



PASSING OF OFF FOUNDER

It is with great sadness, that we report the passing of one of OFF's founders, Rafe Kowron, who died in hospital on the night of Monday, 11 April. He would have been 92 in July.

Rafael and his wife Moyia, as a young couple in the early 1950s, came to live in West Oatley near Lime Kiln Bay and Oatley Park. They were delighted with the bushland surrounds, but appalled at the destruction and vandalism that was taking place. Groups of boys would arrive at weekends to have tree chopping contests, rubbish was being dumped, plants pulled up and fires deliberately started. They determined to do something about it and began calling on houses in the vicinity to seek opinions and stimulate concern and interest. They also approached council aldermen, the local Progress Association, Fauna Protection Panel and Tree Wardens League.

At a Progress Association meeting, the Kowrons invited interested people to their home to meet Mr F.J. Griffiths, Chief Guardian of Fauna in NSW. This meeting was held on 30th November 1955. About twenty people attended and heard Mr Griffiths give a lengthy talk on the various ways of setting up a society which would protect flora and fauna and encourage people to take an interest in their local surroundings. It was suggested that this interest could be stimulated by regular picture nights, discussion groups and field days. All agreed that a Flora and Fauna Society was needed and a steering committee was formed. This consisted of six people – Rafael Kowron, Moyia Kowron, Doris Newbould, W. (Mick) Staples, Harold Barr and Don McMinn.

One week later, on December 7th, the committee held another meeting to establish the basic framework of the Society and to plan future activities. It was agreed that the name of the group should be "Oatley Flora and Fauna Society" (the word "Conservation" was not added until 1967).

(Being Green, Oatley Flora And Fauna Conservation Society, The First 50 Years 1955 – 2005 by Alan Fairley).

We are indebted to both Rafe and Moyia for the legacy they left in OFF.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PLASTICS AND MICROPLASTICS

On 28 March, Dr Scott Wilson spoke passionately about microplastics, their sources and increasing prevalence in the environment. Scott previously worked as a Senior Research Fellow at Macquarie University's Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences. Scott's other role was Research Director of the Australian Microplastic Assessment Project (AUSMAP). This nationwide citizen science project identified microplastic hotspots and source reduction solutions. His 20+ years of research experience in ecotoxicology, ecological assessments, and water quality monitoring resulted in his recent appointment as Chief Scientist at the EarthWatch Institute Australia.

A combined audience of 41 (live and zoom) heard Scott explain microplastics were typically 1-5mm particles of plastic and rubber which result from production of plastic & rubber items and clothing, construction of synthetic playgrounds and playing fields, as well as breakdown of plastics in the environment (on land and in our waterways and oceans). It is estimated we ingest microplastics equivalent to 1 credit card (6g) per week! Scott emphasised everyone can make a difference by considering "9 R's in this order: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Refurbish, Repair, Repurpose, Rot, Recycle". He highlighted recycling of plastic is important however we can make a bigger difference by choosing/buying non-plastic items and those items not packed in plastic. Scott mentioned 'rubber crumb' contaminating the environment surrounding synthetic playing fields (24,100 rubber pieces/m²) and playgrounds (12,200 rubber pieces/m²) was already a major concern. He has recently assisted in guiding OFF members in the initial microplastics survey at Poulton Park.

As global plastic production is increasing exponentially, it is highly likely that many more microplastics will find their way into our environment and our food chain! A sobering thought! A recording of this talk is available [here](#).

UPDATE ON GLENLEE

A rally will be held 10.00 am Saturday 23 April 2022 at Heinrich Reserve, 40D Bayside Drive, Lugarno. Local politicians and Georges River Councillors have been invited and asked to speak briefly on their commitment to saving Glenlee. Given how close the Federal elections are, it is important that there is a big turnout for the rally.

It also appears that Glenlee is still on the market and that Colliers is advertising that it is open for inspection at 2.00pm Thursday 28 April. The rally on 23rd may need to consider a protest at the site on 28 April.

BIRD MIGRATIONS IN OATLEY

Autumn going into winter is probably the best time to appreciate our impressive birdlife. At this time the summer migrants have left (do you miss the koel?) and now the southern migrants



from Victoria and Tasmania are arriving to overwinter in our wonderful area or just stay a few days before heading further north. Already this year beautiful birds such as rufous fantails, golden whistlers and black-faced flycatchers have been sighted in Lime Kiln Bay, Poulton Park and on the Blackbutt track at Lugarno. So now is a good time to get out and enjoy our great reserves and with a bit of luck you may spot a rare bird or two. Image of one of these birds, a rufous fantail, taken at Lugarno by Peter Stevens.

GEORGES RIVERKEEPER HONOUR BOARD

In recognition of the commitment and contribution of past Committee members (Councillors and community representatives), Georges Riverkeeper has acknowledged a number of members for their outstanding support, including 2 OFF members: Sharyn Cullis and Kim Wagstaff. You can read their citations, along with the other recipients, [here](#).

GRC BMX AND MOUNTAIN BIKING FEASIBILITY REPORT 2022

This report was published at a recent Ccl Meeting. It recommends further examination to determine technical feasibility and environmental impact at the following locations:

- i. Lower Gannons Park (dirt jumps and/or trails);
- ii. Oatley Park (dirt jumps and/or trails);
- iii. Peakhurst Park (dirt jumps and/or trails).

OFF is very concerned about the inclusion of Oatley Park in this list, particularly the late inclusion by council of the dirt jumps at Oatley Park as these were not recommended by the consultant. OFF will ask GRC to remove Oatley Park from the study. Surely council should be preserving this precious Crown bushland at all costs, not permitting these damaging impacts.

FEDERAL ELECTION ISSUES

OFF will be distributing a flyer at the community Market day (see below), listing a number of issues voters should consider when they vote in the upcoming federal election, such as declaring a climate emergency, stopping all coal, oil, natural gas projects and implementing a comprehensive National Waste Strategy.

Coming OFF Events in April/May 2022

OFF Full Year Events Calendar: <http://www.oatleyflorafauna.org.au/index.php/progam/>

We have now returned to face-to-face meetings, starting at 7.30pm, in the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley. Meetings will also be available on-line, using the video conference application Zoom. If you are on the OFF News email list, you will receive an invitation prior to meetings or use this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3742141020?pwd=i_daK5memiUVeVb7bERqr5WgKybj2w

Note that some OFF presentations and earlier movies can now be found on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd_PLK8og40D0ekuYAys3IQ

25 April– Supporting biodiversity and conservation on farms. Eleanor Lang

Eleanor is a Cowra-based field ecologist with the ANU Fenner School's Sustainable Farms program, where she contributes to various ecological monitoring projects in the Central Tablelands, and also works with land managers to enhance their farms for biodiversity and productivity. Agriculture takes up over 50% of Australia's land mass, and has been a major contributor to ecosystem damage and species decline. It is therefore also a critical industry for conservation, yet harmonizing agriculture and biodiversity conservation continues to be under-researched and poorly incentivised. ANU's Sustainable Farms initiative maintains several long-term monitoring projects that demonstrate how farms contribute to species diversity, and ways that supporting biodiversity can also directly benefit production and business resilience. Eleanor will give an overview of various projects and related field work, as well as some of the findings from long term monitoring projects and how the program is working with farmers to enhance their landscapes.

27 April Wednesday– Fitzroy Falls. Adrian Polhill.

We plan to walk along the East Rim / Wildflower walk (7km return) in the morning, returning to the visitor centre for lunch & coffee. In the afternoon the plan is to walk (up to 2hrs return) the West Rim with its spectacular views. Meeting point: 10am at the Fitzroy Falls Visitor Centre.

Due to wet weather conditions, there may be some changes in in the details of this walk. Please ring Adrian on 0424 478 498 prior to confirm arrangements.

23 May – Advance Notice: Ecology and Sustainable Management of Mangroves.

Swapan Paul, Wetland Manager, [Sydney Olympic Park Authority](#).

Meetings of the Society are at the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and field days. As noted above, the meeting is also accessible on-line using ZOOM. Please login before 7.30nm: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3742141020?pwd=i_daK5memiUVeVb7bERqr5WgKybj2w

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is normally on the second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm, except January. Now that COVID lockdowns have stopped we are continuing with these sessions, with the next one on 14 May. Please check with Bushcare officer on 0435963643 before coming.

LOCAL BUSHCARE Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites each month on the Thursday after general meetings (except December) from 8.00 am to 11 am. This month we will be back on 28 April at lower Gannons Park supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer. We would welcome new bushcarers. Contact: website and volunteers will be notified via email. <https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Volunteering>

CREATING CANOPIES IN GREATER SYDNEY OFF will be participating in another planting event with the [Greater Sydney Landcare Network](#) on 5 May 2022, at Claydon Reserve, Ramsgate Rd, Sans Souci. Planting will commence at 8am, followed by morning tea. GSLN will provide equipment etc. We hope to see another big turn-out of OFF members for this activity. Bring gloves, hat, sun-screen/rain coat and water

STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Dairy Creek on 26 April.

PHOTO EXHIBITION – LOCAL BIODIVERSITY. OFF has received some impressive contributions for this exhibition which opens on 21 May (official opening is on Sunday 22 May) and runs till 19 June. Please take the opportunity to come along and support this event, as well as viewing the wonderful flora and fauna from our area.

CITIZENS' CLIMATE LOBBY meetings are held at 2:30 pm on the second Sunday of every month at Club Oatley (RSL) and are also on-line at zoom.us/j/2023151151. Next meeting, on 8th May, will be addressed by Zhi Soon, Labor candidate for Banks. Details text George on 0467004892.

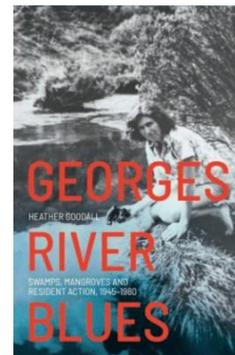
OATLEY LIONS COMMUNITY MARKET DAY 23 APRIL 2022

Don't forget to come to the OFF stall at the Oatley Lions neighbourhood event. next Saturday at Oatley Uniting Church. This was a great success last year. OFF will have native plants for sale.

LAUNCH OF GEORGES RIVER BLUES

Remember to join us at Hazelhurst Museum and Gallery in Gymea on 24 April for the launch of Georges River Blues, Heather Goodall's new book on Swamps, Mangroves and Resident Action 1945 – 1980. Launch details [here](#).

See last month's Newsletter for details.



OFF SECRETARY POSITION

We are still looking for a members(s) to take up miscellaneous secretarial roles. Past Secretary Liz Cameron is happy to outline the roles to interested members or you can contact Kim Wagstaff about your interest.

KOGARAH BAY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION ADDRESS Members Julian Sheen and Graham Lalchere recently addressed this group on the history and work of OFF and found that their members were very interested in OFF's activities such as the recent microplastic sampling.

CONTINUING TREE REMOVAL

OFF has written to GRC expressing our concern at continuing street tree removal at a number of sites, and the lack of notification to nearby residents. This is in contradiction of council policy. Is this due to lack of staff due to recent redundancies?

To find notifications and reports on OFF activities, check the **OFF Facebook** page, to which you can also contribute by sending items/ photos to the administrator for others to view and comment on.