politicians will risk the financial impact of HSR on airports. More at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/campaign-airport-fastrail.htm> & [suggested action in badgerys-flyer-17jun15.pdf](#)

## FOR NOTING

**D**orvanthes – Details about this Southern Sydney Journal of Art, Heritage and Natural History at: [dorvanthes.info/](http://dorvanthes.info/)

**G**reater Sydney Landcare Network is a network of community groups working to protect, restore and improve the natural environment. [Much more at <http://greatersydneylandcare.org/>]

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

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. Next meeting 28<sup>th</sup> Aug 10.30 RSL special 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event. <http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/>





### AUSTRALIAN FOSSILS

A fossil is the impression of a living organism that has been preserved. Fossils are preserved in substances such as sediments, coal, tar, oil, amber, or frozen in ice. There are three main types of fossils: body, trace, and chemical. As well as body fossils, which are actual skeletal remains, there are impressions of soft animals, plants, and footprints that have been left as mud hardened. Chemical fossils are the organic compounds and microscopic organisms that have left their mark in the rocks. Large numbers of fossils indicate that an enormous number of plants and animals have lived on Earth since life evolved more than 3,500 million years ago. Because of its relative isolation over millennia, Australia has a [unique fossil record](#), dating back some 3.2 billion years, close to when the Earth was stabilising its formation. Since separation of the former continent [Gondwana](#), an almost continuous record of the distant past is present in Australia today. This includes Pleistocene era Aboriginal body fossils, many of which were removed and sent overseas. The repatriation of many of these human remains is now being negotiated.

[www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/](http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/)

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

Renewable energy comes from natural processes that are constantly replenished. It comes from the sun, from heat generated deep within the earth; from heat from solar, wind, ocean, hydropower, [biomass](#), geothermal resources, as well as [biofuels](#) and hydrogen from renewable resources. Resources with significant opportunities for energy efficiency are widespread, while non-renewable sources are concentrated in a limited number of countries. Rapid deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency, and better use of energy sources, would increase in energy security and economic benefits, reduce environmental pollution and improve public health. Renewable energy sources can supply humanity with energy for another billion years. <http://www.geni.org/globalenergy/>

### SWIFTIES FACING EXTINCTION

The Wilderness Soc. notes government documents recently released reveal the [Swift Parrot](#) (*Lathamus discolor*) is bound for extinction. "Swifties" visit backyards from Melbourne to Brisbane, but return to Tassie to nest in the old trees of the forests in the South and East Coast. They are [threatened](#) largely by deforestation, and sugar gliders.



<https://www.wilderness.org.au/> & <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/Aug.05>

### LOCAL RAIL PLANS?

A long-term *Strategic Plan for Rail* was prepared in June 2001 by Ron Christie, then NSW Co-ordinator-General of Rail. The report included recommendations for doubling the Illawarra line between Mortdale and Hurstville, and an extension of an extra track to Oatley so that additional fast trains from the South Coast and Cronulla could overtake "all stops" services from Sutherland. With all peak trains boosted to eight carriages, the rail infrastructure would then have been sufficient to meet the estimated ten-year increase in demand on the South Coast line.

14 years later, the situation seems largely unchanged, with express travel times not much shorter, with the "all stops" trains often slowing them down! <http://103.4.17.5/christie/>

### FIRST DAY OF SPRING

A combined Hurstville Council and OFF event was held in Oatley Park on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept to celebrate the first day of Spring, Wattle Day and OFF's 60<sup>th</sup> year. The weather was warm and sunny, and 24 participants appreciated the park and its wildflowers. Alan Fairley led the walk around the Headland Track. <http://off.oatleypark.com>

### NO TO KOALAS?

[Echonetdaily](#) [28/08/15] notes the state government is unmoved by the plight of the north coast's last intact koala colony, and still intends to plough through it to build the new Pacific Highway south of Ballina.

### ECONOMY versus ENVIRONMENT

This debate is heating up with environmentalists described as saboteurs and vigilantes, and the government pledging never to put the environment ahead of the economy. It has announced that it will attempt to weaken national environment laws to make it easier for big business to have development proposals approved, and to make it [impossible](#) for the community to react to failure to enforce the law.

As Ross Gittins [\[SMH 19/08\]](#) pointed out, the current trend is to treat the economy and the environment as if they were in separate boxes, ignoring their major vital interactions.

With so much economic activity abusing the natural environment, damaging our soil, rivers, and aquifers, and destroying much habitat and many species, the environment is suffering badly.

As Ross put it, "the loss of growth and jobs [from environmental protection] might be greater than we are being told, but the longer we leave it, the higher those losses will be." <http://www.smh.com.au/>

### THE FUTURE FOR COAL

The Australia Institute [\[TAI\]](#) argues that there is [no room for more coalmines](#) in a world economy "tackling" climate change. The mining industries are constantly seeking more areas to mine, arguing that new projects will boost the economy. However, [studies](#) indicate that mining contributes much less to the economy than is claimed, and received state government subsidies of \$17.6 billion over a six-year period. Thousands of jobs have been lost from mines due to the low coal price, and the world moving away from coal towards renewables. <http://www.tai.org.au/content/coal>

### OATLEY LIONS FESTIVAL - 17<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. For over 30 years, this Village Festival has been one of the most popular community attractions in the St George area. Last year over 16,000 attended, and \$39,000 was raised in support of local projects. You are encouraged to walk, cycle, use public transport, or hop on the free Festival Courtesy Bus. On the day, the FCB bus driver may be contacted on 0407 296 802 to arrange pick-ups. For more information, see <http://www.oatleylions.org.au/> & [www.oatleylions.org.au/getting-there](http://www.oatleylions.org.au/getting-there) &



<http://www.oatleylions.org.au/donations>

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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept 28<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Jennifer Whaite speaking on "Travels through Ethiopia"

Oct 26<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with [Dr Ian Wright](#) speaking on "Coal mining & water pollution in the Sydney Basin"

Oct 31<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day Rose Bay to Watsons Bay - explore the southern side of Sydney Harbour. Leader Julian Sheen

Nov 20<sup>th</sup> (Fri)\* Field day Brooklyn [The Riverboat Postman cruise](#) up the Hawkesbury River was originally scheduled for Sat 28th Nov\*, but, the cruises are no longer on weekends, hence the \*change of date. The cruise includes morning tea and lunch and the cost is \$50 pp (adult) or \$44 pp (senior). Booking and payment will be at the next meeting. Leader: Graham Fry

Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) Meeting & Social Supper 7.45pm with [Dr Arthur White](#) speaking on "Ghost Bats & Cane Toads"

Dec 7<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Christmas Picnic / BBQ

AUG 24<sup>TH</sup> TALK ON MICROBATS AND MOSQUITOES

The meeting was shaping up to be an interesting presentation by [Dr Leroy Gonsalves](#) on microbat/mosquito relationships. Sadly, Leroy was not well, and unable to attend, but he did furnish us with the entire pre-recorded presentation (photos and commentary).

Unfortunately, the computer sound system did not respond well. The evening chair, Graham Fry, held the microphone to the laptop in the hope of amplifying the sound. He was doing fairly well, but halfway through a thunderstorm struck and drowned out the sound completely.

Because of the continuing technological shortcomings, Graham and others may be more inclined to favour OFF moving to the "state-of-the-art" Oatley RSL next year!

The audience of 43 had braved the elements to attend and we apologise for the shortcomings. However, Leroy has given us permission to upload his material onto our website, and we can now view it at <http://off.oatleypark.com/?cat=7>.

The principal point of the presentation was that scientific [research](#) points to saltmarsh mosquitoes as a valuable food source for the microbats feeding in open saltmarsh locations; and that human control of mosses will have a negative effect on microbats. There are now recommendations on the management of mosquito species to protect local wildlife feeding on them. These stipulations must be put in place to maintain healthy populations of microbats. [Report by Matt Allison Program & Publicity Officer]

## FIELD DAY: CAMDEN PARK HOUSE AND GARDEN

On Sept 19<sup>th</sup>, eight OFF members travelled in two cars to Camden Park,

generously opened to the public once a year by descendants of the original Macarthurs who still live there. An army of volunteers welcomed visitors and brought the property to life with entertaining facts about the



rambling building, garden, and the Macarthur dynasty. Showers threatened but the weather remained fine so visitors could stroll through the extensive and well-labelled gardens. A camellia and a bougainvillea in flower are amongst the oldest individuals in Australia and the wisteria looked just like this photo. Towering trees included ironbarks, bottle trees, kurrajongs, araucarias and kauris, and deciduous elms and oaks. The trees, dense shrubberies, and thickets of bamboo and olive were alive with birds; over 80 species have been recorded in the grounds.

Visitors were well sustained with delicious Devonshire teas, other food stalls, and there was a large garden stall, reflecting the active propagation program at Camden Park.

Camden Park was originally a large sheep station established by John Macarthur, near present day Camden. The house was designed by [John Verge](#) and built between 1832 and 1835. Today, part of the original estate contains the [Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute](#).

The remnants of Camden Park Estate are of social, historic, scientific and aesthetic significance to New South Wales and Australia and are listed on the [Register of the National Estate](#) and on State and local heritage registers

## FOR NOTING

**D**oryanthes – Details about this Southern Sydney Journal of Art, Heritage and Natural History at: [doryanthes.info/](http://doryanthes.info/)

**M**embership renewal for 2016 can be by direct bank transfer – [more info when the renewal notice is sent out]. New members are welcome. Click here for [details](#).

**M**ulga Road Books 89 Mulga Rd Oatley W is operated by Rotary Hurstville and has a wide range of quality second hand books. ■ <http://www.weekendnotes.mulga-road-bookshop/>

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Sept 29<sup>th</sup> [Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎0425 291 879].

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. [OHHS] Next meeting 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 10.15 at Oatley library, coffee and chat. <http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/>

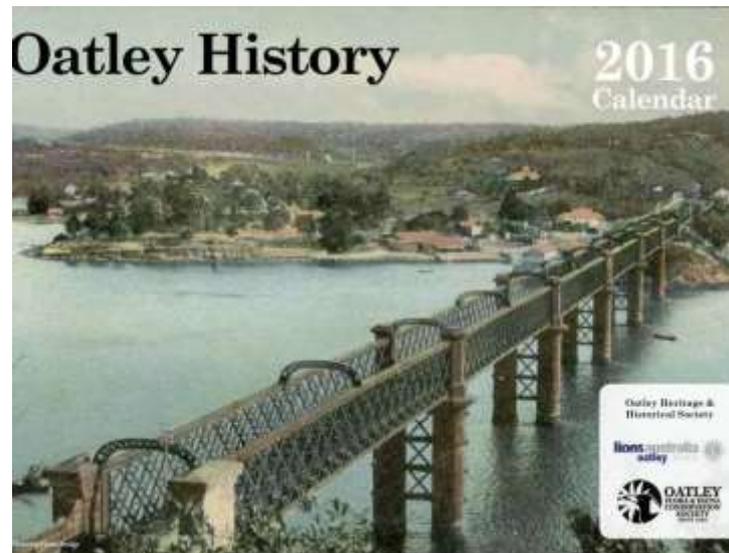
**S**peakers: Our Program Officer is looking for interesting speakers on subjects related to flora and fauna for our meetings next year. Please contact Matt ☎9570 8271.

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

## SYDNEY WATER SYSTEM

*Sydney Water* is proposing new regulations to improve management of the [wastewater system](#) in [wet weather](#). It is seeking input from customers, councils, community, environmental groups, and scientists. [See more on the [video series](#)].

You can sign up to [Sydney Water Talk](#) to join the online discussion. Some OFF members have attended workshops, and made comments for submission to the Environment Protection Authority in December. [See much more on our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>]



CALENDAR AVAILABLE AT LIONS FESTIVAL OFF OR OHHS STALLS FOR \$10.



### HEALTH OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

[WWF-Australia](#) says a damning report exposes failures that have resulted in UNESCO being misled on the health of the Great Barrier Reef, and that nitrogen, sediment and pesticide pollution are a major cause of reef decline. In particular, nitrogen leads to outbreaks of coral-eating crown of thorns starfish. For the last few years Australian government reef report cards have told the public and UNESCO that pollution levels were improving. However, an audit by the State of Queensland has found that these improvements cannot be relied on. The audit found other problems including poor government management, low uptake of best management programs by farmers, and increased land clearing in reef catchments. "This report clearly validates UNESCO's latest decision on the reef, which puts Australia on probation until real results are achieved, including actual reductions in pollution levels," said Dermot O'Gorman, WWF-Australia CEO." [http://wwf.panda.org/who\\_we\\_are/wwf\\_offices/](http://wwf.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/)

### URANIUM MINING IN KAKADU

Planning must begin now for the future of uranium mining at Kakadu National Park. According to the traditional owners, uranium mining cannot "go on forever" in Kakadu. The operator of the controversial uranium mine, *Energy Resources of Australia* (ERA), [announced](#) that it would not proceed to a feasibility study to extend the life of the mine. The Australian Conservation Foundation's Dave Sweeney said the news was "significant and positive." "We have long maintained that the project is poorly considered, risky and dangerous. It is good news for Kakadu in this very contentious and long-running story of uranium mining in Australia's largest national park."

Mr Sweeney said "This operation has never made economic sense; uranium [has been] particularly unviable since the nuclear disaster at the Fukushima plant in Japan."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/> & <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-04-09/>

### TREES ON THE WANE

There are more than three trillion trees worldwide, but that is only half as many as were around at the start of human civilisation, according to new research.

A study, published in the science journal [Nature](#), updates the estimate for the total number and density of trees on Earth. It found that each year more than 15 billion trees are lost through a combination of [deforestation](#), disturbances such as fire, and changes in land use. Since the beginning of human civilisation, the world has lost 46% of its trees.

The research team, led by Thomas Crowther, postdoctoral fellow at the Yale University, School of Forestry and Environmental studies, challenges previous estimates from satellite data by using more than 400,000 on-ground tree density estimates to produce the first [complete global map](#) of trees.

### OATLEY LIONS FESTIVAL - 17<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER

OFF ran a stall at the Lions Festival, as it has done for many years. It was a lovely and successful day. Lots of friends and other interesting and interested people dropped in. Many thanks to those who helped set up the stall, and to those who staffed it during the day. Just an hour or so assisting was a great help.



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

### CLEAN WATER

As [The Conversation](#) notes, much of the world still lacks clean, safe water. Progress on sanitation is [falling far short](#) of the United Nations' [Millennium Development Goals](#). The scale of the problem is [highlighted by India](#), where most sewage is dumped untreated into rivers and streams. Worldwide, contaminated water is implicated in [85% of all illness](#).

An even more pernicious problem with the world's water is widespread [contamination with antibiotics](#), fueling the rise of resistant superbugs. A recent survey in China estimated that [53,800 tons of waste drugs are entering the environment each year](#). Water is in urgent need of a cleanup. Installing or upgrading sewer networks and sewage treatment plants, and implementing regulations to curb the release of [antimicrobials](#) into waterways, will be crucial.

<http://theconversation.com/cleaning-up-the-worlds-water>

### WASTE INTO ENERGY

Echonetdaily notes that a study, funded by the *Office of Environment and Heritage* (OEH) and *Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers* (RDA-NR), has opted to investigate a potential renewable energy source. Tweed Shire is supporting the cutting-edge regional project to convert organic trade, household and industry waste into a renewable-energy source. The [Northern Rivers Biohub](#) study will encourage community and businesses to get involved by providing the biomass (such as trade, agricultural and food waste, parks and garden clippings) for conversion to energy through technologies such as [anaerobic digestion](#), gasification and direct combustion.

[www.echo.net.au/2015/09/](http://www.echo.net.au/2015/09/) & <http://sustainnorthernrivers.org/>

### BLUE MOUNTAINS 200 YEARS AGO

On 26<sup>th</sup> April 1815 Governor Macquarie, accompanied by his wife and a party of dignitaries set out on a coach trip across the Blue Mountains on the newly completed road. On the way Macquarie named Springwood, Blackheath, Mount York, Cox's Pass, Vale of Clywdd, Cox's River and then Bathurst, on the banks of the Macquarie River. A few years later, the Blue Mountains first building was established by Macquarie - a military post at Springwood. The site was on Macquarie Road between Homedale and Short Streets and a commemorative plaque is in place there. <http://www.bluemts.com.au/history-detail/>

### BLUE MOUNTAINS ENVIRONMENT UNDER THREAT

The Blue Mountains is a unique area — one that has been in the making for hundreds of millions of years. It is part of the system of National Parks in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, globally recognised for its outstanding universal values by UNESCO. However, the NSW Department of Planning is now recommending that key heritage and environmental provisions be downgraded. Many are protesting such a move and urging others to support them. See the BMCS [Letter to the Minister for planning](#)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct 26<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm** with [Dr Ian Wright](#) speaking on "Coal mining & water pollution in the Sydney Basin"
- Oct 31<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field day, walk Rose Bay to Watsons Bay** with famous views, bushland tracks, and historic landmarks. The walking is not difficult, and the distance not great, but the rewards are significant. Board the third carriage from Oatley at 9.13 or at Mortdale at 9.15. At Edgecliff, transfer to the 324/5 bus. Alternatively, you can join us at the Rose Bay Wharf at 11am. After the walk, at Watsons Bay, you can choose: a) the South Head walk, b) a ferry to Circular Quay or c) a bus to Bondi Junction. **Leader: Julian Sheen** ☎ 0415 4287 44
- Nov 20<sup>th</sup> (Fri) Field day Brooklyn The Riverboat Postman cruise** up the Hawkesbury River [originally Sat 28<sup>th</sup> Nov]. We will catch the 7:59am train at Oatley to Central and change to a Central Coast service that leaves at 8:45am. We leave the train at Hawkesbury River and walk about 100m to the wharf, the steps at the station are steep so be careful. On the cruise, we are provided with both morning tea and lunch, we return at 1pm. With appropriate train connections, we should be home by 4pm. The cruise will cost \$44, payable on the day; the company asks that if possible we have the right money so we can board without delay. We only have seven vacancies left, so if you wish to come please contact the Leader, **Graham Fry** ☎ 95806621.
- Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) Meeting & Social Supper 7.45pm** with [Dr Arthur White](#) speaking on "Ghost Bats & Cane Toads"
- Dec 7<sup>th</sup> (Mon) Christmas Picnic / BBQ**

SEPT 28<sup>TH</sup>: TALK ON TRAVELS THROUGH ETHIOPIA

At our September meeting OFF member, Jennifer Whaithe guided us along the trail less travelled, to the populous African nation of Ethiopia, a land that has surreptitiously changed the face of Oatley over the past decade or so. "What!" I hear you say. Well, Ethiopia is the origin of the humble coffee bean!

Ethiopia is one of the most fascinating, and little known, countries in Africa. Prehistorically it is widely considered the region from which *Homo sapiens* first set out for the **Middle East** and points beyond. Historically it is the only African nation to have defeated a European colonial power and retained its sovereignty. Subsequently, many African nations adopted the colours of Ethiopia's flag following their independence.

During her travels, Jennifer saw the source of the Blue Nile, (perhaps) the palace of the Queen of Sheba, the incredible rock churches of Lalibela carved out of the surrounding stone, and the fourth most holy city in the Muslim world, Harar. Jennifer wound up the travels with an adventurous trek in the remotely beautiful Simien Mountains that saw her burgled of most of her possessions during a thunderstorm. Fortunately, she lived to tell the tale to forty appreciative members and guests. [Summary by Matt Allison, Program officer]

## NO NEW COAL MINES

The Australia Institute [TAI] recently launched a petition to the President of France asking him to put coal exports on the agenda for the *Climate Change Talks* in Paris in December, and to request a global moratorium on new coalmines.

TAI states, "There is no room for more coal mines in a world economy that is tackling climate change. If Australia succeeds in its coal export ambitions, the world will fail in its efforts to tackle global warming".

"Our research shows that the coal industry does not employ many people, or pay much tax, but it does receive billions of dollars in taxpayer-funded subsidies from state and federal governments. Our research also shows preventing new mines from going ahead would be beneficial to the economy." TAI's petition is at [www.nonewcoalmines.org.au](http://www.nonewcoalmines.org.au). More information is at [Blue Mountains Hut News](#) & [Grandparents for Generational Equity](#)

## OATLEY PARK FLOWERS IN OCTOBER

The monthly 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.](#)



## SNOWY MOUNTAINS SUMMER EXCURSION

It is an OFF tradition to spend a week in the Snowy Mountains in January. The Smiggin Holes Hotel Chalet, the usual accommodation, has converted its common room into another unit. The alternative lounge is much smaller and without the atmosphere of the former common room. Alternatively, we may lodge at Charlottes Pass where rates are lower, but there is only one large, shared kitchen. We would like to hear from members.

a) Would you like to join an unofficial OFF trip to the Snowy Mountains next January?

b) If so, would you like to stay at Smiggins Chalet or at Charlottes Pass? Please contact Graham Fry or Liz Cameron (☎ 9580 6621, [fryg@zipworld.com.au](mailto:fryg@zipworld.com.au) or [lizc@pacific.net.au](mailto:lizc@pacific.net.au))

## FOR NOTING

**D**orvanthes – Details about this Southern Sydney Journal of Art, Heritage and Natural History at: [dorvanthes.info/](http://dorvanthes.info/)

**M**embership renewal for 2016 can be by direct bank transfer – [more info when the renewal notice is sent out]. New members are welcome. Click here for [details](#).

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Oct 27<sup>th</sup> [Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎ 0425 291 879].

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. [OHHS] Next meeting 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 10.15 Oatley library, coffee and chat. <http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/>

**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

## WE ARE MOVING TO OATLEY RSL !!!!

The OFF Committee has resolved that our meetings will be relocated to the Oatley RSL, commencing with the AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016.

This decision was not taken lightly, and there is some regret at ending a long and cordial association with the Uniting Church.

The new venue is suitable in many ways, with better acoustics, clearer sound system, better projector, and screen, and comfortable seating. It also has more parking.

The RSL has few activities on Monday nights and closes earlier than usual - at 9.30. Therefore, it has been resolved to start our meetings slightly earlier, at 7.30. Those attending should be RSL members (\$6 for one year or \$12 for three years), or be signed in before meetings.

Most OFF people are already RSL members and can assist visitors by signing them in.



### HEALTH OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

**WWF** notes that the UNESCO World Heritage Committee has voted to maintain pressure on Australia to deliver on its promise to restore the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

This decision requires Australia to deliver "effective and sustained protection" of the reef from threats including reckless industrialization and pollution. Australia is required to provide a first report on progress in just 18 months.

It welcomed Australia's "commitment to establish a permanent ban on dumping of dredged material from all capital dredging projects within the property" and to restrict new mega port expansions in and near the reef.

Following this decision, WWF expects a full ban on dumping in the reef's World Heritage waters to come into force within months.

"Australia has promised to prioritize the health of the reef over damaging activities like dumping dredge spoil. UNESCO will be watching to ensure that the condition of the reef improves in coming years, as will the 550,000 WWF campaign supporters and millions of people worldwide who are deeply concerned and want to see a stop to industrial destruction of the Great Barrier Reef," said Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International. UNESCO expressed concern that habitats and wildlife populations have declined, and that the reef's overall outlook is poor. It emphasized that major long-term threats such as water pollution and climate change remain and require action. [End-to-Great-Barrier-Reef-dumping](#)



### A WARMER WINTER

It is hardly surprising that people noting cool conditions in southeast Australia or snowy photos on their television will imagine cold conditions across the whole of the country. However, winter 2015 temperatures for Australia as a whole were above the long-term average, continuing the trend which has seen only two below average seasons since 2000. The national average winter temperature was 0.8° C above the 1961–90 reference period, making it the ninth warmest winter on record. These findings are verified from the entire Bureau network of nearly 700 temperature stations. <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/>

### OATLEY LIONS FESTIVAL - 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

OFF ran a stall at the Lions Festival, as it has done for many years. It was a lovely and successful day. Lots of friends and other interested people dropped in. The highlight of the day was the interactive model of the water catchment borrowed from the Australian Museum. This tied in well with OFF's project to raise community awareness of Lime Kiln Bay Wetland and changing behaviour to reduce detrimental environmental impacts. [More on the website](#)



### NEARING THE END FOR FOSSIL FUELS?

Wind and solar power have made great strides in recent years, accounting for 56% of [net additions to global power capacity](#).

Tesla's Elon Musk has introduced his new **Powerwall** – a wall-mounted energy storage unit that can hold 10 kilowatt hours of electric energy, and deliver it at an average of 2 kilowatts. This means that a domestic system plus storage would come out ahead of coal-fired power from the conventional grid. [Theconversation.com/the-tesla-battery-end-for-fossil-fuels](#)

### THE PROPOSED BADGERYS CREEK AIRPORT

"A draft Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] has confirmed a 24-hour a day operation with a lower quality of life for the people of Western Sydney," said Keith Muir director of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

"The people living in suburbs east of Parramatta have the fresh air and an aircraft curfew. Those living west of Blacktown and Liverpool will not. The noise from the 24-hour-a-day airport operation will cause sleep interruption for many people, and the road traffic associated with the proposed airport will create unacceptable levels of ozone-based air pollution". <https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>

### AN ARTIST ACKNOWLEDGED

The August entry in the [2016 Oatley History Calendar](#) co-sponsored by OFF has a colourful detail from a painting of Oatley West Public School in the 1990s. The artist needs to be acknowledged. His name is **John Corby**. [Noted by Julian Sheen]

### REGENT HONEYEATERS – chance to fund research

The Regent Honeyeater is a striking and critically endangered bird that breeds in Capertee NP. This year box and ironbark trees are flowering well in Capertee Valley and a PhD student at ANU, Ross Crates, has located a number of breeding Regents. He is using video cameras to monitor nesting pairs and is seeking funds to purchase more cameras. OFF members Liz Cameron and Shaun Keys-Byrne have already contributed to the project; others may wish to donate at the November meeting or at the OFF picnic in December. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/>

### CHANGE OF DATE FOR NEXT POWL WORKSHOP

I aim for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. to do some pellet analysis, data review and generally to chew over the last breeding season. If you have not been to a workshop before, let me know and I will give the details and directions to the venue. [From Chris Lloyd](#)



<[Chris.Lloyd@wiyanga.com.au](mailto:Chris.Lloyd@wiyanga.com.au)>

### HURSTVILLE COUNCIL VOLUNTEERS AWARDS 2015

"It was a pleasure to accompany John Davoren, our Newsletter editor to this year's awards at Hurstville Council Chambers. John was nominated by Oatley Flora and Fauna and received his award for the diligence and imagination he has put into our newsletter over the last eight years. The Newsletter is not only a resource for our members, but a reference point for conservationists across the city. Well done John", Julian Sheen

### RECENT ITEMS ON THE WEBSITE

- 1) Monitoring Georges River Health.
- 2) Sydney Rivers in Pictures and Poetry.
- 3) Dolphins on the Georges River.
- 4) 2016 Oatley History Calendar
- 5) Spring Walk in Oatley Park

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Nov 20<sup>th</sup> (Fri) Field day Brooklyn\* [The Riverboat Postman cruise](#)** up the Hawkesbury River [\*originally Sat 28<sup>th</sup> Nov]. We will catch the 7:59am train at Oatley to Central and change to a Central Coast service that leaves at 8:45am. We leave the train at Hawkesbury River and walk about 100m to the wharf, the steps at the station are steep so be careful. On the cruise, we are provided with both morning tea and lunch, and we return at 1pm. With appropriate train connections, we should be home by 4pm. The cruise will cost \$44, payable on the day; the company asks that if possible we have the right money so we can board without delay. We only have 7 vacancies, so if you wish to come please contact the Leader, **Graham Fry** ☎ 95806621.

**Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) Meeting & Social Supper 7.45pm** with **Dr Arthur White** speaking on "Ghost Bats & Cane Toads".

Note this is our last meeting in the church hall; so please bring a plate of food for the farewell supper.

**Dec 7<sup>th</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 1<sup>st</sup> (Mon) AGM at Oatley RSL** starting at 7.30pm. Supper will be served after the meeting. Members are invited to bring electronic images to share with the audience.

### OCTOBER 28<sup>TH</sup> COAL MINING AND WATER POLLUTION

Dr Ian Wright from the University of Western Sydney (UWS) presented startling evidence of environmental damage caused by coal mining in the Sydney Region. He worked as a scientific officer with Sydney Water investigating the impact of human activities on creeks and rivers in the Sydney basin before taking up a research fellowship at UWS in freshwater ecology and water pollution. He is now a full-time lecturer in water quality and management, environmental planning and environmental regulation areas. Dr Wright, comparing water samples taken upstream of mining activity with those downstream, found significant deterioration in water quality attributable to waste water discharge from mining operations. Toxic levels of salt, bicarbonate, zinc, nickel and other minerals impacted on aquatic life and degraded waters flowing through prized wilderness areas and World Heritage sites.

Long-wall mining, in particular, is responsible for subsidence in the bedrock of some creeks and streams feeding into Sydney's water catchments. He showed photographs of streams simply disappearing into cracks, and re-emerging further downstream polluted by mining waste. He was critical of the Environmental Protection Agency, responsible for regulating the discharge of wastewater from mines, arguing that pollution licence conditions needed to be tightened, requiring mining companies to meet higher standards. He noted that the regulator had lifted its game recently, but only under pressure from the community and government.

Dr Wright noted the need to keep the pressure on our politicians to introduce more stringent rules on mining activities, and saw his role as keeping the community (including OFF) informed of developments in the regulation of the coal industry. More at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

### FIELD DAY 31<sup>ST</sup> OCT: ROSE BAY TO WATSONS BAY

This walk was generally well reviewed and was given an overall four-star rating. Thirty-one OFF members and friends took part, ignoring threats of rain and thunderstorms. The weather was perfect for walking.

Features of the day included: a history of Rose Bay and Mr George Rose (1744-1818); seaplanes; Dumaresq Bay; the Hermitage Walk- the most extensive remnant bush on the south side of the harbour; Carrara (or Strickland) House; and Greycliff House.

We had lunch and a swim at Nielsen Park; and then moved on to Coolong Street, otherwise known as Swank Street (many miles from Struggle Street!). We then went to Vaucluse House Park, Parsley Bay suspension bridge and the Watsons Bay Pub. Some thought there were some steps too many, but most agreed that the world class views of Sydney Harbour were a rich compensation. [Notes from Leader Julian Sheen] See more photos at <https://plus.google.com/photos/>



### HARK TO OUR RELOCATION!

#### OFF meetings will be at Oatley RSL, from 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2016.

OFF first met at the Swimming Club Hall Myall St, Oatley West, then at the Uniting Church Hall on Gungah Bay Rd. In October 1986, the venue was changed to the Uniting Church Hall, on Frederick St. The OFF President at the change was John Blacker, the Secretary Lesley Cox, and the News Editor Alan Fairley. We have had a 29-year association with the current location, and the venue proved to be a great success. The decision to move from Frederick St has not been taken lightly, and there is some regret at ending such a long and cordial association with the Uniting Church. However, the new venue is suitable in many ways, with good acoustics, sound system, projector, and screen. It also has good seating and more parking spaces. **Meetings will be from 7.30 to 9.30pm.**

### SNOWY MOUNTAINS SUMMER EXCURSION

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**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Nov 24<sup>th</sup> [Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎ 0425 291 879].

**O**atley Heritage & Historical Soc. [OHHS] Next meeting 27<sup>th</sup> Nov Julian Sheen speaking on [Robert Townson](#) at Oatley RSL at 10.15am. <http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/>

**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.

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### MASS TRANSPORT

