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O.F.F. NEWS

Published by

OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.

January/February, 1995



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Greetings to all OFF members!! We trust you had an enjoyable holiday season and have returned from the break refreshed and eager to take on another year. It's going to be a busy one for the conservation movement. The State elections in March will no doubt evoke a plethora of promises from all political parties and give us the opportunity to express our approval or disapproval through the ballot box.

This time last year we were focusing on the results of the horror fires and trying to find some causes for the tragedy. Those questions have still not been resolved. New issues have arisen to occupy much of our attention this year - the woodchip licence fiasco, water quality in our river systems, wilderness vs access to national parks, the sale of Western lands and the continuing local problems of protecting suburban trees and bushland. It's going to be an interesting and busy year !!

A VIEW ON WOODCHIPPING

I have just returned from three weeks in Tasmania. As we drove around, it was impossible to be unaware of the massive logging operations throughout the island. On every road we passed trucks packed high with logs headed for the woodchip mills. A truck passes through central Launceston about every 5 minutes headed for the mill on the Tamar. From forests all around the north-east there is a constant stream of trucks bringing logs to feed the appetite of the chip mill. These are not left-over sawmill residue but giant eucalypts so large that they have to be broken up to fit on the trucks. As we camped at Launceston, the trucks roared past from 6.30am to 9.00pm without a break. In the north-west, goods trains were loaded with logs for Devonport; in the east, logging trucks delivered their loads to Triabunna Woodchip Mill and there was logging going on in

the furthest reaches of the south and west, even to the edge of the World Heritage Areas.

So it was with dismay and even disbelief that I heard reports that the Federal Government had not only renewed the 11 export woodchip licences but had in fact increased the licences by 2 and had failed to take into account the recommendation of the Minister for Environment, Mr Faulkner, to exclude areas of high conservation values.

Such ill-conceived and politically inept decisions have become a feature of the Keating Government and it is no wonder that anger and outrage spread quickly not just in conservation circles. Even the "man in the street" can see that the decision-making process and the decision itself was a farce and leaves the nation divided. As one of my neighbours said, "It's enough to make me cry."

What to do: Write to Paul Keating and to your Labor MP telling them of your disappointment and requesting them to reduce the areas set aside for logging, **and/or** that you could not support a party which shows such little concern for our native forests.

WESTERN LANDS SALE

At the end of 1994, the NSW Government introduced legislation to allow the purchase of 400 leases in the Western Division of the State. This will lead to massive land clearing and soil degradation. Many mallee and box communities are poorly preserved and many are of high conservation value. This decision goes against the recommendations of the Fisher Inquiry (1983) which found that perpetual leases were the most appropriate form of land tenure for the Western Division. It seems that the Labor Party will not oppose this Bill but only seek to amend it, a policy which undermines their credentials at a time when they are considered as an alternative government.

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

Please make yourself known as you come in.

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

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

COMING EVENTS

February 6 (Monday). ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Reports and the election of officers. 1994 was a good year for the Society so come along and show your support. It's your chance to comment on the running of your Society and perhaps to become more involved. Some of the committee members are standing down this year and there will be positions to fill for 1995. Also, it is a good chance to say hello to everyone after the break. The AGM will be followed by members' slides and super. Bring along some of your recent slides as well as a plate of food.

The **FIELD DAY** for the end of February will be detailed at the February 6 meeting and in the next *O.F.F. News*. The Programme of Activities will be available at the meeting of 27 February.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Fees are now due. With the approval of the Annual General Meeting, the fees for 1995 will be \$10 per household; concession membership will be abolished. Fees include subscription to *O.F.F. News* (11 issues a year) and an annual programme of events.

You may renew directly at the next meeting OR send a cheque to: Hon Treasurer, P.O. Box 52, MORTDALE. 2223.

BUSH REGENERATION In 1992, OFF received a grant from the Environmental Trusts to carry out bush regeneration work in the area west of Oatley Station at Gungah Bay, now known as Miles Dunphy Reserve. Past installation of a sewer pipe through the reserve had resulted in disturbance of the bushland and subsequent weed invasion.

The work has now finished and a report on the work has been submitted to the Society. In all, 3302 hours of work were completed on the site and 641 tubestock were planted. The most difficult area was along the creek draining from Mulga Road which had large amounts of rubbish, foreign fill and a heavy infestation of exotic vines.

The full report is available for loan at our meetings

COAST WALK - ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

A clash of philosophies is emerging over the proposal to reconstruct the Coast Walk through the Royal National Park.

The Hacking River Catchment Management Committee has received a grant to upgrade the track

and work to commence soon on the Wattamolla to Marley section based on a consultant's report. The proposal accepted by the NPWS is for a track 1.6 m wide, with gravel compacted surface and steel deck walkways over swampy or sensitive areas. The width of the track is determined by the need to take wheel based machinery in for construction and maintenance. The NPWS believes that such a wide, even track will open the area up to new groups of people and establish the walk as an international track.

At a meeting attended by a number of representatives of "interest groups" (including Alan Fairley for OFF), serious concerns were raised about the plan. Most wanted to see a re-routed track remain small scale and narrow and believed that a wide track was not only incompatible with the natural environment but would open up areas like Marley to trail bikes, vandalism and overuse.

It is important to resolve the issue now as the whole of the 32km Coast Track could end up as a "footpath". Is this what you want for the Royal? "Parks are for people" is an often-heard sentiment, but to what extent do national park values have to be compromised and the outdoor experience tamed to make it easier for people to get away from their cars?

NEW NATIONAL PARKS : GOOD NEWS

It was good to hear in December that the State Government had created 10 new national parks. Most are relatively small but do include the Gardens of Stone, an area north of Lithgow which conservationists have long wanted to protect from coal mining, and 6 areas of the south-east forest which have been protected from woodchipping.

Hon President : Graham Quint, 16 Evans Street, Peakhurst. 2210. 534 3239

Hon Secretary : Robln Dickson, P.O. Box 52, Mortdale. 2223. 5805663

Hon Editor : Alan Fairley, P.O. Box 148, Oatley. 2223. 570 8332



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THE WOODCHIPPING CRISIS

At the last OFF meeting, Graham Quint mentioned an excellent article on the woodchipping debate which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on February 6th. For those who missed it, some extracts are re-produced below.

Truth Gets The Chop by James Woodford

"If it turns out that some areas of nil conservation value were recommended for protection by the Federal Environment Minister, Senator John Faulkner, then the process he used will need to be seriously reconsidered.

But, with a few exceptions, this is unlikely to be the case, because what he was recommending was a moratorium on logging in these areas so they could be properly assessed - and the timber lobby knows it. Areas were listed for much more complex reasons than simply whether they were covered in tall trees. Aboriginal archeological values were taken into account, and ensuring that World Heritage areas were buffered was considered, as was the presence of endangered plants and animals.

The National Forest Policy Statement signed by the State and Commonwealth governments provides for the protection of high conservation areas which have been disturbed.

The industry knows that the real focus of the government's woes is the office of the Federal Resources Minister, Mr David Beddall, and that it is only a matter of time before his role in the fiasco comes under greater scrutiny.

He went on his merry way and has left the government with a headache which is quickly becoming a migraine. He has refused to recognise that at least some of the electorate believes conservation of important areas is a priority. His

December decision expanding the woodchipping industry seems to have been based on a misguided view that his job is to represent the industry only.

It now appears the processes he followed were so flawed and based on such bad advice that he has in fact damaged the industry and brought it under an unprecedented scrutiny, which may lead to a public backlash.

Woodchipping is not necessarily all evil. There is a place for the industry because huge amounts of timber are wasted in the sawlogging process and it does keep thousands of Australians employed. Everyone of us needs and uses paper, but should short-term economic necessity be at the expense of the tiny remnant of old-growth forests on the driest continent on the globe?"

STATE LABOR ON SIDE

The *Leader* recently reported the NSW Opposition leader, Bob Carr, as promising to stop the Helensburgh land development should the Labor Party win government on March 25. He also promised to expand the Georges River National Park to include Mill Creek and to include Crown land near Waterfall into the Heathcote National Park. As these are proposals for which this Society has given strong support in the past, we welcome Mr Carr's promises. It will be interesting to see if the Liberal Party will match these promises.

BUSH REGENERATION - ROYAL NAT. PARK

Working bees are being held to assist regeneration in fire-damaged areas of Royal National Park. Volunteers would be much appreciated. Work includes rescuing and relocating seedlings, potting-up at the nursery, and removal of weeds from riverside rainforest at Audley and wetlands at Bonnie Vale. Work is on week days and at weekends, from 8.00 am to 12.30 pm. Contact Patsy Nagle for details on 542 0635.

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COMING EVENTS

February 27 (Monday). NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN THE SUBURBS. A talk on Biodiversity and Conservation in Local Government areas by Dianne Campbell, Environmental Officer for Pittwater Council. Dianne has been overseeing a unique approach to protecting the environment in Sydney's northern peninsula, an approach which has become a model for other Local Councils. Dianne comes to us with high credentials as an interesting speaker, and what she has to say should be of importance to members of this Society. **The Programme of Activities will be available at this meeting.**

March 11 (Saturday). FIELD DAY. A walk along the shoreline of Sydney Harbour to Hermitage Reserve and Nielsen Park. About 4 km by easy track - beautiful scenery and historic interest. We intend to inspect Vacluse House at the end of the walk (entry fee is \$5.00, \$3.00 concession). Catch train from Oatley at 8.36 am or Hurstville at 8.42 am (meet in second carriage from the front). Change at Town Hall for Circular Quay where we get a bus to Sacred Heart Convent, Rose Bay. Anyone travelling by car should meet us outside the Convent at 10.00 am. Leader : Val Argall , phone 579 1874.

SUMMER AT SMIGGINS, JANUARY 1995

It is unfortunate that this year there was a sudden drop in attendance during the first (or children's) week at Smiggins Chalet. Probably the young people are growing up and developing other interests. But those who went took advantage of the fine weather and made trips to the more spectacular areas, such as the Blue Lake, Watsons Crags and Mount Kosciusko itself.

During the second week, the Chalet was almost fully occupied and, despite occasional doubts about the weather, trips to the Main Range included the summit of Kosciusko, the Lakes Circuit, the Blue Lake, Watsons Crags, Mount Twynam and Mount Tate. Lesser trips include a revisit to Mount Stilwell (behind the Kosciusko Chalet) with a side trip to the site of the abandoned restaurant and chair-lift south-east of that mountain. I understand that these operated during the 1960s and the chair-lift is notorious because of the deaths of two persons who were on it when it was shut down and who froze to death overnight.

A party attempting to reach the Chimneys, higher up the Thredbo River beyond Dead Horse Gap, failed to reach the summits. To do this trip successfully would involve leaving Smiggins at an early hour and avoiding the Big Boggy on the left (south) bank of the river. An easier alternative for the less fit or more decrepit would be to follow a

4WD track to the historic Cascades Hut and forget about the rocky-topped Chimneys !

Constance's Hut, up the Burrunguburre River (a tributary of the Snowy) , was again visited this year. This is an easy 10 km return trip from where the cars are parked about 7 km downstream from Island Bend. Members of our party tell me that the hut has been restored, which is of course an advantage should it rain.

I will merely mention some of the other trips made by small groups. They included the Porcupine from Perisher Valley, the Waterfall and Palaibo Tracks from Sawpit Creek and the walk from Rennix gap to the Giants Castle. The last-named was dropped from our programme some years ago because it was not thought interesting enough. But it possesses a wealth of sub-alpine flora !

We all wish to thank Norm and Win Tonkin for again opening their chalet to our members and their friends, and hope that this arrangement will be renewed next year. Harry Whaite

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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STATE ELECTION EDITION

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society is a non-party political organisation and it does not advise its members how to cast their votes in elections. But being a member of this Society assumes that you are interested in and concerned about environmental issues and see them as important determinants in the way you will vote. It has been said that this election could be a "make or break" one for the environment in this State. A government with green interests could make a great deal of progress to protect our environment, whereas the damage done by a bad one may well be irreversible. We are at a watershed and each person's vote could make a real difference.

Some very valid points were made by Peter Wright in an article in *Sydney Morning Herald* (9 March).

"This election campaign has seen Labor and the Coalition cancelling out each other's policies, issue by issue. But when environment is put on the scales, the Coalition has so far found it hard to match the weight that Labor is giving to the issue.

As a former Minister for Planning and Environment, Bob Carr is adopting environment, and old growth forest in particular, as one issue which he believes clearly distinguishes Labor from the Coalition. So far John Fahey has kept well clear of green issues. With his Coalition partners - the Nationals - breathing down his neck, he has found it isn't easy being green. The Nationals control all the land and resource portfolios except Environment, and have a major influence on the Government's direction.

The National's traditional anti-green influence was particularly evident in the wilderness debacle, when Fahey was forced to back down on his promise to declare 350,000 hectares of wilderness. In the end, only one third of that area was protected, a tiny proportion of the State's identified wilderness. The National Party's plans to sell off Crown land in the Western Division are still on the books.

There have, however, been some wins for the environment under the Coalition. Chief among these was the funding boost for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which was long overdue. The promise to protect parts of Jervis Bay, both on land and under water, has also been welcomed. The establishment of the Environment Protection Authority has brought greater strength to pollution control in NSW, and community programs such as Streamwatch and the Catchment Management Committees have meant greater public involvement in monitoring and restoring our degraded areas...

But the hottest issue of the campaign is undoubtedly forests and woodchipping. Conservationists view the next term of government as the one in which the fate of our remaining old growth forests will be determined. Labor's current program is streets ahead of the Coalition's. While the Coalition is phasing out old growth logging, Labor has a moratorium plan which should stop the worst of the logging in the short term.

The major improvements in the last four years have come about through the environmental concern of the non-aligned Independents who hold the balance of power in the Lower House. Coalition bills have been remodelled into responsible laws after negotiations between environmental groups, the Coalition and the Independents.

The Upper House has been a major obstacle for green issues. The Democrats have played an important supporting role, but their actions have been generally blocked by the Call to Australia Party. This time the Democrats look set to return Richard Jones, and the Greens should win the spot the lost to Fred Nile at the last election. The Greens are committed to policies that reflect those of the environmental groups, so a Green/Democrat balance of power in the Upper House can only benefit conservation."

MILO DUNPHY AS LOCAL CANDIDATE

An interesting new element has arisen with the nomination of well-known conservationist Milo Dunphy as an Independent for the seat of Georges River. Milo is an Oatley resident, member of this Society and known throughout the State for his dedication to the environment. He has been the

Director of the Total Environment Centre for 23 years and has been awarded the Australia Medal for his services to conservation. His policies are outlined in a pamphlet which should have been letter-boxed to everyone in the electorate. You can find out more by contacting Milo direct at 113 Mi Mi Street, Oatley, or by phoning 579 5543.

(All election comment by Alan Fairley, P.O. Box 148, Oatley 2223)

ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Both major party candidates for the Georges River electorate (Philip Sansom, ALP, and Marie Ficarra, Liberal) are friends of Oatley Flora and Fauna and both have had positive input into environmental matters while on Hurstville Council. Yet, as individuals, they will have difficulty influencing their respective Party's environmental policies. No doubt OFF members will have heard of some of the Party's policies already announced through the media. Below is a summary.

Labor

- Twenty new national parks in the first year, fully funded.
- A million hectares of wilderness to be declared.
- Wild and scenic rivers legislation.
- A ban on new canal estates and new ocean sewer outfalls.
- Significant coastal land acquisitions and restrict coastal development.
- Opposition to the privatisation of waste disposal.
- New policy on higher density/urban consolidation based on the co-operation of local communities.
- Strong support for Sepp14 Coastal Wetlands policy.
- Removal of State Forestry Dept from areas of high conservation and to assess areas to be logged according to the National Forest Policy.

- Comprehensive endangered species legislation.
- Establishment of seven new regional parks in Sydney.

Liberal

(Despite phone calls to Liberal Party NSW and Ministry of Environment requesting policies, none was received. The following summary is based on newspaper reports, Sunday March 12.)

- To promote a eucalypt planting program - \$23 million.
- A Premier's conservation taskforce.
- Continuation of the Environmental trust program for bush regeneration.
- Tertiary treatment plant and effluent reuse at Cronulla - \$170 million.
- Joint venture solar technology projects - \$64 million.

LOCAL ISSUES QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire to survey the environmental attitudes of local candidates was sent to Marie Ficarra, Philip Sansom and Milo Dunphy with a request to return it by 10 March for publication in *OFF News*. Neither the Liberal nor the Labor Party have returned this survey in time for printing. Below are some of the questions and the responses by Milo Dunphy.

1. Would you stop sand-mining in the Georges River? **Yes.**
2. Would you support the expansion of the Georges River National Park to include lands along Mill Creek and Barden Creek? **Yes.**
3. Would you support additional funding for national parks as already announced by Mr Hartcher, Minister for the Environment? **Yes. I would move for further increases and a shift away from National Party priorities.**
4. Would you protect the Georges River catchment by dedicating all Water Board

land in the catchment as national park, including O'Hares Creek? **Yes.**

5. Would you support the establishment a marine national park off Curracurrang (Royal NP)? **Yes. I have a draft bill on marine parks ready to table in parliament.**

6. Would you support the continuation of Environmental Trust funding for local bushland rehabilitation? **Yes.**

7. Would you work to prevent the expansion of Helensburgh and add its environmentally sensitive areas to Royal National Park? **Yes. I spoke at the Inquiry against these plans.**

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc Highlights of the Annual Report for the Year 1994

The year 1994 saw a continuation of the Society's now traditional format of monthly meetings and field trips, annual camping weekend, Snowy Mountains bushwalking vacation and participation in the national "Clean-Up Australia" campaign.

At the monthly meetings, there were many informative, inspiring and entertaining guest speakers with a wonderful selection of photographic slides. Because of an attendance of between 60 and 100 at these meetings, we can attract a range of top speakers. Highlights were Bob Wilson's talk on the Georges River, Doug Benson's "Plants and Geology of Sydney", Kim Brebach from the Threatened Species Network and Peter Galton's slides of the "Bounty". During the year a Members' Forum was introduced at which members are invited to raise issues of environmental concern or comment on the running of the Society. This resulted in the re-establishment of some Sunday field trips and representation to Hurstville Council with regard to local tree preservation.

In 1994 we were successful in securing a grant of \$15,000 to regenerate the Oatley-Como Walkway over a two year period. The National Trust have been contracted to carry out the work in conjunction with State Rail. Bush regeneration at Yarran Road and Gungah Bay (the latter now re-named the Miles Dunphy Reserve as a result of our efforts) has now been completed. It was financed by grants obtained by the Society from the Environmental Protection Authority and the Water Board.

Local tree preservation has been a major issue this year. Following protests and correspondence to Hurstville Council regarding removal of indigenous trees, several meetings were held with Council officers and staff. Many positive outcomes resulted from these meetings and follow-up meetings will continue. Other representations were made to Local Councils about the control of feral foxes and cats and the elimination of European wasps. Kogarah Council printed a bushland leaflet based on information provided by this Society.

The January bushfires were an unwanted feature of 1994 which resulted in the Society changing its Clean-Up Australia venue from the local area to the Royal National Park. The Society recognised the role of Hurstville Council and the local State Emergency Service for their part in managing the local area's bushland with regard to fire prevention.

To mark our 40th year of operation, a dinner was held in July. This was very well attended and possibly heralds a return to an annual dinner. Stalls were held at both Oatley and Lugarno Lions Festivals. Native plants were offered for sale and information and displays were provided. Another community service was to provide a judge for the Heritage House and Native Garden Competition.

We have continued to make representations to both State and Commonwealth governments on matters as diverse as legal aid for environmental issues, woodchipping, south-east forest protection, Georges River National Park and illegal shellfish collection. We are linked to a number of other environmental organizations whose publications are available for loan at our meetings. Financial and moral support was given to other conservation bodies, such as the Total Environment Centre, Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, Georges River Environmental Alliance and the Wilderness Society.

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(near the corner of Letitia Street), Oatley.

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

COMING EVENTS

March 27 (Monday). AFTER THE GREENING - THE BROWNING OF AUSTRALIA. A talk by **Dr Mary White**, one of Australia's best known palaeo-botanists and author of a number of books on the evolution of Australia's flora and landscapes. Those who heard Mary White at our meeting in 1992 will remember her as a wonderfully informative and inspirational speaker - both interesting and educational. This talk will concentrate on the research for her recent book which looks at the drying out of the Australian continent.

April 1 (Saturday). FIELD DAY. A walk in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park from Cowan to Brooklyn, part of the **Great North Walk**. The walk is about 11 km from station to station and should take about 4 hours 30 minutes. About half the walk is along a wide service trail and the other half on foot tracks. There are beautiful views and a great array of wildflowers but **WARNING!!** there are two steep ascents, one of 160 metres from Jerusalem Bay over the ridge, and another of 110 metres up to the service trail. We will be taking things easy and making lots of stops to look at flowers and views, but a reasonable level of fitness is required and a good pair of walking shoes. Bring lunch and a drink.

Meet at Cowan Station at 10 am. If travelling by train, catch the 8.36 am from Oatley (8.42 ex Hurstville) to arrive at Central at 9.06. Hurry to catch the 9.17 ex Central to Cowan, via Strathfield. It arrives at Cowan at 10.03 am. If travelling by car, it is best to drive to Hornsby and catch the train from there to Cowan as the return train from Hawkesbury River does not stop at Cowan. Leader : Alan Fairley, phone 570.8332.

PROTECTING OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

About 95 people attended our last meeting to hear Diane Campbell, Environment Officer at Pittwater Council, tell us about what her local council is doing to help preserve tree cover, to protect habitats and to encourage bio-diversity. Every suburb has problems of native tree reduction and threats to local bushland and the lower Georges River-Oatley area has a lot in common with what is happening in Pittwater.

It was encouraging to see that members of Hurstville Council took the trouble to attend the meeting - the City Engineer, Chris Little, was there, as were Councillors Marie Ficarra and Philip Sansom, both taking time off from a busy schedule of political campaigning.

Policies developed by Pittwater Council include :

- Community involvement to incorporate public ideas into the Annual Report, a legal document required under the Local Government legislation.
- A survey of native vegetation and a booklet to encourage the growing of suitable endemic native plants.

- A habitat and wildlife corridor map prepared for Council by a naturalist.
- Tree preservation definition widened to include bushland vegetation, with special emphasis on endangered plants and animals.
- Plans of management prepared for local bushland areas, and pamphlets printed promoting local bushland.
- The employment of consultants and casual employees to do bushland surveys and the use of students in surveys of park neighbours and to letter-box those near reserves informing them of work and the importance of the local bushland.

ANTI-WOODCHIP RALLY

A number of our members attended the Save the Forest Rally on February 19th at the Domain. The following message of support was read out and was applauded by those present :

"This Society deplores the decision to continue woodchipping in old growth forest. The Keating Government is out of touch with mainstream Australians. It will go the way of the forests if the decision is not reversed."



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THE BROWNING OF AUSTRALIA

When I was a boy, my mother would often state proudly "One day we'll have sixty million people living in this country". I think this pearl of wisdom originated late last century with Sir Henry Parkes, but I was never impressed. Then there was Billy Hughes earlier this century with his catch cry of "Populate or Perish" to warn us of the so-called Yellow Peril.

Back in 1964 - I remember the year because it was on an N.P.A. trip on which a good friend of mine died - we were discussing Australia's population, and I ventured the opinion, based on our generally poor soils and our aridity, that it should never have been allowed to rise above ten million. There was no disagreement. At that time, we had already passed the eleven million mark.

Therefore, I found it heartening that, during her talk at our March meeting, Dr Mary White suggested a maximum population of twelve and a half million for this country. She based her estimate on a requirement of five hectares per inhabitant, which would imply a total arable land area of 625,000 sq.km., or about 8% of Australia's land area.

Dr White's talk, basically devoted to the arid lands, was copiously illustrated with slides relevant to her subject. We have been long aware that, in the rainforests, the nutrient lies mainly in the top few centimetres of soil and that the clearing of this type of forest initially results in a few seasons of good crops before nourishment is exhausted. But I had not been aware that a similar restriction applies in the arid areas. Here the nutriment lies in the top centimetre or so of the soil and when the land is cleared that soil is likely to be blown into the Tasman Sea or even as far as New Zealand to be lost forever.

My regret is that every member of the Society was not able to be present to hear Dr White. Her talk was not without hope. She considers it possible that rehabilitation of our country will come from grassroot organisations such as Landcare, rather than by action of our politicians.

Thank you, Dr White, for a most thought-provoking evening.....Harry Whaite

Another opinion of the talk by Dr White from a long-time member was that, despite the depressing message, "she was the best speaker we have ever had". High praise, indeed!!

Dr White's clear message for a sustainable population was based on ecological and scientific arguments. She presented overwhelming evidence for stopping such practices as tree felling, land clearing and poor farming methods on arid lands. One comparison in particular stood out. She compared old growth forest to dinosaurs of the bush. Would we kill the last group of dinosaurs left in the country? Once we cut them down then they exist no more. Terrible mistakes have been made in the past and creatures like the Tasmanian tiger have been exterminated with living memory - these mistakes must not be repeated with our forests.

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COMING EVENTS

April 24 (Monday). A talk on the botanist, DANIEL SOLANDER by historian, Dr Edward Duyker. Illustrated with slides. Solander is best known in Australia as the botanist who assisted Joseph Banks on Cook's journey to Botany Bay, but he had other fascinating aspects to his life both in his homeland of Sweden and in countries as far afield as South America, Tahiti, England, Iceland and New Zealand. Dr Duyker has just completed a detailed study of Solander's correspondence which is currently being published, and is working on a biography, so there is no-one more qualified in the world to tell us about this man who contributed so much to early botanical knowledge and to natural history. Some advance copies of the book *Daniel Solander: Collected Correspondence 1753 - 1782* may be available at the meeting (a limited edition costing about \$50). If you enjoyed last month's talk, you're sure to enjoy this one also.

April 29 (Saturday). FIELD DAY. BOTANY BAY NATIONAL PARK. To commemorate the 225th visit of Captain Cook to Botany Bay, we will visit the northern side. Meet at 9.35 am in the park opposite the bus terminal at La Perouse. If not going by car, take the 7.35 am train from Oatley or the 8.00 am from Mortdale to Martin Place and walk up to Elizabeth Street for the No. 394 bus to La Perouse, which leaves Circular Quay at 8.45 am.

The walk is not strenuous and is about 8 kms. I hope to be back at La Perouse in time to visit Bare Island (tour 3.30 pm, duration 30 mins) and the museum (open until 4.30 pm). Bring HAT, WATER and SUNBURN CREAM as the coast is rather exposed. Leader : Janet Aitken, phone 790 2211.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Following the success of last year's Anniversary Dinner, another Society get-together/dinner has been arranged for this year.

Date. Saturday, 8th July at 7.00pm

Place. St George Masonic Club, Mortdale

Cost. \$18.00

Val Boyan will be taking bookings at meeting nights. The last day for payment will be Monday 26 June

FIELD DAY REPORT by John Blake

Inclement weather in the morning of 11th March failed to prevent a dozen intrepid walkers assembling at the Rose Bay Convent at 10.15 am for what was to be a delightful walk along the Hermitage Foreshore of Sydney Harbour National Park.

A morning tea stop in the vicinity of Hermit Point was greeted by the first rays of sunshine which remained with us for the rest of the day. It was noted that along the edges of the walking track lantana and belladonna were in profusion. Much regeneration work needs to be done in this area. Some effort has been made to

protect the trunks of indigenous trees from the claws of feral cats and possibly possums by wrapping metal sheeting around the bases of sundry trunks.

Later in the morning, an inspection was made of the external architecture of Strickland House before the group climbed Mt Trefle. Pleasing prospects to the south-west of Port Jackson and also north-east towards Watsons Bay and Macquarie Lighthouse were satisfying compensations for the climb.

Lunch was eaten at Nielsen Park after which the afternoon was spent at the beautiful Vaucluse House.

A most interesting history of the Wentworth family was displayed on a number of panels and, together with authentic furnishings from last century, readily transported one back in time to a more leisurely age.

As the 4 pm bus conveyed us to the city, all agreed that it had been a most enjoyable day.

Field Day - April 1st

Unlike most OFF walks, this one - part of the Great North Walk from Cowan to Brooklyn - was a challenge and the 21 brave souls who attended were certainly glad to reach Hawkesbury River Station. Despite the effort, everyone agreed it was a great day.



95/5

O.F.F. NEWS

Published by

OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.

May/June, 1995



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DUAL-OCCUPANCY RETHINK

Local Councils are beginning to react to the flood of ratepayers' complaints about the policies of urban consolidation and dual-occupancy and it looks like the new State Government may also be about to resolve some of the weaknesses of the present situation.

Originally planned as a means of reducing urban spread and of helping family members develop addition self-contained accommodation on one block, dual-occupancy has become a focus of developer greed, with no consideration given to social and environmental consequences and is undermining the quality of life in existing communities as the infrastructure fails to cope. The real problem is that Councils and residents have no say over developments in their areas and any attempt by Local Councils to place sensible restrictions on developments have usually been overthrown by State Planning Policies introduced by the former Coalition Government.

In Council areas such as Hurstville, Kogarah, Sutherland and Bankstown, indiscriminate sub-division under the banner of urban consolidation has seen town-houses and over-sized dual-occupancies squeezed onto blocks destroying the native tree cover that gives the areas their character, increasing traffic and overloading the sewers and stormwater systems that were not designed for such loads.

The former manager of the Water Board, Bob Wilson, claims that mindless urban growth along the Georges River is leading to declining water quality, and will affect the region's fishing and oyster industry. "Increased urban consolidation," he says, "is diminishing the tourist, commercial, social and ecological value of the river."

Local newspapers are full of stories in which disgruntled residents complain about over-development

and feel frustrated that government is not sensitive to their views. Lugarno residents are objecting to a development which would see 30 townhouses on a two acre block. At Milperra there is a proposal to put 107 townhouses on flood-prone land. At Picnic Point beautiful tree-covered riverside blocks have become prey to developers' greed. In Sutherland, Mayor Genevieve Rankin has waged a long battle to control the explosion of dual-occupancy in the Shire.

The Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Mr Craig Knowles, has made the first moves to prevent such abuses of the policy. Over the next 12 months, a single new SEPP (State Environmental Planning Policy) will be produced which will give local communities more say over developments and allow councils to seek exemptions based on their own special circumstances. We look forward to more information about this policy and concerned residents should write to Mr Knowles' department expressing their views and urging him to hasten the SEPP.

WATER QUALITY - TIDAL POOLS

Kogarah Council has conducted bacterial water testing of tidal swimming pools along the Georges River. The good news is that the results are well within the recommended guidelines of a maximum 300 cfu/100ml. The results were : Carrs Park - 42cfu/100ml and Oatley Pleasure Grounds - 55cfu/100ml.

LAKE PEDDER RESTORATION

The Society has received the journal of the Lake Pedder Restoration Committee which sets out the rationale for restoring this drowned lake and answers the seven most commonly asked questions. The journal will be available at the desk at next meeting.

DARLING RIVER - RUNNING OUT OF TIME

Information on the state of the Darling River and inland wetlands has been received and will be on the desk at the next meeting.

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

Please make yourself known as you come in.

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

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

COMING EVENTS

May 22 (Monday). Author and educator, David Waterhouse, returning by popular request. David has spoken to OFF meetings previously on rainforest pigeons and on his research in the Illawarra rainforest. His topic for this meeting is **Reminiscence of the Rainforest.**

May 27 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY. ROYAL NATIONAL PARK.** Come back to the Royal now that all the tracks have re-opened and the bush is regenerating after the January 1994 fires. Walk from Heathcote Station to Karloo Pool, then down alongside Kangaroo Creek to Head of Navigation, and return to Engadine Station. About 15 km, with some easy rock hopping along Kangaroo Creek where the track is vague, and a steep ascent back to the plateau. Beautiful pools along Kangaroo Creek. Catch train, 8.49am ex Mortdale and 8.51am ex Oatley, arriving at Heathcote at 9.09am. Leader : Ralph Newbould, phone 579 4889

DINNER/GET-TOGETHER

Have you got your tickets yet for the 1995 dinner?

Date. Saturday, 8th July at 7.00pm

Place. St George Masonic Club, Mortdale.

Cost. \$18.00.

Val Boyan will be taking bookings at meeting nights. The last day for payment will be 26 June

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

** There were 20 people on our last walk to La Perouse, Cape Banks and Little Bay. The weather was beautiful and the arrival of the *Endeavour* replica in Botany Bay added to the interest of the day.

** 70 members and guests attended the last meeting at which Dr Duyker gave a fascinating account of the life of Daniel Solander. Slides illustrated aspects of Solander's varied and interesting life in places as scattered as Tahiti and Iceland. An article on Dr Duyker and his book on Solander appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the Saturday following our meeting.

** *The Things We Do*. A summary of what the Society did in 1994 is available from the desk on meeting nights. Please take one and distribute it so that the Society's work gets maximum exposure.

** We have ordered some laminated posters for use in displays. *Bush Enemies* has colour photographs of common garden plants which invade bushland and *Bush Vandals* urges care for our bush and gently tries to persuade through cartoons for people to do the right thing.

KOGARAH ENVIRONMENT REPORT

We have received a copy of Kogarah Council's *State of the Environment* Report, a document required under the Local Government Act of 1993. It details the current state of the environment within the Municipality, areas of environmental sensitivity and programmes to protect and improve the local environment. The OFF Committee intends to make a submission for the current year's report and any members who may have something to contribute are urged to read the report and give written comments to the Hon Secretary.

FOREST PROTECTION

There will be a petition at the next meeting directed to the Senate of the Federal Parliament, seeking permanent protection of Australia's remaining native old growth forest and the creation of employment incentives to establish timber plantations. Please read the petition and sign if you agree.

LOCAL HISTORY PROJECT

During 1995 Kogarah Library is undertaking an oral history project to help fill gaps in the recorded history of the local area. Especially welcome are memories of people on such topics as life between the wars, life postwar, local sports, recreation and business. If you have anything to contribute, contact the Reference Librarian, Ion Sloggett, on 588 0882.

OATLEY PARK BATHS

The Leader reports that Hurstville Council is to spend \$68,800 on upgrading Oatley Park Baths. It will include repairs to the wharf and picnic tables/shelters.



95/6

O.F.F. NEWS

Published by

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Price 10 cents

June/July, 1995

COMPOSTING

At our next meeting, Greg Longmuir of Canterbury Council will tell us all about the joys of composting and recycling our household waste. Here are a few points to think about before hearing Greg's practical ideas.

What's the big deal about composting?

Composting

- helps control soil erosion
- reduces the amount of waste needing central processing
- conserves energy
- saves money
- turns waste into resources
- reduces water usage on gardens
- benefits soil and plants

Help nature recycle !!

The composting of the organic component of the waste stream reduces the concentrated leaching of nutrients from tip sites into the water table. In addition, by reducing the volume of refuse, composting extends the life of the tip sites.

What can be composted?

Anything which was once part of a plant or animal. Not recommended are pet waste, meat scraps and dairy products. Remember you are building a biological birthday cake when you make compost, so vary the ingredients.

Compost is ALIVE. A balanced diet is made up of both carbon ("browns") and nitrogen ("greens"). The ideal weight ratio is 30:1 respectively.

All living things need air and water to thrive and so it is with compost. Over time your heap/bin will "cook up" the ingredients and produce rich compost for potting mix, seed-raising mix, top dressing and general fertilising.

- The waste from your household would fill your home in one year.

WOODCHIPPING

Woodchipping is no more than a latter day variation of that most primitive form of economic activity - slash and burn farming. It is a low value-added enterprise that makes only a minute contribution to our export receipts.

Max Walsh, S.M.H., 29 March (in Colong Bulletin)

The latest move in the programme to stop woodchipping of our old-growth forest is the establishment of a Woodchip Licence Fighting Fund. With the Prime Minister's unsatisfactory "compromise" which protects only one third of the high conservation areas identified by the Minister for the Environment, the fight is now to challenge the validity of the Government's decision. Money donated to this fund will be used to test the validity of the 13 new woodchip licences in the courts.

Cheques may be sent to : Woodchip Licence Fighting Fund, c/o The Office of Senator Spindler, 62 Wellington Pde, East Melbourne. 3002.

DEPOSIT ON BOTTLES

The election of a Labor Government in NSW marked the beginning of a count-down to the introduction of Container Deposit Legislation (CDL). It was an election promise of the ALP that CDL would be introduced if industry failed to meet waste reduction and recycling targets necessary for the State to achieve a 60 percent reduction in waste by the year 2000.

A recent survey found that nine out of ten people believe Coca-Cola should use returnable refillable bottles with a 20 cent refundable deposit. At present, the Coke company has no plans to introduce returnable refillable bottles nor a refundable deposit on their range of beverage containers. If Coke remains intransigent, the NSW Government could pass legislation forcing it to act in a more environmentally responsible manner.

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COMING EVENTS

June 18 (Sunday). FIELD DAY- GEORGES RIVER. By special request, a Sunday walk close to home. Walk from Panania to Revesby via Georges River National Park. The plan is to start from Panania Station at 10 am, have morning tea at Yeramba Lagoon watching the birds, head along the river to Cattle Duffers Flat, lunch at Burrawang Beach, explore the national park and return to Revesby Station by way of Morgans Creek and Little Salt Pan. Train departs Oatley 8.36 am, arriving Sydenham at 8.59 am; change for the East Hills Line and catch the 9.26 am to Panania. The return will be by either the 2.36 or 3.06 pm train from Revesby. Leader: Laurie Bruce - Tel. 502 3061.

June 26 (Monday). Composting Made Easy. A talk by Greg Longmuir, Senior Environmental Health Officer with Canterbury Council. Composting and worm farms have become an essential part of an environmentally friendly garden. Come along and find out how it's done properly.

July 1 (Saturday). FIELD DAY - BLACKHEATH, BLUE MOUNTAINS. Walk from Evans Lookout to Neates Glen and Grand Canyon. Lunch above Beauchamp Falls, then back to Evans Lookout. A steep descent, but with handrails - ferny glades, rock overhangs, rainforest and a tunnel. The walk is not hard and is 8 - 9 kms. Meet at 10 am in the Evans Lookout car park. Turn east off Great Western Highway, 2kms on the Sydney side of Blackheath Station. Give yourself 2 hours to drive from Oatley. Leader: Janet Austin : Tel. 579 2375.

July 8 (Saturday evening, 7.00 pm). DINNER and GET-TOGETHER at St George Masonic Club, Mortdale. Cost: \$18.00. Many people have already booked for this enjoyable night, but if you have not, Val Boyan will be taking bookings and money at the next meeting night (26 June).

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

** Over 60 people were present at the last meeting to hear David Woodhouse's entertaining and informative talk on rainforests.

** The thought of 15 km of walking, some along rocky creek banks, must have scared off most of our regular walkers as there was only a handful on our last walk down Kangaroo Creek. Those who attended said it was a wonderful walk with the creek running clear and lots of large pools and little cascades.

** Laminated posters on common bushland weeds and what makes a bush vandal have been purchased by the Society. They will be available for perusal at the next meeting.

FRIENDS OF YERAMBA LAGOON

A number of people have got together to help clean up and look after Yeramba Lagoon, that

stretch of fresh water to the right of Henry Lawson Drive as you approach Picnic Point. The lagoon is an important area for migrating birds. Over 100 species of birds have been recorded in the area, including unusual species such as Baillon's Crake and Black-faced Monarch.

The group has had a rubbish clean up and there is a weed removal project in progress in conjunction with the N.P.W.S. The biggest problem facing the lagoon at present is the introduced water lily which is almost covering the whole surface.

If you would like to become involved in the Friends' activities, please contact Jill Molan on 772 4030 or Chris Dewhurst on 660 6545.

A.W.A.R.E. The rescue service for injured native fauna. Also for rescue and capture of native animals. For emergencies, phone 525 0010



95/7

O.F.F. NEWS

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Price 10 cents

July/August, 1995

TREE PRESERVATION

Another meeting of the Hurstville Council's Tree Preservation Working Party was held on June 20th. It was attended by Councillors Bryan McDonald, Marie Ficarra and Dick Swanton, Council Officers Chris Little, Andrew Sharp, Phillip da Pra, Julie McInnes and Rob Casey, and community/OFF representatives Alan Fairley, Sharon Cullis, Graham Quint, Debbie Andrew, Joan Aston, Andrew Steward and Nicole Hawick.

The outcomes were very positive. The Tree Preservation Order (TPO) of Hurstville has been strengthened and published widely in the local papers. The value of trees to the community has been promoted in the *Leader*. Posters will be printed to promote tree preservation. Council envelopes will contain TPO information.

It was decided to have free tree giveaways of tubestock, with information about the tree, its care and its growing habit. These trees will be indigenous native trees grown from seed collected by local volunteers.

There will be another meeting of the group in September. It is hoped that discussion will be expanded to include wider environmental issues such as urban planning and consolidation.

WIDENING OF HENRY LAWSON DRIVE

An argument has developed between the R.T.A., Bankstown Council and environmental groups over a proposal to widen the 1.3 km section of Henry Lawson Drive between River Road and the Electricity Sub-station at Picnic Point. Anyone who knows that road would agree that it is potentially dangerous, especially at high speeds,

but conservation groups, including the Bankstown Bushland Society, do not see widening and straightening as a solution to these problems.

The issue has become another of those classic cases of an engineering solution versus the community interest.

The road widening will impact severely on part of the Georges River National Park. Other impacts include :

- An increase in volumes of heavy traffic using the road;
- Destruction of a large number of trees;
- Threat to rare and endangered plant species;
- Scarring of the visual amenity of the riverine corridor;
- Increase in the loss of native animals due to road kills.

This road has only recently been designated as a "Tourist Drive".

In an article in its recent newsletter, Bankstown Bushland Society (BBS) argues that the following is needed:

- Traffic, especially trucks, should be encouraged to use the M5 by increasing the on/off ramps onto the Expressway and abolition of the M5 toll;
- Load limits for trucks should apply to Henry Lawson Drive and a speed limit of 60 kph;
- Remedial measures such as improving problem curves could be undertaken without bushland destruction.

BBS is conducting a survey of public opinion of local residents on this issue. Copies of the questionnaire will be at our next meeting.

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(near the corner of Letitia Street), Oatley.

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

COMING EVENTS

July 24 (Monday). Meeting night. Dr Michael Bryden from the Department of Veterinary Anatomy, University of Sydney, will speak on the **Conservation of Marine Mammals in Australian Waters** - a topic of great interest to conservationists. The protection of whales has been one of the success stories of the conservation movement, but there is still a lot to be done.

July 29 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Heathcote National Park. One of the classic walks around Sydney, **Waterfall to Heathcote on the Bullawarring Track.** Meet at Waterfall Station carpark for a 9.00 am start. for those travelling by train, catch the 8.19 am at Mortdale (8.21 at Oatley, 8.39 at Heathcote), arriving 8.44 at Waterfall. Distance is approximately 10 km along a track which has some steep and rocky sections but is mostly gentle and under good tree cover. There should be some early flowers. Leader: Lesley Cox, contact 579 3782 (H), 350 5739 (W).

August 13 (Sunday). An extra Field Day for those who want a Sunday walk. Bundeena coastal circuit, Royal National Park. Catch the 9.30 am ferry from Gunnamatta Bay (Cronulla) to Bundeena. Coastal heath, wildflowers, Aboriginal engravings, wonderful views. Some rock hopping. Bring water and lunch. Leader : Mamie Clark, contact 546 3570.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

** 61 people were present at the last meeting to hear the very informative talk on composting - an excellent turn-out for a cool evening in the middle of winter.

** The Sunday walk to Georges River with Laurie Bruce was much enjoyed by the 13 people who attended.

**Copies of Alan Fairley's new walks handbook *Discovering Royal National Park on Foot* will be available at our next meeting. Discount price: \$7.50

Walk Report from the Neates Glen-Grand Canyon Trip - from Janet Austin

It was cold and windy when 32 walkers set off down Neates Glen. An overnight fall of rain resulted in the streams and waterfalls being at their prettiest in the subtly changing canyon light. We found sunshine for our first stop where the canyon widened. Later there was near mutiny when we left the main track for the steep and narrow descent to the top of Beauchamp Falls where we had our second stop. All was forgotten when we saw the sunlit sandstone cliffs and Mt Banks and Lockley Pylon across the valley.

Yet another great walk!!

COMPOSTING

Some points made by Greg Longmuir at our last meeting

The four main principles of composting are:

1. **ALIVENESS** - mould, fungus and little creatures like worms are natural; don't use any chemicals.
2. **DIVERSITY** - put in a mixture of kitchen waste, newspaper, herbs, egg shells, vacuum cleaner contents, etc.
3. **AERATION** - there is a need for air in the compost; keep lawn clippings, etc, in a layer about as thick as your hand; turn it regularly.
4. **MOISTURE** - good compost should be 50-60% moisture; you can't overwater good compost; moisture keeps away vermin like mice and cockroaches.

Hurstville and its Development Plan

Community disquiet and a grass-roots backlash against the adverse effects of overdevelopment and "urban consolidation" have led Hurstville City Council to repeal its Residential Development Control Plan. What this means precisely for the environment of Hurstville is still not clear, but there is no doubt that a review of development and planning issues is badly needed.



OFF NEWS

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95/8

August/September, 1995

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MULGA ROAD DEVELOPMENT

A large development is planned for 47-67 Mulga Road, West Oatley, the site of Les's Butcher and four houses. It is proposed to build shops and units to 3 storeys high. Such a development is totally out of character with the Oatley West area and an excessive over-development of the site. The proposal seems to be an underhand way of getting units into Oatley West. It will adversely increase traffic and is an inappropriate development for the area. It will seriously affect the amenity of the area both for the immediate neighbours and the local community in general.

A Petition of Residents has been organised and sent to Hurstville City Council. Local Councillor Philip Sansom, who is strongly against the development, is helping to organise the petition. If you have not already signed this petition, you might make your views known to the General Manager, Hurstville City Council or to the Member for Georges River, Marie Ficarra.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The election for Local Councils to be held on Saturday, 9th September, is a great opportunity to make sure we have local representatives who are responsive to community needs, know the importance of protecting green spaces and have good conservation ethics.

There will probably be a big field of candidates in every ward, so careful examination of their credentials will be important if we wish to make our vote count for the environment.

There are at least two candidates from Peakhurst Ward, Hurstville, who have proven environmental records. They are Philip Sansom and C.W.(Chicka) Derwent.

Philip Sansom has been a labor Councillor on Hurstville Council for the past 4 years. He has strongly supported the OFF Society's tree preservation measures, fought developments which are out of character with the area, worked towards re-instatement of the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area and has been instrumental in getting weekly recycling services established.

Chicka Derwent is known to many OFF members and has attended our meetings. He is a Residents candidate, with a wide knowledge and interest in local bushland, polluted drainage, siltation, dumping and weed infestation. He believes bushland regeneration and street tree programs can be improved. Chicka has supplied the Society with detailed policies on such matters as recycling, traffic management, bush regeneration and community consultation. These will be available at our next meeting.

OFF members who have long memories will realise that it was Aldermen Alison Bailey and Ross Stewart who supported the removal of the healthy Angophora trees from Marine Drive last year (see *OFF News* 94/8), voting against the Tree Preservation Officer's recommendation to retain the trees and arguing that it was only fair that residents who had too many trees should be able to remove some of them. Here is an opportunity to tell Ross Stewart (who is standing again) what you think of his attitude to tree preservation within our community.

Hurstville/Kogarah Councils - free workshops on water reduction, home composting and worm farming. Saturday 26 August. Tel. 588 0845

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

COMING EVENTS

August 28 (Monday). Meeting night. Following last month's excellent speaker from Sydney University, we are pleased to have another expert from that institution. This time it is **Dr Richard Whittington** who will tell us about that curious Australian animal, the platypus.

September 2 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** West Head and Lambert Peninsula, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. The intention is to travel by car to West Head and then do a series of easy walks to lookouts on both sides of the peninsula. There will be Aboriginal engravings, lots of wildflowers and wonderful views over Pittwater, Cowan Creek and Broken Bay. Bring lunch and drinks. It may be possible to arrange some lifts for those without cars at the next meeting. Meet 9.30am at the parking area at the junction of McCarrs Creek Road and West Head Road (beside the road bridge over the creek). About an hour's drive from Oatley. There is a \$7.50 per vehicle entry fee to the park. Leader and contact : Alan Fairley, phone 570 8332.

September 23 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Please note that this field day is **BEFORE** the September meeting not after it as usual. Another wildflower bonanza!! A walk around Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. If you haven't been here in Spring, you shouldn't miss this opportunity. There will be plenty of flowers and birds. Meet 10.00 am at the Barren ground parking area. Turn left at the top of Jamberoo Pass; take it slowly as it is easy to miss the sign. Bring lunch and drinks. Leader and contact : Val Boyan, phone 533 1013.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

The Society is to have a stall at both the Lugarno Lions fair on September 10 and Oatley Lions fair on October 21. These two functions are major publicity opportunities for the Society, a chance to present the Society to the community and to have a chat with locals. We sell native plants, Oatley Park booklets, have give-aways and lots of conservation information. Three or four regulars usually help out manning (or personning) the stall. We will be calling for volunteers to help, especially for the Lugarno fair at Gannons Park. All assistance will be much appreciated.

Report on Field Day, 29 July, Waterfall to Heathcote on the Bullawarring Track.

Saturday proved perfect for walking. There were 19 in the group and as usual much good humour and chatter. It was a good walk for flowers and birds. Boronias, eriostemons, grevilleas and banksias were blooming and cockatoos chattered. A lyrebird made an appearance at Lake Eckesley where we lunched. Altogether a very pleasant day.
Lesley Cox

BLACK-COCKATOO NEEDS HELP

The Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union has adopted the Red-tailed Black-cockatoo as its major project for 1995. This beautiful bird is threatened because of the decline in old growth forest which contain required nesting hollows. In the West in particular there has been serious interference with its favourite food tree, the Marri, which is also a favourite for woodchipping. If you wish to help, send a donation to : RAOU, 415 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East, Vic. 3123.

FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTS CONDEMNED

The Australian Conservation Foundation has issued a statement strongly condemning French testing at Moruroa Atoll. It calls for a boycott of French products, the cessation of sales of Australian uranium to France, the signing by the French of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the closure of its test site. It urges all environmentalists to act now and write to Prime Minister Paul Keating and Foreign Minister Gareth Evans making them aware of your concerns.



O.F.F. NEWS

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95/9

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MULGA ROAD DEVELOPMENT

The Consequences of Poor Urban Planning

The issue of inappropriate and unsustainable urban planning and development and the problem it causes was well illustrated by the public meeting on Tuesday 29 August at Oatley West Public School where more than 800 voted unanimously to oppose a gross overdevelopment proposal of multi-storeyed units in West Oatley.

The meeting opposed all such developments and urged that the Scenic Foreshore Protection Zoning be reinstated.

The development proposal has been made possible by an appalling loophole in planning controls created by Hurstville Council with its new Development Control Plan (DCP) and Local Environment Plan (LEP) 1994. It is hard to imagine how trained 'expert' professional planning staff at Council can have failed to foresee such a disastrous scenario.

Whilst the Council has rejected the proposal, their shaky LEP may encourage the developer to make an appeal to the Land and Environment Court. Costly legal fees could become the ratepayers' responsibility in any attempt to protect the social fabric and environmental integrity of this neighbourhood.

Sharyn Cullis (From the Newsletter of Georges River Environmental Alliance, of which OFF is a member)

Editor's note. It is important that we follow up on the community anger expressed at the meeting regarding over-development. One positive thing we could do is to comment on the new Development Plan. Write to Council saying that the new DCP should

- a) eliminate the loophole which allows multiple residences to be attached to a shop in commercial zoning;
- b) re-introduce the Scenic Protection Zone with tight controls over the height and density of housing developments.

WHY GROUPS LIKE O.F.F. EXIST

Recent newspaper headlines tell it all

- "Nature hitting its limit - report."
- "Salt, pollution spell slow death for rich farmland."
- "Global warming a threat to wildlife."
- "Sea of garbage still a big threat."
- "State shame over wetlands record."
- "Seabird deaths blamed on fishing."
- "Cyanide fishing endangers Pacific corals."
- "Slow death of the once wild Snowy River."
- "Clearing threatens Jervis Bay wildlife."

Living as we do in a "State of Degradation", the battle seems never-ending, but it is too important not to be fought. Our ecological future depends on each one of us.

POPULATE *and* PERISH ?

"There is a limit on the population growth that this continent, fragile and battered as it has been over the last 200 years, can take. That has got to figure in the assessment of immigration intake from year to year."

"Sydney is simply too large. Sydney is up against its natural boundaries". Bob Carr, NSW Premier.

For two hundred years growth has been regarded as not only good but essential, but in recent years this attitude has been challenged. In 1992 the NSW Dept of Planning requested comments on Sydney's future and was swamped by submissions saying that Sydney was already too large. The Federal Inquiry into Australia's Population Carrying Capacity (1994) received letters of which 95% were opposed to further population increase.

Every increase in population imposes social and environmental costs, so the debate must continue and it must be free of any racial overtones. Estimates of the continent's long term human carrying capacity vary from one to one hundred millions, so there is a long way to go before consensus is obtained.

(Thanks to *River Post*, No.16, for some of the information in this article).

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September 25 (Monday). Talk by architect and historian Bob Irving on **Bush Huts, Architecture without Architects.** Many of us have camped overnight in some wonderful old huts, full of character and of ghosts from the past. Another special night which you could regret missing.

October 21 (Saturday). Oatley Lions Festival

October 23 (Monday). David Noble, photographer and bushwalker. **Kanangra and Wollemi National parks.**

October 28 & 29 . CAMPING WEEKEND at Jervis Bay. More details in next *OFF News* or from Val Argall on 579 1874.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

- The Society had a stall at the Lugarno Lions Festival on September 10. Val Douglas and Alan Fairley who manned the stall reported that it was a successful day, with a lot of interest from locals including some potential members. Quite a few native plants were also sold. We will also have a stall at Oatley Lions Festival on October 21.
- 36 people attended the West Head walk on September 2. We managed to pick the first day of rain for 45 days, so we got somewhat wet, but everyone agreed the day's activities were enjoyable, with a nice mixture of Aboriginal engravings, views and wildflowers.
- Talk on Platypus. This was another excellent evening, with an expert sharing his knowledge and wonderful photographs. Richard pointed out the consequences of the loss of valuable riverside vegetation caused by sand-mining and the effect of turbidity, siltation and bank erosion on platypus populations. Many people were surprised at the number of platypuses which have been recorded from the Shoalhaven River.
- Help for member. Nancy Bainsbridge would appreciate a lift to OFF meetings if anyone is coming

from Revesby as she hates to miss the speakers but no longer has a car. If anyone could help, ring Nancy on 772 3818.

WELCOME ADDITION TO NAT. PARKS

The Carr Government has recently announced new national parks : Gardens of Stone (near Lithgow), Cudmirrah (near Sussex Inlet), Conjola (near Milton), Popran (between Dharug and Brisbane Water), Jervis Bay and a series of parks in the south-east forest. With extensions to existing parks, the additions total 70,000 hectares.

PROTECTION OF NATIVE VEGETATION

A new state Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP No 46) was gazetted on August 10 to help prevent the inappropriate clearing of native vegetation. It covers such local government areas as Blue Mountains, Gosford City, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee. It is a policy that requires the assessment of proposals to clear native vegetation and the consent of the Director of the Dept of Land and Water Conservation. The aim is to conserve remnant vegetation , biological diversity, endangered plants and communities and habitats for rare and endangered fauna.



O.F.F. NEWS

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TELECOMMUNICATION EXPANSION

A public meeting was held recently by AUSTEL (Australian Telecommunications Authority) to assist with the review of the Telecommunications National Code. O.F.F. contributed to the review by submitting comments on the present code and suggestions for a revised code.

The general feeling at the meeting was that the present code is inadequate and that major overhaul is required.

It became apparent that the general public, and also many Local Councils, did not know of the code's existence, were unaware of their rights or of the methods required to lodge objections or enter into negotiations with carrier companies.

There are three licensed carrier companies at present - Telstra, Optus and Vodafone; however, in 1997 a further 36 licences will be issued.

The Australian government has decreed that each carrier company "rolls out its own infrastructure", i.e., lays or suspends its own cables, installs its own sub-station boxes, microwave repeaters, satellite dishes, operating booths, etc. The sharing of poles and towers is encouraged, however this may accentuate the problem by concentrating noise, electromagnetic radiation and microwave output into a small area.

The possible environmental impact after 1997 is of grave concern. Are we to have multiple layers of overhead wiring which will cause even more tree mutilation than that which occurs already, not to mention the possible health risks which may be incurred by exposure to electro-magnetism and microwaves? And, of course, there will be the visual pollution created by the unnecessary duplication of unsightly equipment.

At present the carrier companies are NOT bound by the usual environmental and planning restraints - this should not be allowed to continue!

A suggestion was made at the meeting that time frames be altered. At the moment it is almost impossible for Local Councils to object to a carrier company's proposal in the required time span.

If after an investigation, AUSTEL recommends that the code be altered, and the Australian Government approves, a new code will be implemented in 1997.

Robin Dickson, Hon Secretary.

Dr MARY WHITE : ILLUSTRATED TALK

Those members who missed Dr White's talk on *The Browning of Australia* last March but heard how good it was, or those who liked it so much that they want a repeat, will be pleased to learn that she is returning to give her unique presentation on Monday, October 30, 7.30pm at Sutherland Entertainment Centre, Eton Street, Sutherland. Admission is free, and the talk is sponsored by Sutherland Council and the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre.

SMIGGIN HOLES, KOSCIUSKO N.P.

Win and Norm Tonkin's chalet at Smiggin Holes will be available for us again early next year. Come and enjoy a week or a fortnight walking or relaxing in the Snowy Mountains in summer. Cost : \$250 a double per week, children free. Dates: 20 to 27 January; 28 January to 3 February inclusive. Bookings are being taken by Robin Dickson, Tel. 580 5663, or see Robin at the October or November meeting.

POCKET DIARIES. Each year we order a number of National Parks Pocket Diaries, available to members at a discount price. The Diaries have now arrived and are available from the desk at the meeting for \$9.00, a saving of almost \$2.00. They are an excellent gift to send to relatives or friends overseas.

Letters, comments and articles about the Society's activities and general conservation matters are always welcome for publication in your newsletter.

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

Please make yourself known as you come in.

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

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

COMING EVENTS

October 23 (Monday). David Noble, photographer and bushwalker. **Kanangra and Wollemi National parks.** Apart from wonderful photographs and a huge knowledge of the Blue Mountains and associated national parks, we believe that David is the person who found the "living fossil", the Wollemi Pine. Should be a very informative evening.

October 28 & 29 . CAMPING WEEKEND at Jervis Bay. Attention all those who were intending to go on this weekend !! Due to shortage of leaders, we have had to cancel this trip. This is unfortunate and the first time in my memory we have had to cancel a trip, but all our regular leaders are either away or have other commitments this weekend. We would like to have another outing before the end of the year, so if you can lead a day walk somewhere in late November or early December please let Field Officer John Blake know (Tel. 50 7210).

November 27 (Monday). Last meeting of the year, with Social Supper. Harry Whaite will show slides of his visit to Cooper Creek.

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

1996 Subscriptions

Current income is not covering expenses and it is proposed that the 1996 Subscription be \$12.00. The current approximate position is as follows :

	\$
Income. Subscriptions / Donations	1900
Expenses. Newsletter (printing/post)	860
Public Liability Insurance	241
Hire of meeting hall	200
Programmes	161
Lions Festival fees	130
Administrative expenses	100
Projector repair	90
P.O. Box rental	40
Fee Annual Return	30
Subscriptions - ACF	59
- NPA	50
- NCC	175
- Other	100
Total expenditure	2236

Our bank balance of approximately \$1100 (excluding Presidents Fund) has been built up mainly from interest on bush regeneration grants and is considered a minimum we should have.

John Watters - Hon Treasurer.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

- The talk by Bob Irving at our last meeting on Architecture without Architects was regarded by those present as one of the best this year. Unfortunately, because of the terrible weather, the attendance was very low. It's been suggested that we might invite Bob back next year.

- 36 people went to Barren Grounds for the walk and flower identification. The boronia (*Boronia thujona*) was magnificent as were the views.

- The programme for 1996 is currently being prepared. If you know of any good, interesting, informative or educational speakers then Val Douglas would love to hear (tel. 580 7783). If you would be willing to lead a walk let John Blake know (tel 50 7210).

FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTING

The Nature Conservation Council has called on all member societies (of which OFF is one) to encourage their members to take part in a boycott of imported French goods and services. It has strongly condemned the French testing program in the South Pacific and has called on the Australian Government to condemn the tests and the recent assault on a Greenpeace boat in international waters near Mururoa Atoll.

A recent copy of the newsletter *Canopy* deals with the French testing in the South Pacific and is available from the desk at the next meeting.



OFF NEWS

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MANAGEMENT OF RESERVES - H.C.C.

Some members of OFF have expressed concern about the management of public reserves within Hurstville City area. Things just seem to "happen" without any public consultation. Recently in Oatley Park there has been the widening of the pool concourse near the dressing sheds and changes to the lookout areas. Now there is a Council proposal to construct a kiosk at the oval. Whilst these developments may be perfectly in keeping with the natural features of Oatley Park, there has been little, if any, public input.

Oatley Park is showing signs of overuse and bushland degradation, especially around the oval and along the headland track. Regeneration of some areas seems urgent. There are no signs to remind people of their responsibility to keep to the tracks.

Given the statutory responsibility of Local Councils regarding the State of the Environment Reporting, all Councils should be consulting widely with interest groups such as Oatley Flora and Fauna. It is incumbent on all Councils to have Management Plans for their bushland reserves which identify rare and endangered flora and fauna and clearly outline strategies for their protection. As far as we can see, some Councils are very slow to fulfil these requirements.

TAFE - ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Gynea College of TAFE hopes to offer a course in Environmental Studies in 1996. It would involve 4 hours per week evening attendance and 2 days fieldwork per semester over two 18 week semesters.

Semester One would involve *Investigating Ecosystems*. Semester Two would be *Investigating Environmental Issues*. It is likely Gary Schoer, local NPA Secretary, will be the chief lecturer.

If you are interested in receiving information about this proposed course, ring Peter Gloag on 710 5013 or contact Tim Higgins, Head of Studies, Gynea TAFE, Kingsway, GYMEA. 2227

NSW FORESTRY BILL PASSES

NSW Parliament has recently passed the Carr Government's proposal to extensively restructure the forestry industry. An essential aspect of the plan is the release of the \$130 million in the Environmental Trusts. The money will pay for compensation for displaced timber workers (\$60 million), create 24 new national parks (\$50 million) and pay for a number of other environmental measures. By this means, the Government's promise to save high-conservation, old-growth forest will be achieved.

Interest from the Environmental Trusts has been used for grants to groups such as our Society for restoration and educational activities. Over the last few years we have applied for and received bush regeneration grants for projects at Lime Kiln Bay, Gungah Bay and Oatley-Como Walkway. Whilst we are reluctant to lose this source of funds, the new legislation will be for the overall good of the environment in this State and the Trusts will revert to their original role of providing grants for community projects at the end of five years.

MORE ON THE POPULATION ISSUE

Following the item on "Populate and Perish" in September's *OFF News*, the issue is further explored in the latest edition of *National Parks Journal* (Oct.'95). Alan Jones, scientist at the Australian Museum, sees population as "the ultimate environmental factor". He suggests that environmental goals must include the protection of biodiversity and ecological integrity and that there be a precautionary approach to development. He also makes a plea for the understanding of factors exacerbating the global growth problem, and the need for the United Nations to target family planning, the alleviation of poverty and the education of girls and women. Finally, he suggests we examine the concept of growth and ask the question, "Why grow?" "Does it improve the quality of life?"

A copy of the *National Parks Journal* is available from the desk at meetings.

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

Please make yourself known as you come in.

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

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

COMING EVENTS

November 27 (Monday). A BIG night for the last meeting of the year. Harry Whaite will show slides and bring back some memories of the trip to Coopers Creek (S.A.) which a number of OFF members went on.

Ian Pilgrim from the National Parks and Wildlife Service will give us a brief outline of the success of the biological control program for Bitou Bush - a program vital to the preservation of our coast.

Val Boyan will be having a bargain stall, with jams, novelties, Christmas specials and lots of other goodies, so bring your money with you.

As usual at this time of year, there will be a get-together and supper after the slides. Please bring a plate of food to contribute to the success of the evening.

December 17 (Sunday). An extra walk for those not too tied up with Christmas activities. **Engadine - Audley - Loftus (Royal National Park).** Engadine to Audley is a pleasant 6 km walk taking a little over 2 hours. It is planned to have a picnic lunch at Audley (around 11.30 - 12.30 on the grassed area). Then return via the Honeymoon Track to Loftus Station (4.2 km; we could catch the tram from the National Park Station). Catch the 8.51am train from Oatley; meet Engadine Station on the Park side at 9.10am. Leader : Alan Fairley, Tel. 570 8332.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

Over 80 attended our last meeting to see the wonderful slides of David Noble. His photos of Blue Mts rock formations, canyons, wilderness and his adventures abseiling were truly wonderful because of his artistic eye for colour and patterns.

SMIGGIN HOLES, KOSCIUSKO N.P.

Win and Norm Tonkin's chalet at Smiggin Holes will be available for us again early next year. Come and enjoy a week or a fortnight walking or relaxing in the Snowy Mountains in summer. Cost : \$250 a double per week, children free. Dates: 20 to 27 January; 28 January to 3 February inclusive. Bookings are being taken by Robin Dickson, Tel. 580 5663.

POCKET DIARIES

Last chance for the National Parks Pocket Diaries for 1996. On sale at the next meeting for only \$9.00. An excellent Aussie gift to send to friends or relatives overseas.

HURSTVILLE COUNCIL AND CABLE TV

Hurstville City Council has replied to our letter of concern about the expansion of above-ground and underground telecommunications cables associated with cable TV. Council has resolved to oppose an

Optus installation proposal to allow an aerial cable network and will seek the support of Members of Parliament and other Councils in its opposition.

The Local Government Association's position on aerial cabling is that "it is an inappropriate method of infrastructure rollout which is unnecessary, aesthetically unacceptable to most communities and will perpetuate the existence of above ground infrastructure provision."

"FLORA OF THE SYDNEY REGION"

Harry Whaite reports that copies of the new edition of this classic book by Beadle, Evans and Carolin is available at the reduced price of \$12.95 (previously \$60) from Westfield Hurstville. It certainly is a good opportunity to get the most up to date version at a very good price.

HORSES AND DOGS IN ROYAL N.P.

Reports have reached OFF of people illegally riding horses and taking their dogs into Royal National Park, especially from East Heathcote. We have written to the NPWS to ask what measures are being taken to stop this practice and requesting information on the number of prosecutions for such offences in the past 12 months.