



OFF NEWS

Published by

OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.



96/1

January/February, 1996

Price 10 cents

A new year's greeting to all OFF members!! We hope that this will be a happy and a productive year personally and for the conservation movement.

This time last year we were looking forward to the approaching State elections, hoping for positive results. The new Carr Government has already shown its environmental credentials and we hope for more in the coming year (such as the promised additional national parks). Unfortunately our chance to change the attitude of Local Councils in environmental matters slipped by when pro-development groups gained control in local government elections.

This year promises to be equally busy and challenging. There will be a Federal election soon and such issues as wood chip exports, a population policy and Commonwealth attitudes to resources management should be high on the agenda.

There always seems to be issues on the conservation battlefield, whether it be local matters, such as tree preservation, overdevelopment of our suburbs and bushland regeneration, or international matters, such as species extinction, land clearing and global warming. Sometimes it is easy to throw in the towel in the frustrated belief that nothing can be done or to simply accept change and its detrimental effects as an unstoppable part of life.

It is therefore pleasing that this Society in its 42nd year continues to be strong and active and to attract local participation across a wide range of ages and interests. By joining OFF you have shown your concern about the issues of conservation and your willingness to help, if only in a small way, to protect and improve the world we live in.

Let us begin 1996 with the positive attitude that we can make a difference and by encouraging others in the local community to join the Society so that through strength of numbers we can achieve even more.

MORE ON OPTUS CABLES

This Society was one of the first groups to express its concern about the inadequate controls over the expansion of the cable TV network, especially the

environmental impacts of Optus over-head wiring (see *OFF News* October 1995).

Over the holiday period there has been a lot more written about this issue and calls for action. The Federal Government's response has been totally inadequate, giving the green light to the telecommunication companies for the next two years. By then it will be too late.

The community has begun to react, because the pay-TV carriers can over-ride local planning laws and ruin attractive streetscapes. Already a Melbourne Council has been successful in having a court order stop Optus Vision. Another Council officer has described how Optus has ripped into the trees and created an eyesore by installing the cables and junction boxes.

We must insist that Optus and other companies place their cables underground. Write to your local Council encouraging them to oppose overhead cable works **and** either write a letter of protest to Optus Vision or boycott their product by not subscribing to Optus pay TV (be sure to tell them why you are not subscribing).

OATLEY HERITAGE GROUP

OFF members may be interested in this newly formed group which is attempting to gather information on all aspects of Oatley and to help maintain the suburb's heritage. Meetings so far have been on Friday mornings at Oatley Library. Anyone interested should contact Russell Gibbs on 570 1113 or Helen Ong on 580 4817.

SHACKS OR NO SHACKS

A debate is taking place between two leading environmental groups over the fate of the shacks at Era and Burning Palms in the Royal National Park. On the one hand, the National Trust wants to preserve the shacks as part of the cultural heritage of the area. The National Parks Association wants the ultimate removal of the shacks saying they are intrusive, a source of pollution and are out of place in a national park. The debate brings up the important question: What is the role of a national park? What do you think? Let the editor know your views and we will publish them in a future issue of this 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

February 5 (Monday). ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Reports and election of officers. Come along and show your support for your Society. It's also your chance to comment on the running of the Society and perhaps become more involved. Also, come and say hello to everyone after the break. The AGM will be followed by a **water testing demonstration** by Sharyn Cullis, OFF committee member and teacher at the Georges River Field Studies Centre and by **members' slides**. Bring along some of your classic photographs for others to enjoy.

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.

February 26 (Monday). Wildflower photographer, **Dr. Philip Moore**, will show slides and talk about the "**Interesting Plants of Inland National Parks**". Philip is the co-author and photographer of the book "Native Plants of the Sydney District". He has lectured to many groups including the Society for Growing Native Plants and those with a long association with OFF might remember his two previous talks to the Society in 1976 and 1986. (If you have a copy of "Native Plants" you might like to bring it along to have it signed by the author).

The first **FIELD DAY** will be on Saturday, 2nd March - a coastal walk from Bondi to Coogee. More details in the next *O.F.F. News*.

The **Programme of Activities** for 1996 should be available at the meeting of 26 February.

Sunday, 3 March is State-wide **CLEAN-UP DAY**. We will be concentrating our activities on Oatley Park. Meet at 10 am at the park's main gate for a few hours service to the community. More details in the next newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Fees are now due. They are \$12 per household. Fees include subscription to O.F.F. News (11 issues a year) and the opportunity to come on monthly walks and meeting nights.

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

PARKS BENEFIT RURAL TOWNS

An interesting new study reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* says that national parks contribute significantly to local economies and created new job opportunities. For example, Dorrigo N.P. was found to have contributed \$4 million to the local economy and created 71 jobs.

BUSH REGENERATION - ROYAL N.P.

A volunteer program is operating in the Royal National Park for those interested in bush regeneration. It began soon after the January 1994 bushfires and now numbers more than 200 people. Work has included collecting seedlings, potting them, nurturing them and then replanting them alongside fire-damaged tracks. On one Saturday alone, 1200 seedlings were planted along the Coast Walk. Other volunteers have been involved in weed removal, seed collection, propagation and revegetation of disturbed areas. As part of their induction, volunteers receive basic training in the ecology of the park and in bush regeneration techniques.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact Andrew Horton, telephone 542 0658.

Hon Secretary : Robin Dickson, PO Box 52, Mortdale 2223. 580 5663

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



O.F.F. NEWS

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



96/2

February/March, 1996

Price 10 cents

Congratulations to those elected on to the OFF Committee at the AGM last meeting. All the office-bearers from 1995 were re-elected and John Winters was elected to fill the vacant position of President.

Our Secretary, Robin Dickson, reported on the success of the Society during the past year. Highlights of her report include:

- *** the success of monthly field days and meetings;
- *** contracting of National Trust to complete weed removal and regeneration of the bushland area beside Oatley-Como Walkway;
- *** the success of the stalls at two Lions Club Festivals at which the human face of the Society was promoted, environmental material was available and native plants were on sale;
- *** our continued working relationship with Hurstville City Council to ensure better environmental practices;
- *** Submissions to AUSTEL, public meetings and letter writing expressing concern about overhead cables for pay TV;
- *** representations to Governments and other bodies and organisations on issues such as dogs and horses in national parks, Helensburgh urban development, French nuclear testing, degrading of koala habitats, commercialisation of Australian wildlife, coal mining waste on Illawarra Escarpment and concern about lead levels;
- *** receipt and dissemination of conservation information through desk at meetings and newsletter.

Robin thanked all who had assisted during the year, with a special thanks to Oatley Uniting Church for use of their hall, Oatley West School for use of their Library for committee meetings, Graham and Janet Austin for printing the newsletter and those members who help distribute it thereby saving postage costs, the Hon Auditor, David Trewartha, Mary Martin for her fine work with the name tags, Audrey Benson and Mamie Clark for their hospitality and Val Boyan who once again raised money for the Presidents Fund.

We welcome comments, members' views and short articles on conservation themes for *OFF News*.

OFF extends its congratulations to Ian Mc Namara of "Australia All Over" fame for being one of the six finalists of Australian of the Year. Ian is an Oatley boy and we occasionally see him at OFF meetings when he is not too busy. His mother, Lorna, is a long-time OFF member who always attends our meetings. She must be very proud of Ian's achievements.

SOMETIMES BIGGER IS NOT BETTER

A letter to the editor worth quoting as part of the sensitive yet important population debate.

"One of the most important things to me about Australia is the feeling of space. Of being able to get away if I want to. Lack of crowding is part of the essence of this place. Those who would continue to push for an expansion of Australia's population will destroy this essence.

Also, pressure of population will degrade the environment. The beaches, the bush, the water resources must all suffer. The folly of the economic "We've got to keep expanding" theory will cause a lot more of us to have less happy lives.

Australia has a natural negative population growth. With a migrant intake of 30,000 to 50,000 per year, we could achieve a stable population. What a wonderful thought. Let's aim for it.

David Ross

WHAT IS CONSERVATION ?

"Conservation is humility. It is realising that life is not a pyramid with the human on top and everything else below. Conservation is love - for other people. Everyone relies on the earth for life. It is the total acceptance of others and oneself that must lead to ecological harmony and peace. Conservation is being in the bush and feeling that it is a part of you, and you part of it. You want to preserve it and nurture it because the trees and plants, rocks and animals - and yourself - are ultimately all interdependent."

(From Paddy Pallin's *Bushwalking & Camping*)

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

COMING EVENTS

February 26 (Monday). Wildflower photographer, **Dr. Philip Moore**, will show slide and talk about the "**Interesting Plants of Inland National Parks**". Philip is the co-author and photographer of the book "Native Plants of the Sydney District". He has lectured to many groups including the Society for Growing Native Plants and those with a long association with OFF might remember his two previous talks to the Society in 1976 and 1986. (If you have a copy of "Native Plants" you might like to bring it along to have it signed by the author).

March 2 (Saturday). Our first **FIELD DAY** for 1996 - a coastal walk from Bondi to Coogee and beyond. A good easy track along a beautiful stretch of coastline, mainly on wide paths which connect the beaches of Tamarama, Bronte, Clovelly and Coogee. About 6.5 km, taking less than 2 hours. Return from Coogee by bus. For those who are keen to continue further, a group will walk the extra distance to Maroubra Beach, an additional 4.7 km (90 minutes). Bring lunch or buy it along the way. Also bring swimmers as there will be plenty of opportunities for swimming especially if the weather is hot.

As this is **Election Day**, we will leave a little later. Catch the 10 am train from Mortdale (second carriage from the back) to Bondi Junction. Note: This train does not stop at Oatley. From Bondi Junction take the bus to Bondi Beach. Meet at the south end of the beach promenade on the corner of Notts Avenue at 11 am. Leader : Alan Fairley phone 570 8332.

Sunday, 3 March is State-wide **CLEAN-UP DAY**. We will be concentrating our activities on Oatley Park. Meet at 10 am at the park's main gate for a few hours service to the community. Please inform Robin Dickson on 580 5663 or at the next meeting if you will be attending so that sufficient collection bags can be organised.

The **Programme of Activities** for 1996 should be available at the meeting of 26 February. All people joining or renewing membership will receive a programme. The A.G.M. approved a membership fee of \$12 per household.

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

The membership fee is very reasonable; in fact, most of the \$12 goes towards the production and distribution of 11 issues of *OFF News*. The feeling of members at the AGM was that each of us should be more active in encouraging our friends and neighbours to join the Society and to emphasise the benefits of membership. If each member could sign up just one other person it would be a great boost to the Society (I'm not sure where they would sit at meeting nights).

Summary of TREASURER'S REPORT Year ended 31st December 1995

Credit balance 1-1--95	\$1891.88
Credit balance 31-12-95	\$1552.71

Receipts

Subscriptions	1881.50
Trash/Treasure sales	591.00
Book/Plant sales	175.50
Interest	329.79
Dinner profit	112.00
Term deposit	5000.00

Total	8089.79
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Payments

M'ship of Organisations	496.00
Donations(TEC, Woodchip Fd)	800.00
Newsletter	1203.25
Other (programs, projector, etc)	1089.71
National Trust, Bush Regen.	4840.00

Total	8428.96
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96/3

March/April, 1996

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LIME KILN BAY WETLANDS

On February 15th OFF was invited to send representatives to a meeting arranged by Hurstville City Council to hear and comment on a consultant's report on the rehabilitation and development of the freshwater wetland in the eastern arm of Lime Kiln Bay, Oatley. The plan is to enhance the water quality of the wetland, to improve the environment for wildlife and native wetland plants and ultimately to increase the recreational, aesthetic and educational value of the area. A series of options was presented which now have to be costed and presented to Council for a decision.

Lime Kiln Bay contains one of the last remaining natural reedlands draining into the Georges River. Litter and other pollutants run into the reeds and although the main area of the wetland is in good condition, its margins contain numerous weeds and siltation is occurring. Money needs to be spent on removing the gross pollution and exotic plants and re-directing the water flow so that the entire freshwater swamp receives its share.

It is pleasing to note that Hurstville Council is committed to the project. A copy of the Stage 1 Report prepared by the consultants is available for viewing and loan at the OFF meeting.

Historical note. *How attitudes have changed!! It is only 20 years ago that Oatley Flora and Fauna was involved in a bitter campaign against Hurstville Council to prevent the infilling of Lime Kiln Bay for a rubbish tip. The fight for the bay began in the early 1970s when the Council applied to the State Planning Authority to tip rubbish into Gungah Bay and Jew Fish Bay and started filling the northern arm of Lime Kiln Bay in October 1972. Locals (many of them OFF members) formed the Lime Kiln Bay Preservation Committee; its President was John Blacker (later OFF President) and its Secretary was David Koffel (still an OFF member).*

The dispute was a classic conflict between "improvement" and "preservation". Ald. Dick Swanton expressed the dominant view on Hurstville Council when he said, "Council has to dispose of garbage somewhere. We are not destroying the environment. We are creating a new and

more pleasing and more useful environment. Instead of swampy sections of the bay, there will be an 18 hole golf course and areas of playing fields"

Objections were lodged with the State Government, petitions were collected and the Council decided to conduct an environmental impact study, thus delaying the infilling. In 1976 residents formed the POW (Preserve Oatley West) group. Although the northern arm of Lime Kiln Bay was lost to garbage, the protest action and the delays saved the eastern arm. When the Menai Tip facility opened, taking Hurstville's rubbish, the pressure to fill the bay was relieved and the wetlands were saved.

COMO WALKWAY BUSH REGENERATION

OFF obtained funds from the Environmental Trusts to remove weed and regenerate the bushland beside the Oatley-Como Walkway. The work has been done by a National Trust team which has recently reported its progress.

The work began in January 1995 and to the end of December 265 hours of work had been carried out. Additional work was done by a TAFE class and fire hazard reduction work by Cityrail assisted in the project. Initially handweeding was carried out to isolate native plants prior to spraying. Once a month weeds were sprayed to encourage the spread of native grasses. Kangaroo Grass has become the dominant species as a result. Major dominant weed species, such as lantana, asparagus fern, camphor laurel, rumex, blackberry, morning glory, fennel and privet have been cleared.

Funding obtained by OFF will cover an additional 400 hours of work in 1996.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

(Available for loan from OFF meeting)

- Putting Together the Solution - Managing Wastewater in Sutherland Shire (Sydney Water).
- Georges River Catchment Management Committee brochure.
- Wildlife Australia (Summer 1995-96), with a rock wallaby on the cover.
- Habitat (February 1996), with a green python on the cover.

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COMING EVENTS

March 25 (Monday). Research scientist **ROD CAVANAGH** will talk about his work on **SOOTY OWLS**. Hear about their movement, diet and roosting habits, with special reference to the Royal National Park.

March 30 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Walk the **Coast Track** from **Otford** through **Palm Jungle** to **Burning Palms**, Royal National Park. About 15 km return, with a steep ascent from the beach back up to the plateau which requires a reasonable level of fitness. A wonderful section of the National Park, with great views and interesting vegetation. Catch the 8.51am train from Oatley to Waterfall, where you change for the next inter-urban train to Otford. The walk up from Otford Station to Lady Wakehurst Drive is fairly steep. If anyone is driving, meet the group from the train at Otford Lookout on Lady Wakehurst Drive at about 9.40am. It is planned to return to Otford Station to catch the 4.25pm train. Leader: John Winters, telephone 53 7766.

April 22 (Monday). A speaker from the National Parks and Wildlife Service on **Fire and the Bushland**.

SOCIETY NEWS

Report on last walk (2nd March).

Election day and an overcast sky didn't deter 33 keen hikers from enjoying this walk from Bondi to Coogee with an extension for most to Maroubra. With Alan Fairley as our leader, our walk mainly traversed the Cliff Path with only a short detour along roadway. Morning tea was taken on the grass in Tamarama Park adjacent to the beach and lunch in the summer house in the reserve at Clovelly Bay.

Superb coastal views, rock formations, an inspection of historic graves in Waverley Cemetery, (among which were Henry Lawson's, William Bede Dalley's and a monument to the Irish Rebellion of 1798) and an unusual trench cut in rock on the foreshore of Lurline Bay used for the generation of electrical power - these were some of the highlights that combined to make the day pleasant and interesting. All up, the total distance was about 10 km and was completed in about 4½ hours.

John Blake - Field Officer

Clean-up Australia Day. 33 people registered at the OFF desk to help clean up Oatley Park on March 3rd. They included a number of children

and people from outside the Society. Many bags of plastic, foam, glass pieces, drink bottles and other odds and ends were collected, and tyres, wood and metal objects were retrieved from the mangroves area along Lime Kiln Bay. In all, Oatley Park was left a lot cleaner. Thanks to those who put in the few hours to make our contribution to the great community effort of that day.

Annual dinner. Following some discussion at the last monthly meeting, and the seeking of opinion among members, the location for the Annual Dinner has been finalised. Details will be notified in a later *OFF News*.

Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands Forum. Alan Fairley and Ralph Newbould attended this forum sponsored by Hurstville Council on 15 February. A more detailed report appears elsewhere.

Blue Mountains sewage. The issue of where Blue Mountains sewage was to be discharged once the Mountains were connected to the pipeline was raised at our A.G.M. It is to be discharged through the Malabar outlet not from Cronulla as we were led to believe.

Hon Secretary : Robin Dickson, PO Box 52, Mortdale 2223. 580 5663

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O.F.F. NEWS

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



96/4

April/May, 1996

Price 10 cents

NO NATIONAL PARK FOR UPPER REACHES OF THE GEORGES RIVER

During the State elections in March 1995 the now Premier, Bob Carr, promised that the O'Hares Creek catchment would become the Dharawal National Park in the event of a Labor Government. So it was with considerable disappointment that conservationists heard on 23 March 1996 that Dharawal was to be made a State Recreation Area, a category which will give even less protection than when the area was under Water Board control as water catchment land.

The Dharawal area is virtually in Sydney's backyard, located as it is between Wedderburn, Appin and Darkes Forest. It contains the sub-catchments of O'Hares and Stokes Creeks and is a superb region of unspoilt bushland protecting rare and endemic plant species, koala habitat and many Aboriginal sites. It is a source of clear unpolluted water for the upper Georges River, a supply which contributes significantly to the maintenance of acceptable water quality for the whole of the river. The region's high nature and biodiversity values have caused it to be listed on the National Estate Register.

A State Recreation Area category will open up claims from recreational landuser groups for detrimental use when the Plan of Management is being determined. Horse riding, access by 4WD vehicles and trail bike usage may be permitted. It is reported that a decision has already been made to permit the Illawarra Gun Club to have a shooting range on 500 hectares of one of the swamps.

The Georges River Environmental Alliance (of which OFF is a member) is calling on all member groups to act by writing to The Hon Pam Allen, Minister for the Environment, NSW Parliament, demanding that the status of Dharawal be changed to that of National Park and that damaging uses be excluded from the area when the Plan of Management is determined.

RESIDENTS SAY "NO" TO WOOLIES

More than 1500 local residents attended a recent meeting to express their opposition to a massive Woolworths development in Oatley. The sheer size of the development was worrying - two levels of underground parking, a store that would trade until midnight and residential apartments. Concern was expressed about resultant noise and traffic problems and for the destruction of the village atmosphere of Oatley. The meeting voted overwhelmingly to oppose the development and Kogarah councillors Graeme Staas, Susan Gainsford and Col Ritchie have agreed to support the residents in their opposition.

NEW THREATENED SPECIES LAWS

The new *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* has at last come into force. Unlike the previous Act, its coverage extends to plants as well as animals, invertebrates as well as vertebrates. Unfortunately, because of pressure from the fishing lobby, the Government has excluded fish and marine vegetation from the new Act. A new administrative framework will be established to halt the decline of threatened species and ecological communities.

Some provisions of the Act include:

- scientifically-based listing process for endangered species;
- development of Recovery Plans for listed species;
- a provision for Stop Work Orders;
- a process to define a Critical Habitat; and
- preparation of Species Impact Statements where necessary.

More details about this Act can be found in the NCC Newsletter *Environment NSW* (Summer 1995/96) at the desk on meeting nights.

CRONULLA SEWAGE UPDATE

The Carr Government has ordered tertiary treatment for Cronulla sewage works instead of deepwater outfall. This is good news for the environment.

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(near the corner of Letitia Street), Oatley.

Please make yourself known as you come in.

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COMING EVENTS

April 22 (Monday). TONY AULD will present a talk on **FIRE, ECOLOGY AND THE BUSHLAND**. What is the effect of fire on our native plants? How does frequent fire affect our national parks? Is there such a thing as a 'good fire'? How does wild fire change the ecology of our bushland? These and many other questions will be addressed. Tony is a Senior Research Scientist for the Environmental Survey and Research Division of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

April 27 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Walk from **LAVENDER BAY** to **BALLS HEAD RESERVE**, returning from McMahons Point Wharf. This is a dawdling walk of about 5 km and comprises historic points of interest, some natural bushland and waterfront with both intimate and sweeping views of Sydney Harbour. Wear sensible walking shoes and bring a hat, drink and lunch. Assemble at No. 6 Jetty Circular Quay to catch the 9.30am Hegarty Ferry to Lavender Bay. It is planned to return from McMahons Point Wharf by Government ferry at 2.30pm. Hegarty Ferry fares : Adult - \$2.25 ; Seniors - \$1.10. Leader : John Blake, tel. 50 7210.

May 27 (Monday). John Bazzano, bushwalker and photographer, will present a audio-visual presentation of his Namibian Adventures.

SOCIETY NEWS

Report on last walk (30th March).

There were 28 participants on John Winters' walk down through Palm Jungle to Burning Palms in the Royal National Park. The weather was beautiful - hot enough for a swim - and everyone reported that they had a wonderful day. On the return, the party split into two groups with some returning to the fire trail via the Burgh Track and the others back through Palm Jungle.

Trees in danger

Local residents in Southern Street, Oatley, have alerted us to the fact that there is an application to cut down some large Smooth-barked Apple trees (*Angophora costata*) because they are in the way of a garage extension. These trees are part of the original vegetation of the area and contribute to the unique character of Oatley. We have been through all this before with Hurstville Council when the *Angophoras* were removed from Marine Drive and we hope that Council will reject this new assault on our environment. In response to a Society letter, the Council has said that it is still considering the application. We will be carefully monitoring the Councillors' performances.

Annual Dinner. The Dinner will be held this year at Kyle Bay Bowling Club on **Saturday, 13th July**. There will be 3 courses at a cost of \$20 per head. Val Boyan will begin taking names and collecting money at the next couple of meetings.

Pioneering Canoeist Films. Members may be interested in an evening of historic canoeing films from the 1940s and 1950s to be presented at the River Canoe Clubhouse, Richardson Ave, Tempe (near the Tempe Railway Station) on Friday, May 3rd. It will feature trips down the Snowy River before it was dammed and through Burragorang Valley before the building of the Warragamba Dam. The screening commences at 8pm (with a BBQ at 7pm). Entry is by donation of a gold coin.

Oatley Heritage Group. OFF members may also be interested in this history group which will have its next meeting on Thursday, May 23rd at 7.30pm in the Uniting Church Hall (where we meet). The topic for this meeting is 'Meeting Places in Oatley'.

Hon Secretary : Robin Dickson, PO Box 52, Mortdale 2223. 580 5663

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96/5

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DEATH OF MILO DUNPHY

"Green Hero", "Wilderness Warrior", "Champion of Australian Wilderness" - these were some of the epithets used by newspapers reporting the death of Milo Dunphy. But for many of us in Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society, Milo was a friend, a local resident, in whom we have found support for many a conservation battle over the years. So it was with profound sadness that we learnt that Milo had died on 13 April after a long battle with liver cancer.

It was only a year ago that some OFF members helped Milo in his campaign as a local independent candidate during the State elections, and only weeks ago that the Society wrote to him to congratulate him on his award of an honorary doctorate from the University of NSW. The Society has extended its condolences to the Dunphy family on behalf of all OFF members. A fund for the purchase of wilderness is to be set up in Milo's name and the OFF committee has already agreed to make a donation to this fund.

RIVERWOOD WETLAND REVIVAL

An estuarine wetland at the end of **William Road, Riverwood**, is to be regenerated by Hurstville Council and the Dept of Land and Water Conservation. Local residents have been asked for input at public meetings. The plan is to have pollution traps to prevent litter and sediments from flowing down the creek into the estuarine area bordering Salt Pan Creek. This will help protect the wetland which forms an important local habitat for native plants and animals. It should also help improve the water quality of the Georges River. Representatives of OFF will attend future planning meetings.

DISCUSSION PAPERS RECEIVED

- *Shaping Sydney's Transport - a framework for reform* (Clean Air 2000).
 - *Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Sewage Discharges to Ocean Waters* (Sydney Water)
- Both these papers may be borrowed from the meeting

MORE ON OPTUS OVERHEAD CABLES

Kogarah Council has instructed its solicitors to write to Optus instructing that company to cease all works in the Kogarah Municipality, otherwise the Council will give consideration to taking injunction proceedings.

The Mayor, Councilor Lind, will be part of a delegation of mayors to meet with the Prime Minister to find a long-term solution to the problem.

DHARAWAL NATIONAL PARK FOLLOW-UP

State Member for Georges River, **Marie Ficarra**, has supported representations by OFF to the NSW Minister for the Environment. In a detailed letter to the Minister, Marie Ficarra has pointed out that O'Hares Creek catchment is listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands for Australia, has been included on the Register of the National Estate and is part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination. Her letter mentions the presence of 17 rare or threatened plant species, a number of threatened animals and a large number of Aboriginal sites.

The letter concludes "such an outstanding upland swamp ecosystem deserves the highest protection from your department. Environment community groups such as the Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society deserve an answer in relation to political and environmental integrity by your government".

The Member for East Hills, **Pat Rogan**, has also made formal representations to the Minister fully supporting the Society in this matter.

THE BAD NEWS.....

- That dangerous poisonous pest, the cane toad, has been sighted as far south as Port Macquarie.
- Hurstville Council is reported to be about to cut its funding to bush regeneration.
- The Snowy River is beset by problems of erosion, salinity and siltation. Less than 1 per cent of the water flows down the river compared to before 1967 when it was dammed at Jindabyne.

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(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 22 present

May 27 (Monday). **JOHN BAZZANO**, bushwalker and photographer, will bring us an audio-visual presentation entitled **NAMIBIAN ODYSSEY**. Namibia is a recently independent state in south-west Africa which has long been famous for its wildlife. Another interesting evening.

June 1 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Walk : **POINT CLARE STATION - KOOLEWONG RIDGE - WOY WOY STATION.** Approximately 11 km. Grade: Easy/Medium. There are two short, steep climbs and two fairly difficult descents (slippery pebbles and leaves on the track). One of the few walks with a welcome descent to finish. Also one of the most picturesque walks on the Central Coast. Panoramic views of Brisbane Water from Gosford to Barrenjoey headland. Leader : **Ralph Newbould.** Catch 8.00am train from Mortdale to Central. Change to Sydney Terminal (Country Platforms). Catch 8.47am train going to Wyong but get off at Point Clare (8.59am Strathfield, 9.20am Hornsby). Arrive Point Clare at 10.04am. Return from Woy Woy at either 2.59pm, 3.16pm or 3.59pm, depending on the pace of the group.

June 24 (Monday). Dr Arthur White will talk about Frogs and their conservation.

ANNUAL DINNER. The Dinner will be held this year at Kyle Bay Bowling Club on **Saturday, 13th July.** There will be 3 courses at a cost of \$20 per head. Val Boyan will begin taking names and collecting money at the next couple of meetings.

SOCIETY NEWS

Report on last meeting.

About 70 people were in attendance to hear Tony Auld's talk on the effect of fire on the native bushland. It was pleasing to note the large number of visitors along for the first time, including a group from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Fire is a complex phenomenon, depending on frequency, intensity, season and extent or size. Tony explained with the help of photographs how plants survive a fire and cope with a fire regime.

Report on OFF walk, 27th April.

A perfect autumn day enhanced our easy Lower North Shore walk from Lavender Bay to Balls Head. Thirty-nine members and friends strolled through North Sydney viewing many old homes

that ranged from the quaint to the imposing, some of which had been occupied for varying periods by Henry Lawson, Brett Whitely and Burton Dibbs (son of Sir George Dibbs a former Premier of NSW). A large Aboriginal rock carving near HMAS Waterhen, several magnificent specimens of Hoop Pine, Port Jackson Figs and Angophora trees all added to the charm of the walk before we reached our lunch stop on Balls Head. Among the trees on this delightful headland, one finds it hard to believe that the Sydney Centre is less than three kilometres away. Our return route around Berrys Bay, past the site of the old Eaton timber works, brought us to McMahons Point wharf and our 2.30 pm ferry to the Quay.

TRACK UPGRADES IN ROYAL NAT. PK.

Work is underway upgrading the badly eroded section of walking track from Engadine to Kangaroo Creek, including a realignment around upper Engadine Creek.

Despite concerns (expressed in *OFF News 95/1*), the newly constructed Wattamolla to Little Marley Coast Track has not degraded the park's environment. The two hour return walk is fairly easy and a delight on a fine day.

Hon Secretary : Robin Dickson, PO Box 52, Mortdale 2223. 580 5663

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



O.F.F. NEWS

Published by

**OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA
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June/July 1996

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DHARAWAL STATE RECREATION RESERVE

Marie Ficarra, MP for Georges River, has been continuing her efforts on our behalf to find out what is happening to the Dharawal area of upper Georges River. In Parliament on May 21st she asked the Minister for the Environment

- Why was the Dharawal Nature Reserve, containing O'Hares Creek Catchment, given only State Recreation Area status and not National Park status?
- What are the criteria for these two types of listing?
- Is a management plan being prepared for the area?

Subsequently, the Society has received a letter from the Government's Policy Adviser on the Environment which explains the Government's position. This letter says that *"although the bulk of the area has been reserved as a state recreation area so as to accommodate existing mining leases and renewal rights, this reserve category is not meant to suggest that the area can cope with intensive visitor activity. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is well aware of the significant natural and cultural values, and the plan of management will give careful consideration to the potential impact of the various types of recreational use. Your organization will have the opportunity to present its views during this process."*

In recognition of the undisturbed condition of the catchment, both Sydney Water and the NPWS consider that its 'Special Area' status should remain in place. This will ensure a greater level of conservation protection than might be achieved by the SRA category on its own. In addition, some 290 hectares of upland swamps at the eastern end have been gazetted as nature reserve. Once negotiations with Campbelltown Council and the Department of Urban Affairs are completed, the koala habitat at Wedderburn, at the western end, will also be added to the reserve.

The Minister has noted your objections to sighting the

proposed rifle range within the catchment. Such development will be subject to the restrictions imposed by the 'Special Area' classification...The NPWS will negotiate with the Illawarra Shooting Association to ensure the protection of conservation values within the range and safety zone and to minimise impacts on the neighbouring reserve."

ADVANCE NOTICE

The **Field Trip** on Saturday, 27th July, will be a walking tour of **Rookwood Cemetery**. The tour will be conducted by a guide from the Friends of Rookwood Cemetery and run from 10 am to 3.30 pm. Reports from those who have done the tour are that it is a fascinating day, combining history and nature. There will be charge of \$10.00 per person. It will be necessary to **book and pay** in advance. Money will be collected at the meeting on 22nd July. Arrangements about the meeting place will also be made at that meeting. If unable to attend the meeting, ring John Blake on 50 7210.

Oatley residents may also be interested in the forthcoming meeting of the Oatley Heritage Group on Friday, 23 August. The topic is : **The War Years in Oatley**. The meeting will be held at the rear of the Oatley Library, starting at 10.30 am.

SUCCESS OF LAST OUTING

The walk on 1st June to Point Clare ridge was attended by 22 people. It was a delightful medium walk, with a couple of tricky parts over ball-bearing gravel. The weather was perfect and there was a beautiful lunch stop on a rocky creek bed beside water flowing through eroded potholes. Highlights were the superb views and the stands of turpentine and red gum.

RECEIVED : Greenpeace's *Olympic Report* (April 1996) and *Green Games Watch*. Available from the desk on meeting nights.

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

June 24 (Monday). Dr Arthur White, consultant biologist, herpetologist and experienced in field surveys of fauna will speak on **ENDANGERED FROGS, THEIR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT**. Frogs have been having a bad time in recent years, with numbers apparently in serious decline. They have often been seen as indicator species, telling us that the environment is under stress. Find out about the problems and what can be done to prevent the decline.

June 29 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Walk : **MT YORK TO HARTLEY VALE** via Coxs Road (built 1815), returning via Lawsons Long Alley (1823) to Mt York. **MOUNT VICTORIA, UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS.** Approximately 13 km, taking about 6 hours. There are two steep grades of 1:2, the first 500 metres down and the second in the last kilometre back up the return track to Mt York Road.

Note: There is no water available at either Mt York or Hartley Vale, so bring plenty to drink. Walking staffs also recommended. An optional side trip (1.5 km return) is to visit Collitts Inn in Hartley Valley. Entry is \$2.00 per person - memorabilia available.

Meet at 9.30 am at Mt York Obelisk Car Park. Turn off the Great Western Highway 100 metres past the Cedar Lodge Holiday Cabins at Mt Victoria into Mt York Road and proceed to the end of the road. It is about 2 hours drive from Oatley.

Note the early start because of the shorter days of winter and the steep descent/ascent which will slow the group. Toilets (but no paper) at Mt York and Hartley Vale. Some cars may be left as a shuttle at Lawson Long Alley to reduce the walk by 3.5 km. Leaders : **Dorothy and Len Rootes** (Tel. 580 7574).

July 13 (Saturday) O.F.F. ANNUAL DINNER - see below.

July 22 (Monday). The Schoers tell us about their trip to Chile and the Antarctic Peninsula.

ANNUAL DINNER.

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR TICKETS YET ?

The Dinner will be held this year at Kyle Bay Bowling Club, Merriman Street, Kyle Bay on **Saturday, 13th July. 7.00pm for 7.30pm.**

There will be 3 courses at a cost of \$20 per head. Val Boyan (Tel 533 1013) has been taking names. Please pay at the June meeting.

Sad news from Victoria.

Those who have been in the Society for some time will remember Cec and Rita Sainty. Sadly, we have had a letter from their daughter Nola that Rita Sainty passed away on 25th April. We offer the family our sincere sympathies.

Cec was OFF President in 1959, 1960, 1961 and 1962 and Vice-President from 1963 to 1967. Cec and Rita were the Society's Field Officers in 1968 and 1969. Both contributed immensely to the development and smooth running of the Society in those years.

Cec is now 89 years old and still receives *OFF News*. Nola says that he looks forward to hearing all the news from Oatley. Nola has "fond memories of swimming there as a teenager and the many picnics, and of course the flannel flowers and Xmas bush".

SOCIETY NEWS

Report on last meeting.

Those present on May 27th were privileged to see some of the finest outdoor photographs ever to be presented at our meetings. John Bazzano's images of Namibia and Okavango wildlife left us stunned by their beauty and artistry. John let his photographs do the talking and they spoke loudly for his sense of composition and colour.

Hon Secretary : Robin Dickson, PO Box 52, Mortdale 2223. 580 5663

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



O.F.F. NEWS

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GREENHOUSE BACK ON THE AGENDA

Judging from recent newspaper reports, the Greenhouse gas debate and issues of climate change are back in the public arena (for conservationists they never went away).

"US greenhouse switch leaves us in the cold" (S.M.H., 15th May) reported how the United States was moving rapidly to take a tougher, greener position on international efforts to curb emissions of greenhouse gases. Latest US evidence predicts that build-up in the atmosphere of greenhouse gases from burning oil, coal and gas will cause a dangerous shift in the world's climate. Already the European Union has proposed a ceiling on carbon dioxide levels and Britain wants a 5-10% cut in greenhouse gases by the year 2010.

"Greenhouse gas risk ignored in mine approvals" (S.M.H., 20th May) reports that no official assessment of the proposed Hunter Valley's Bengalla coal mine's potential for causing climate change has ever been made and that it would take 420 million new trees to soak up the estimated 281 million tonnes of greenhouse gases it would produce. The fact that massive air pollution can be ignored during the development approval stage points to an urgent need for reform of Australian environmental laws.

"Cabinet breach feared on greenhouse" (S.M.H., 31st May) was concerned more with breaches of Cabinet confidentiality than with the real issue that the Howard Government was about to weaken Australia's stance on greenhouse. It was noted that our representatives at the forth-coming Geneva Ministerial Conference of the Climate Change Convention, we would not support legally binding targets for emissions or the setting out of a timetable to achieve a specific level of carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere. This is all about protecting industry, especially the coal industry and its exports, a fact borne out by the leaking of the Government's position to the mining industry in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

NEW NATIONAL PARKS FOR N.S.W.

The Carr Government has announced a package of 24 new national parks to honour its election promise which was to create 24 parks in its first year of office. Although the new parks are not exactly the same as those promised, they nevertheless are a valuable addition to the protected areas of the State.

The largest of these new parks are:

- ☞ Culgoa NP (15,614 ha) - north of Bourke and adjoining Queensland's Culgoa Floodplain NP;
- ☞ Brindabella NP (12,050 ha) - high country west of the ACT border;
- ☞ Gundabooka NP (43,590 ha) - south west of Bourke;
- ☞ Tarawi Nature Reserve (33,570 ha) - south west of Broken Hill;

Also established was Scheyville NP (950 ha), which although only small protects an important remnant of clay woodland east of Windsor.

WHY WORRY ABOUT WEEDS ?

Given the Society's interest in bushland management and restoration of native vegetation, it was interesting to read the comments of National Trust bush regenerator Louise Brodie in a recent National Trust magazine. Some extracts are printed below.

"Retention of natural vegetation is the first step in conservation of our natural heritage. Natural areas such as urban bushland reserves are subject to many impacts which degrade and alter the vegetation and weed invasion is a major problem.

As many weed species which threaten our bushlands and wetlands are widespread, measures to control and reduce such weeds need community support. Consequences of weed invasion are the loss of diversity of native plant and animal species and the character of the landscape is altered. Loss of bushland on farms has economic effects especially on the long-term sustainability of our agricultural systems."

More about weeds in the next issue of OFF News.

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

July 22 (Monday). Gary and Bronlyn Schoer, will present **CHILE AND CHILLIER**, slides and a talk on their recent adventures in Chilean National Parks and on the Antarctic Peninsula. Good winter-time entertainment. Gary is an environmental consultant and involved in the National Parks Association; Bronlyn is a high school principal. They are Oatley residents and have spoken to us before. Their slides are always excellent, so don't miss out on a chance to visit another fascinating part of the world.

July 27 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Walking tour of **Rookwood Cemetery.** A full day (10 am to 3.30 pm) tour conducted by a guide from the Friends of Rookwood Cemetery, combining history and nature. The cemetery still contains a surprising amount of native vegetation, mostly patches of low shrubs growing on clay - a habitat which is becoming rare in the urban area. There is a charge of \$10 per person and it is necessary to **book and pay in advance.** Money will be collected at the July 22 meeting where information will be given about where we will meet. If you are unable to attend the meeting, but still wish to go on the walk, ring John Blake on 50 7210.

August 11. A SUNDAY SPECIAL!! FIELD DAY. Walk in the SYDNEY HARBOUR NATIONAL PARK. Mamie Clark will lead the group from The Spit to Manly. Given fine weather this is a lovely walk at this time of year. Plenty of wattles and early wild flowers. The beaches and waterways are quiet and the views, as always, are spectacular. The walk is about 8kms. There will be plenty of opportunities to explore the coastline, look at the Aboriginal engravings and relax at the lookout points. Meet on 8.38 am train from Mortdale. Change to catch the 9.26 am bus 182 from York Street, Wynyard. Return by ferry from Manly. For further information, ring Mamie Clark on 546 3570.

August 26 (Monday). A speaker from the Royal Botanic Gardens will tell us about a ten year study on the **Birds of Mount Annan Botanic Gardens.**

LOCAL BUSH REGENERATION

O.F.F. recently wrote to Hurstville Council expressing concern that the funding for bush regeneration done under contract by the National Trust was to be reduced in the Draft Council Budget 1996/97 from \$60,000 to \$20,000.

After representations on our behalf by several Councillors, the Mayor, Peter Olah, has responded in a long letter in which he confirmed that this reduction was expected to occur.

Councillor Olah states that "*Council has continued to increase its financial commitment towards bush regeneration over the past five budgets. Unfortunately, in order to meet this commitment and to employ Council's permanent staff, the 1996/97 Budget allows for an increased allocation of resources to Council-run bush regeneration programs partly offset by the reduction in contract work to the National Trust.*"

However, since this correspondence the working Budget has been passed. The allocation to National Trust contract funding is to be \$40,000. Total bush regeneration funding will be \$230,000 (including plant, tools fire trail maintenance etc. - an increase from the 1995/96 Budget allocation of \$193,500.

Meanwhile, the regeneration work along the walkway and bicycle track on the Oatley side of

Como Rail Bridge is nearing completion. O.F.F. obtained the funding for this work and it has been carried out under contract by the National Trust.

BLUE MOUNTAINS WALK - COX'S ROAD.

Many thanks to Dorothy and Len Rootes for a most enjoyable day, albeit cold, windy and rainy at times (a real Blue Mountains winter day). Dorothy and Len gave a very well researched historical account of the events of the road building of the day (around 1813 or so). A great day for the 18 people who attended even though some of them completed the distance by car!

A SAD PASSING

Many of our members will be sad to hear of the death of Ida Carder. Ida passed away on 20 - 6 - 96 at the age of 86 years. Details of her service to O.F.F. will be published in the next O.F.F. News.

WASTE MINIMISATION is now law. The new Act sets out the Government's central objective of cutting waste by 60% by the year 2000. Details in a later edition of O.F.F. News.

Hon Secretary: Robin Dickson, P.O. Box 52, Mortdale. 2223. 580 5663

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



O.F.F. NEWS

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The incoming mail to OFF this month has been dominated by two issues - the proposal to examine Holsworthy as a second airport site and the countdown to the NSW Government's decision on forest parks.

AN AIRPORT FOR HOLSWORTHY ?

About 2000 people, including a number of OFF members, attended a meeting recently to protest against the proposal that Holsworthy should be considered with Badgerys Creek as a site for Sydney's second major airport. Numerous community groups have joined in the outcry against what appears to be a crazy proposal, but one which is being taken very seriously by decision-making authorities.

Georges River Alliance, Total Environment Centre, South West Sydney Community Alliance, Australian Conservation Foundation and Lugarno Progress Association have all condemned the decision and are united in opposition.

It seems incredible that an area of such rugged beauty, with important natural values could even be considered for clearing and development. But, of course, it is Commonwealth Government land, and as such comes free. With offers from private business concerns and the opportunity to sell the land at Badgerys Creek and Bankstown Airport for housing and industrial estates, it would mean low capital outlay for the government - an airport on the cheap. On the site there are at least 9 rare or endangered plant species, 8 species of fauna recognised as endangered and over 300 Aboriginal sites. In addition, the streams which cut through the plateau on which the airport would be sited supply clean water to the Upper Georges River and Woronora River. Many of these would be filled or end up as drains to increase the sediment and pollutants in the river systems.

Wider environmental implications would include the impact on at least 500,000 people in the south and south-west. An airport at Holsworthy would erode

their quality of life by increasing noise, traffic, run-off and vehicle emissions.

We have received "Draft Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement on Sydney's Second Major Airport at Badgerys Creek or Holsworthy". As is usual with such important but controversial documents, not enough time is given for comments. Submissions close 19 August. The OFF Committee and a number of individuals have already outlined their objections in writing.

FOREST PARKS DECISION

The pressure is on the NSW Government in the next few weeks to implement its promises to come up with a forest plan which includes a "comprehensive, adequate and representative" (CAR) reserve system.

VALE - IDA CARDER

OFF Committee member for 25 years (1966-1991)

OFF Hon Secretary 1972 - 1982

OFF Ass't Secretary 1985 - 1991

Ida was more than just the mainstay of this Society for many years. She was also a valued and loved friend by members who knew her well. A kind and generous person, she willingly offered assistance to anyone who needed a helping hand.

Born and raised in western Victoria, she loved the bush and was a genuine conservationist long before most of us even thought about it. She read everything available concerning the environment, wrote numerous letters to MPs and anyone else she considered could get anything done.

After retirement from her profession as a high school teacher, she had time to travel. Accompanied by fellow OFF members, she explored Australia and overseas countries. These trips were to leave her many happy memories. Ida valued her association with OFF and the companionship of fellow members. She was that kind of person.

Good-bye, dear Ida, it was a pleasure knowing you.

Val Boyan

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

August 26 (Monday). Alan Leishman, from the Royal Botanic Gardens, will tell us about a ten year bird study on the **BIRDS OF MOUNT ANNAN BOTANIC GARDENS**. Most of us have been to the Mt Annan Botanic Gardens near Campbelltown and admired the wonderful variety of native plants. Here is another perspective on that beautiful spot.

September 7 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Walk the Curra Moors Circuit in the Royal National Park. This is one of the best walks for wildflowers around Sydney especially in early Spring. The Circuit is about 10 km return, mostly with easy gradients. At first the track passes through woodland then emerges onto a heath which is rich in flowering plants. Lunch along the coastal cliffs near Curracurrong. See Eagle Rock and the waterfall which drops directly into the sea. The heath has recovered well from the 1994 fires and should be a blaze of colour. Bring lunch and drinking water. Leader : Heather Mackey, phone 9 528 7071. Meet 9.00 am at the car park near the old National Park railway station before you descend to Audley, where cars will be rationalised so that fewer vehicles will need to be taken to Curra Moors parking area.

September 23 (Monday). Buz Wilson, a marine biologist from the Australian Museum, will tell us about freshwater crustaceans.

OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

Sunday, 8th September. Lugarno Lions Club Carnival at Gannons Park. OFF will have a stall on site to publicise the Society and promote conservation issues.

Monday, 23 September at 7.00pm. A public meeting to debate the location of Sydney's second airport. Organised by the Australian Conservation Foundation. Australian Museum Theatre, William Street, Sydney. Entry cost: \$4.00.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

* 41 people attended our last field day inspecting the historical precinct of Rookwood Cemetery. It was a fascinating walk, led by interesting, informative and humorous guides. The rain in the afternoon failed to dampen anyone's enthusiasm and most agreed that a follow-up trip next year would be a good idea.

* One of the biggest attendances ever at our monthly meetings (well over 100) was enthralled and awe-struck by the beauty of Chile and Antarctica as seen through the Schoer's camera. Another inspiring night.

* Foxes. A number of members have been

worried by the sighting of foxes in the Oatley area and want to know what to do. The Plan of Management for Hurstville Council commits it to trapping and eradicating of foxes, so ring Council if you locate a lair.

* Following concerns expressed (see *OFF News*, 96/4), Committee members of OFF have been represented at a meeting called by NPWS to discuss Management Plans for Dharawal Nature Reserve.

* The Oatley-Como Walkway bush regeneration work, contracted by OFF to National Trust, is now completed. Vast amounts of weeds have been removed and the native bush has now a good chance of surviving.

We regret to report the death of Beatrice Goldstein. Many OFF members will remember Beatrice - she was the Society's Minutes Secretary from 1960 to 1964 and Publicity Officer from 1966 to 1970. Her involvement in and love of the Society is reflected in the fact that she has left a substantial sum of money to OFF in her will. Our sympathies are extended to her family at this sad time.

Hon. Secretary : Robin Dickson, P.O. Box 52, Mortdale. 2223. 9580.5663

Hon. Editor: Alan Fairley, P.O. Box 148, Oatley. 2223. 9570.8332



O.F.F. NEWS

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HOLSWORTHY AIRPORT SITE

Increasing fears are being expressed as new information becomes available about the likelihood of an international airport being constructed at Holsworthy. Conservation groups like OFF have pointed out the great damage to the natural environment such a project would have, but the residents of St George and Sutherland are now becoming very aware of the great threat such an airport poses to their lifestyle. There is no doubt that aircraft noise levels would increase, the roads would be busier and that the Georges River would be degraded by the site run-off and the destruction of feeder streams.

These concerns were expressed at a public meeting held on August 13 at Hurstville. Representatives from Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale Councils, National Trust, Lugarno Progress Assoc., Georges River Coalition, OFF, local politicians and the public were there to develop a campaign to stop further consideration of Holsworthy as a site. All agreed that we must not trash a beautiful bushland area when other sites which are already cleared and degraded are available. Those present felt it imperative that all members of the public be aware of the danger to their living standards of an airport whose boundary would be on the edge of the Georges River and whose runways would be only 8-10 kilometres from Lugarno-Oatley. Maria Ficarra, MP for Georges River, expressed the mood of the meeting when she implored the Federal Government to "consider this very carefully as we are not going to take this lying down."

The meeting resolved

- To totally oppose the Holsworthy Airport option as presented in the Draft Guidelines for an EIS for a Second Major Airport for Sydney (July 1996).
- Called for the Minister for the Environment, Sen. Hill, to broaden the scope of the EIS if it is to

go ahead so as to include alternative options and to increase the range of scientific studies to be done.

- To encourage Councils and Members of Parliament to provide both moral support and resources to continue the fight.

Action decided upon included

- Arguments against the Holsworthy site to appear in Hurstville's *Council Comment*.
- A letterbox drop (using Council letterhead) to be made in St George and Sutherland.
- A regional working party to be set up consisting of key community groups, MPs and Councils to plan and co-ordinate action.

What you can do.

It is important that the government in Canberra gets flooded with protest letters to show the public's anger at this proposal. Letters should be addressed to John Howard, Parliament House, Canberra. 2600. A simple letter opposing the site because (a) the site is inappropriate and (b) will have an adverse effect on your lifestyle is all that is needed.

PAPERBARK REMOVAL, WEST OATLEY

Following a number of expressions of concern, the Society has written to Hurstville Council enquiring about its reasons for removing the large broad-leaf paperbarks (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) from Woonona Parade, Oatley. Council has replied that these large trees were an inappropriate planting and have to be continually pruned because of the overhead wires. They are to be replaced by the smaller *Melaleuca styphelioides* (prickly paperbark), a handsome small tree indigenous to the local area. Only the large trees under the wires have been listed for removal and replacement.

In addition, following our suggestion, because the nature strip is wide enough for planting of larger trees, Council intends to plant suitable Eucalyptus species away from the wires. OFF is satisfied with this approach.

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

September 23 (Monday). **Buz Wilson**, Marine Biologist and Oceanographer from the Australian Museum will tell us about the hidden world of **Freshwater Crustaceans**.

September 28 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Walk in the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park from Mt Kuring-gai Station to Appletree Bay, and along the edge of beautiful Cowan Creek to Waratah Bay and back to Berowra Station. About 11.5 kilometres round trip. A combination of scenic beauty and varied plant life. The track is narrow in places but easy to follow. There is a descent of 210 metres from the plateau to the water and a subsequent ascent at the end back to the rail line. Bring lunch and drinks. Leaders: Beverley and John Watters, phone 9534 1096. It is intended to make an early start by train from Oatley at 7.36am arriving at Town Hall at 8.18am, changing for Mt Kuring-gai where we arrive at 9.08am. If driving your car, meet at Kuring-gai Station. We will return from Berowra Station at about 3.00pm.

October 19 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** Note that this month's field day is before the monthly meeting. Walk from Maroubra to La Perouse. A southern continuation of the coastal walk which many members did last year. An easy walk passing along the top of magnificent sea cliffs and around the margins of local golf courses. Plenty of native heath vegetation, waders and sea birds, picturesque small beaches and an historic cemetery. A good chance of seeing whales off-shore at this time of year, so bring binoculars. Parts of the track are narrow, unformed and wet after rains. The total distance is 13 kilometres, but you could walk the first 5 kms and then return by bus from Malabar. Catch the 8.00am train from Mortdale, arriving Town Hall at 8.24am; change for Circular Quay, from where we will catch the 396 bus to Maroubra Beach. If you are driving, meet the group at Maroubra Beach in front of the Life Saving Club at about 9.30am. Bring lunch and drinks. Leader: Alan Fairley, phone 9570 8332.

Camping Weekend. This year's camping trip is on the weekend of 2nd and 3rd November. It will be in the Southern Highlands, based at the Caravan and Camping Ground at Mittagong. Walks will include the Mount Alexandra Circuit, past Sixty Foot Falls, and a Sunday drive, probably to Fitzroy Falls where there are some great short walks. Those intending to go on this weekend will need to book early directly with the caravan park to be assured of accommodation. The Caravan Park's telephone number is 048 711 574. It has unpowered tent sites for \$9.00, powered caravan sites for \$12.00, and a variety of on-site vans from economy to luxury from \$20.00 to \$35.00. There will be more information at the October meeting or ring Val Boyan on 9533 1013 or John Blake on 9150 7210.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

* This month OFF Committee members have been represented at various meetings, including Hurstville Council's Tree Preservation Order Working Party and anti-Holsworthy airport meetings. We have also had a stall at the Lugarno Lions Festival at Gannons Park.

* Oatley residents may be interested in a meeting of the Oatley Heritage Group on Thursday, 225 November at 7.30pm in the Uniting Church Hall (where we have our meetings). The Topic is : "Public Transport in Oatley".

* Members may be interested to know that the latest edition of *Flora of the Sydney Region* by Roger Carolin and Mary Tindale is available at a very reduced price from Angus and Robertson at Westfield, Hurstville. Usually it sells for \$69.95, but they have it for \$16.95. A real bargain!!



OFF NEWS

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Price 10 cents

COMMUNITY LAND - HURSTVILLE - PLANS OF MANAGEMENT

The Local Government Act of 1993 requires Local Councils to adopt Plans of Management for all community land. Given the historic misuse of community land by Local Government, it is important that these documents have input and are carefully scrutinised by community groups such as ours.

Hurstville City's published Plans of Management (a copy of which is available for loan at our meeting night) is a comprehensive document which shows how far Councils have moved from the "bad old days". It is a register of all community land under the classifications of *Park* (playground, formal garden), *Sportsground* (oval, playing field), *Natural Area* and *General Community Use* (scout halls, civic spaces). It also sets out Council's management goals, methods of achievement, future expenditure and funding for each area.

Twenty eight Natural Areas are listed, mostly along the Georges River foreshore. The figures show that the people of Peakhurst Ward have much more Open Space than the rest of Hurstville City - 8.05 hectares for each 1000 people, compared with a City average of 3.8 ha. and less than 1.3 ha. in Penshurst Ward.

SNOWY RIVER FLOW (OR LACK OF)

The once great Snowy River now contains just a fraction of the water which it had in the past. A panel of experts in March recommended a more appropriate "environmental flow regime" (committee-speak for "water supply"), with peak flows to coincide with spring snow melts and an annual flood to restore degraded banks and channels. These new regimes would restore only about 25% of the natural flow level.

Since the report, the NSW Minister has promised to allocate more water to the Snowy, but the problem is that the River is controlled by three governments -

NSW, Victoria and the Commonwealth and the Snowy Hydro-electric Scheme is to be privatised.

What you can do. Write to Jeff Kennett, Premier of Victoria, and John Howard, Prime Minister, requesting that they act now to return water to the one great Snowy River.

(Information from *Inland Rivers Network News*, a new newsletter designed to keep us informed on the problems associated with our inland rivers, eg. wetlands of Macquarie Marshes, the Darling River, Menindee Lakes, irrigation, levee banks, the health of the Murray River. This newsletter is available for loan at the desk on meeting nights).

OPPOSING URANIUM

At the next OFF meeting there will be a petition which members may wish to sign. It is addressed to the Senate of Federal Parliament and opposes the mining of uranium at Jabiluka and Koongara sites within Kakadu National Park and the enrichment and sale of uranium. The petition comes with a 16 page newsletter setting out the current situation, the position of the political parties and details of the problems and issues faced by Australians should mining go ahead.

At present there are two uranium mines operating in Australia - Ranger in the Northern Territory and Olympic Dam (Roxby Downs) in South Australia. Since winning the elections in March, several Ministers of the Howard Government have made public comments about proposals to mine uranium within Kakadu National Park, and have speculated on the possibility of exporting uranium to Indonesia for the development of up to 12 nuclear power plants.

The problems foreseen in the accompanying information include radioactive spills of water into the catchments, the difficulty in disposing of the waste, accidents in nuclear power plants and the ethics and legalities of mining within a World Heritage Area.

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 28 (Monday). Alan Fairley presents his slide show **La Ruta Maya**, a fascinating journey through Central America visiting the Mayan sites in Guatemala, Belize and Yucatan in southern Mexico. See the stepped pyramids surrounded by jungle, the Temple of the Jaguar where there was once human sacrifices and the amazing ball-game courts. The Mayan people are a living culture and we visit many of their colourful markets and festivals. The scenery of the region is spectacular, ranging from active volcanoes to upland jungles and coral cays. Alan and Chiew visited this wonderful part of the world less than a year ago. Come and share their memories and learn something about a unique part of the world.

Camping Weekend. The weekend of 2nd and 3rd November. This year's camping weekend will be in the Southern Highlands, based at the Caravan and Camping Ground at Mittagong. On Saturday there will be a drive to Fitzroy Falls where there are some great short walks. On Sunday there will be a half day walk around the Mount Alexandra Circuit, past Sixty Foot Falls. Those intending to go on this weekend will need to book early directly with the caravan park to be assured of accommodation. The Caravan Park's telephone number is 048 711 574. It has unpowered tent sites for \$9.00, powered caravan sites for \$12.00, and a variety of on-site vans from economy to luxury from \$20.00 to \$35.00. There will be more information at the October meeting or ring Val Boyan on 9533 1013 or John Blake on 9150 7210. Meeting place: at 9.30 am outside the caravan park beside the Hume Highway (near the small shop).

November 25 (Monday). Johanna Robinson presents slides and a talk on the **Game Parks in South Africa**. As this is the last monthly meeting of the year, the talk will be followed by a get-together and supper.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

Report on walk, September 7th.

Due to storm damage, Curra Moors Circuit was closed so a quick decision was made to walk a section of the Coast Track from Wattamolla to Marley. Twenty adults and two children set off. Spectacular views of the coast line and carpets of heath in full bloom were admired by all. Members were impressed with the upgrading of the track. One member commented that we had had biology, geology and ornithology plus show-and-tell with the girls over lunch.

Heather Mackey.

Report on walk, September 28th.

Thirteen of our members enjoyed a very damp (if not wet) walk from Mt Kuring-gai Station down through the beautiful forest area, full of spring flowers, to Cowan Creek. After a walk around to Apple Tree Bay, we then returned along the water's edge passing three lovely coves. A large rock overhang provided welcome dry shelter for

our lunch spot and then onto Waratah Bay and back up the track to Berowra Station and our waiting train. A very lovely day, enjoyed by all.
Bev and John Watters

Tree Preservation Order Working Party

This committee was set up by Hurstville Council following residents' objections to the removal of trees in our area. Its most recent meeting was on 23rd September. Present were Hurstville Council officers, Ward Aldermen, OFF representatives and other interested residents. We heard reports from Council officers on how the Tree Preservation Order was operating, especially regarding Development Applications, and plans for more free indigenous tree and shrub give-aways in April 1997. Last year's give-away was a great success - 2,200 plants were given away to residents. Council has printed a fact-filled and attractive brochure entitled *Living with Trees*, and a large tree poster. Both are available free of charge from Hurstville City Council.

Hon. Secretary : Robin Dickson, P.O. Box 52, Mortdale. 2223. 9580.5663

Hon. Editor: Alan Fairley, P.O. Box 148, Oatley. 2223. 9570.8332



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FOREST INITIATIVES

As reported in August *OFF News*, conservationists have been eagerly awaiting for the Carr Government to implement its promises to come up with a "comprehensive, adequate and representative" (CAR) forest plan. Such a plan was announced on 23rd September, and for the most part it was good news, with the key elements having long-term significance for the environment of this State.

The initiatives identified and protected old growth forest, deferred certain forest areas from timber harvesting, established new national parks and new wilderness areas. In total, 240,000 hectares of new wilderness and national parks have been created. These include eight new national parks on the north coast totalling 45,075 ha and over 40,000 hectares in the south-east, with a promise of an additional 30,000 ha to come. These new parks will fully protect marvellous forests.

Timber cutting is not to occur in the Interim Deferred Forest Areas (IDFA) "except under limited circumstances where supply levels cannot be met from outside the IDFA. Any harvesting within the IDFA must be agreed to by a Harvesting Advisory Board which will include representatives from environment groups." This moratorium area covers less than half of State Forests, but protects the right areas, those with old growth forest, rainforest, threatened species and rare forest types.

In addition to the 30% sawlog quota reduction which took effect in July 1996, another 10% reduction for Northern sawmills and 5% for Central and Southern sawmills will take effect from 1 July 1997.

The only sour note in the decision was a promise to hand out long-term timber contracts as 'resource security'. The fear is that the promised timber supply will not and cannot be met outside moratoria areas and there will be pressure to log those important areas set aside for protection in this agreement.

A Summary of Forestry and Wilderness Conservation Initiatives and forests in question will be available at the desk at the next OFF meeting.

HOLSWORTHY AIRPORT MEETING

A Report by John Watters

On October 17 several committee members attended a meeting of the Georges River Environmental Alliance to hear speakers from Rust PPK, the consultants who have been selected to conduct the E.I.S. for the second airport. Assisting Rust PPK were three consultants - one each for Noise and Air Quality, Water Quality, Flora and Fauna.

Some key points to emerge were :

- The E.I.S. will NOT make a decision on the preferred site (Holsworthy or Badgerys Creek) - that is up to the Commonwealth Government.
- Terms of reference EXCLUDE any review of sites at Wilton or Goulburn.
- The Draft EIS will be produced by March 1997, with public exhibition until May/June 1997.
- The master plan for the configuration of the runways was not available.

The project leader stated that if there were deficiencies in the study due to time restraints, the EIS would state this.

Many serious questions were raised and the answers were in the main inadequate. For example, there is only one botanist to assess the 15,000 ha of pristine bush, but 14 archaeologists. Great concern was expressed about the very short period of time allowed for the EIS to properly address issues such as noise, air and water quality, fuel delivery, related traffic, effects on Georges River and feeder streams - the list of problems (and the lack of satisfactory solutions) is virtually endless.

The lack of publicity in major and local newspapers was criticised and the non-appointment of an independent auditor was noted. The Chairman pointed out to Rust PPK the potential for harm to their reputation in the event of a deficient or unsatisfactory EIS.

Finally, we urge you all to treat this disgraceful proposal seriously and urgently. Get involved - attend protest meetings and write letters to the Prime Minister, John Howard.

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(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 25 (Monday). Johanna Robinson presents a slide show and talk on **Game Parks in South Africa**. The slides will cover safaris taken in eastern and southern Africa and will be centred on the wildlife in the various national parks and game reserves.

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 is traditional 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.

FIELD DAY Because of the holiday season, there will be no field trip in late December. Just wait for our 1997 programme which will be a beauty.

FUTURE DATES FOR DIARY.

February 3rd 1997 - First meeting of OFF for the new year and Annual General Meeting.

February 24th - OFF meeting: 'Inland Waterways'.

SOCIETY NEWS IN BRIEF

Report on activities

Only 14 people attended the walk on 19th October from Maroubra to La Perouse. The weather was beautiful and the coastal scenery was superb. The many interesting things along the way included the coastal cliffs, a windmill for generating electricity, historic Coast Cemetery and the gun emplacements on Henry Head. It was a most enjoyable day.

The annual camping weekend was also down in numbers, raising the question of whether members still want such an activity or whether it should be replaced with a day walk. Those who attended had wonderful weather for the two days and the walks at Fitzroy Falls and around Mount Alexandra were much enjoyed.

Meetings

This month OFF Committee members attended three meetings: Hurstville Council's Tree Preservation Group, a residents' action meeting about over-development in our area and a meeting organised by Georges River Environmental Alliance to hear speakers from the consultants doing the E.I.S. for the proposed Holsworthy Airport site.

Unacceptable building developments

At last OFF meeting we heard from local residents who are concerned about two proposed developments in Oatley and Peakhurst. One is the plan to build 54 units in 3 tower blocks at 47-67 Mulga Road, a proposal vigorously opposed by Council and by a large meeting of local residents (800 people) in

August last year. The developer is taking his proposal to the Land and Environment Court on 18-21 November.

Loretta Brown has also alerted us to a large development proposal in Ogilvy Street, Peakhurst, where a narrow block running down to the river may have up to 12 houses built on it, necessitating the wholesale clearing of native trees.

Members present at the meeting signed petitions and promised to send protest letters. The committee has also acted to protest against both proposals.

Memorial garden.

Oatley West Public School is to establish a native garden to be named in memory of Milo Dunphy, the great conservationist who lived in Oatley West.

Environment phone tree.

Helen Bell of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre has contacted the Society to see if our members would participate in a telephone contact service. Participants would be phoned when an issue arises and then phone two other people. There would probably only two or three phone calls a year and it is a good way to spread the message quickly. If you would like to get involved, phone the Environment Centre on 9545 3077.

AIRPORT NOISE COMPLAINTS

AirServices Australia is recording all complaints on airport noise. The data collected will be used for reviewing current flight paths. The number to ring is

9582 1850

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