



### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO JOIN OFF COMMITTEE

Best wishes for 2018 are extended by the 2017 Committee to all our members and friends.

The first meeting for the year will be the Annual General Meeting on Monday, 5 February when the 2018 office bearers and Committee will be elected. We would like to hear from anyone interested in joining the Committee. Meetings start at 7.30pm at the Oatley RSL.

### ANNUAL VIST TO KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK JANUARY 2018

Nineteen OFF members and friends stayed at Charlotte Pass for 3 - 7 days. It was our third year in Pygmy Possum Lodge, which has stunning views and is convenient for walks on the Main Range. Also resident were three couples from Berowra who were very convivial and even bought an OFF calendar.

Wildflowers were colourful and abundant (thanks to a late snowfall in October from which many snow drifts remained) and much photographed. The usual walks were completed, even a trek to Blue Lake in rain, hail and mist. The less energetic enjoyed watching Flame Robins visit their nest on the lodge verandah, and reading, chatting and doing embroidery, word games and a jigsaw. Tim repaired a cassette radio that became welcome entertainment for Melina's mother who was nursing a fractured arm.

Weather was changeable and there was a light dusting of snow on the peaks on the final Sunday morning. Photos of the triup are on the OFF website [off.oatleypark.com/?p=6977](http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=6977)

### OFF NEWS NEEDS YOUR DESKTOP PUBLISHING SKILLS

The editorial committee of OFF News is looking for someone who is able to compile the newsletter using Word or desktop publishing software. Most of the actual articles will be written by the editorial committee (or others) and forwarded to you for compiling into a newsletter template. There would be minimal editorial work (unless you want to have more involvement) and your focus would be on the format and design of the monthly newsletter.

If you are interested contact Graham Lalchere [glalch@gmail.com](mailto:glalch@gmail.com)

### OATLEY PARK SURVIVES ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT FRAGMENTATION OF PUBLIC LAND

A proposal motion, put by Hurstville Councillor Vince Badalati, to look at the feasibility of opening a cafe/restaurant in Oatley Park was withdrawn at the last minute at Georges River Council's December 18 meeting after many residents contacted Georges River Councillors expressing their dismay at the fragmentation of public land for commercial use.

Several residents had registered to speak in opposition to the proposal but withdrew once it became clear the motion was not going ahead.

However, Melina Amerasinghe spoke on behalf of the community first thanking Councillor Badalati for withdrawing his motion. She went on to remind councillors that a cafe/ restaurant would contravene the park's plan of management and hoped that there would be no plans for commercial activities in the park proposed in the future.

Over the years there have been several attempts to introduce commercial ventures in the Park (see Alan Fairley's Being Green available on the Off website). Thankfully they have all failed, but this most recent attempt serves to remind us that there are still some members of the community who do not fully appreciate the value of bushland as a public amenity in its own right without the need for additional infrastructure.

### TREE REMOVAL IN GUNGAH BAY ROAD

On 10/11/2017 Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society received a copy of the letter sent to the residents of Gungah Bay Road advising them of the removal of Eucalyptus microcorys (Tallowood) under power lines on Gungah Bay Road between Roberts Avenue and Acacia Street. Many will recall how over the years these trees had been pruned into bizarre vase-shapes to avoid the power lines. The letter advised *"The Tallowoods are an inappropriate species and are too large to be located under the power lines. Unfortunately, the trees have not responded well to the regular pruning around the electricity network, resulting in poor structure and loss of visual amenity."*

A few weeks before Christmas the Tallowoods were removed and replaced by Water Gums. Of course it is a shame to lose mature trees like these, however we understand why council wanted to do this as many of the trees were in a poor state and replacing them meant that there would be consistency in the planting giving an aesthetically pleasing street view. OFF appreciates being consulted prior to the work being carried out and takes this as a sign that our new council is perhaps more sensitive to the environmental concerns of the local community.

Water Gums seem to be the council's 'default option' for street planting and OFF would like to see consideration being given to alternatives such as Wallum Banksia (*Banksia aemula*), Dwarf Apple (*Angophora hispida*) or even Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*).

### EXPRESS INTEREST NOW IN A TRIP TO THE WILD TASMANIAN WILDERNESS OF THE TARKINE

A group of OFF members and friends are planning to visit the Tarkine in early March 2019. It is one of the last, most remote and pristine wild areas in the world. Some of the highlights we are looking forward to are Montezuma waterfall, the tallest in Tasmania, Huon Pine forests, cruises along the wild Pieman river to its mouth and walking on unspoilt beaches where few people are privileged to go. Flexible walking options include short strolls to challenging full day adventures. We intend to book an accommodation base within the Tarkine for a maximum of 5 days with all of these activities and more within easy walking or driving distance, and are looking for extra travelling companions. Numbers will be limited due to accommodation options.

People may wish to book holiday extensions to this before and after. Ask us for suggestions, and let us know, what else might be on offer. It is expected that you find your own way there and back.

If you would like further information contact us soon, and we require tentative bookings prior to 31/3/18. We will then advise you of further details including accommodation, catering and costs and when deposits would be required. For further information and to register your interest contact either;

### REPORT ON NOVEMBER MEETING

Alan Fairley presented a fascinating talk on yet another little-visited country where he and Chiew had recently travelled – Iran. He described and illustrated the long history and magnificent ancient ruins and by contrast, the modern cities with their formal gardens featuring fountains and pools, and imaginative designs for cooling buildings.

Following Alan's talk, Reannan Honey, PhD student at the University of Technology Sydney and recipient of a research grant from OFF in 2017, outlined her research project – Habitat restoration for hollow-dependant fauna. She is investigating whether artificial hollows can provide an alternative option to nest boxes for animals like sugar gliders, when natural hollows are in short supply. The meeting concluded with a very sociable supper enjoyed by the large audience.

## Coming OFF Events in February/March

### Monday 5 February 2018 Meeting at 7:30pm - Society's Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be followed by a light supper so bring a plate of food and any interesting OFF- related photos to screen.

### Monday 26 February 2018 - James Baxter-Gilbert - The Eastern Water Dragon - an urban survival story

First regular monthly meeting for the year. James Baxter-Gilbert (conservation biologist) from Macquarie Uni's Lizard lab talking about research into the remarkable ability of Eastern Water Dragons to adapt and thrive in the urban environment.

### Thursday 1 March 2018 - Visit to Victoria Barracks, Paddington - Walk Leader - Julian Sheen

Further details will be provided at the AGM and in the next newsletter.

### Sunday, 4 March 2018 - Clean Up Australia Day. Jinna Reserve 8.30am -12.00pm

OFF members will be cleaning around the edges of Lime Kiln Bay. Everyone is invited. Stay for an hour or the whole morning. Meet at Jinna Reserve at the bottom of Pamela Ave, South Peakhurst after 8.30am. Bags provided but bring boots and rubber gloves. Sign in with Alan Fairley at the OFF marquee.

*Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL and Community Club, 23 Letitia Street, Oatley from 7:30 - 9:30pm usually on the fourth Monday.*

## TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2017 - RODGER ROBERTSON TRIP REPORT - RIVER CAT TO PARRAMATTA

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017		
Income and Expenditure Statement 2017		
	2017	2016
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	\$3,871.00	\$3,408.00
Donations	\$2,276.70	\$1,665.70
Sales stalls etc	\$170.50	\$178.85
GRC Grants various	\$74,686.00	\$0.00
Interest(chq acct)	\$0.00	\$3.20
Annual dinner	\$1,846.00	\$1,756.00
Calendar sales 2017 2018	\$3,934.00	\$1,282.00
Lions Loan for calendar	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
Capertee trip	\$0.00	\$584.25
Bird cards	\$356.50	\$509.25
Miscel Income	\$383.70	\$90.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$90,524.40</b>	<b>\$9,477.25</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
OFF Newsletter printing postage	(\$1,474.70)	(\$1,374.34)
Insurance	(\$360.00)	(\$315.00)
PO box rental	(\$124.00)	(\$121.00)
Brochure printing various	(\$499.31)	\$0.00
Dept Fair Trading	(\$44.00)	(\$54.00)
Planning day	\$0.00	(\$307.75)
Bushcare day	\$0.00	(\$69.96)
Donations and Membership	(\$400.00)	(\$985.00)
Annual dinner	(\$1,672.00)	(\$1,553.07)
2018 Calendar expenses	(\$3,494.70)	(\$1,000.00)
Grants expenditure	(\$37,902.20)	(\$1,389.03)
Card printing	\$0.00	(\$470.49)
Capertee expenses	\$0.00	(\$584.25)
New Computer	(\$650.00)	\$0.00
Research grants	(\$5,000.00)	\$0.00
Lions stall	(\$210.00)	\$0.00
River road project	(\$1,054.00)	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	(\$640.10)	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(\$53,525.01)</b>	<b>(\$8,223.89)</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$36,999.39</b>	<b>\$1,253.36</b>
<b>BANK RECONCILIATION</b>		
	2017	2016
Balance as at 1 January	\$ 12,971.06	\$ 11,717.70
Surplus on year	\$36,999.39	\$ 1,253.36
Cheque account balance 31 December	\$ 14,970.45	\$ 12,971.06
Various term deposits	\$43,490.07	\$ 8,331.77
Total balance at bank 31 December	\$58,460.52	\$ 21,302.83

The accounts in 2017 are influenced by the several grants OFF and Bushcare (on their behalf) obtained in the year. Further information will be provided by the Treasurer at the AGM on 5 February.

Our last walk for 2017 was Sunday 26 November when 12 OFF members took the train to Circular Quay for a beautiful, relaxing morning ferry trip to Parramatta ( 1 1/2 hrs). You certainly see a different side of Sydney from the river.

From the Parramatta Ferry Terminal we walked alongside the Parramatta River in Queen's Park stopping to read many markers providing information (including pictures) on the history of the area - wharves, mills, granary etc. We also chanced upon a ceremony at the HMAS Parramatta Memorial being held to commemorate the anniversary of the sinking of The Parramatta II on 26 November 1941.

From there we proceeded to the historical precinct of Hambledon Cottage, Experiment Farm and Elizabeth Farm Cottage. We decided we must make a return visit in 2018 to do justice to these venues and see them properly.

We headed into the town centre via the Lancers' Barracks which is still in operation and also contains a museum which is open on Sundays - well worth a visit.

Lunch was near the St Johns Cathedral which is on the site of the first church in Australia. After our rest we headed to Parramatta Park to see Government House, a Boer War Memorial and a dairy house museum. It was then a stroll back along the river and into the CBD to take the train back to Redfern Station.

We were all impressed by how much history there is to see in Parramatta and our day was really only a 'taster'. So a return visit is definitely needed.

Photos of the walk are on the OFF website [off.oatleypark.com/?p=6962](http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=6962)

V Bolling

### OFF MISSION STATEMENT - OPEN FOR COMMENT

OFF was asked for a mission statement when applying for a free software licence for the significant tree database. While our Rules of Incorporation include the objects of the society they do not include a mission statement which succinctly defines our core interests.

The Society's objects are:

- to stimulate interest in Australian flora and fauna;
- to act to protect and foster an interest in the natural environment, particularly at the local level;
- to foster an understanding of the need to conserve the natural environment and resources; and
- to cooperate with other groups to achieve these objectives at local, state, national and international level.

The committee has drafted the following Mission Statement:

***Working to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment locally and globally.***

If you would like to comment on the draft before it is finally approved by your committee, an email can be forwarded to [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com)



### THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS - GRAHAM LALCHERE

Graham first thanked the outgoing committee, particularly Shaun Keays-Byrne who will not be standing for the committee this year, Shaun is also cutting back on his work on the newsletter and the production of publicity materials. He will be missed both as editor and from the committee.

Graham then thanked Sue Howard who, along with Vicki Bolling, organised the annual dinner, and the Hospitality and Welcome group: Val Douglas, Bev Watters, Sue de Beuzeville and Vicki Bolling.

He also made special mention of the OFF Research fund sub-committee for researching how to choose our grant recipients for this year, Rheannon Honey and Ross Crates. Rheannon and Ross will be reporting back to OFF at the November meeting. Meanwhile another round of grants will begin, funded through contributions to the President's fund.

This year Graham told members about an inspirational community campaigner from the Botany area of Sydney: Nancy Hillier OAM. Nancy's many contributions to the development of services, to championing the interests of residents, and to protection of the environment in the Botany Bay region were well known in the area. Her legacy is aptly summed up the title of her Sydney Morning Herald obituary as the "Relentless rebel with many causes". Graham stated that he was sure the audience would agree that Nancy was an inspiration to us all.

Graham's address in full will be posted on the OFF website.

### THE SECRETARY'S REPORT - LIZ CAMERON

Highlights of the year included

- Research Grants Program initiated and grants given to two postgraduate students
- Significant Tree Register established to help conserve our tree canopy
- Completion of wheel-chair accessible pathway in Oatley Park
- Photographic competition resulting in very successful *Oatley – Nature in the Suburbs Calendar 2018*
- Greening of the River Road Reserve near Oatley Station with native plants
- Banks Electorate Volunteer's Award to John Davoren for editing OFF News over nine years

We mourned the passing of four members in 2017 – Rob Dickson, Jan Crane, Pat Donnelly and Peter Airey.

Val Douglas stepped down from the Hospitality Team after 13 years, and for 20 years previously, program officer. A sterling record of service. Shaun Keays-Byrne and Keith McRorie have resigned from the committee.

OFF News has been produced by a sub-committee since John Davoren retired as Editor. We are looking for another Editor, and assistance with desktop publishing\*. *Editor's Note: A new member of OFF has now taken on this role.*

Membership reached 312 with a high level of renewals and generous donations to the Research Fund. Members are invited to consider a bequest to OFF.

After two successful years of OFF meetings in the auditorium of Oatley RSL and Community Club, we are disappointed it has been reserved for Club functions on Monday nights. We hope the replacement space downstairs will prove satisfactory. The full report will be posted on the OFF website.

### FEEDING BIRDS

It is common in the northern hemisphere, particularly in Britain, Europe and the US for people to put out food for birds. It is most frequently practiced during the harsh winter that these areas endure. It has been calculated that in the US, 500,000 tonnes of seed are fed to birds annually.

In Australia the scientific community has generally not supported the feeding of wild birds, particularly as we don't have the harsh weather conditions of these northern hemisphere countries. However, recent research has shown that up to 3 million Australians feed wild birds such as seed for parrots and pigeons and meat for magpies. However, many of these people feel guilty about it.

Fortunately, attitudes are changing and it is recognised that people who are feeding birds are getting immense satisfaction from doing it and for some, it is a way of compensating for the destruction that humans have inflicted on the environment. It also enhances our relationships with nature and makes us more willing to support conservation. While we might think that birds are benefiting from the food it is the humans who are probably getting more from it than the birds!

A recent study on magpies where there was unlimited access to mince meat showed that 80% of the food fed to the chicks in the nest was still natural food (worms, insects, etc) and that the parent birds were not dependant on the humans feeding them. Therefore, do not feel guilty about feeding your pet magpies but try to make sure that the food is well balanced, such as pet food but most important of all is to keep everything clean as sharing food and water bowls is the easiest way to spread diseases amongst birds.

Finally, while birds like food offerings from humans, they are much more grateful for water. A clean source of water will be used by many species not just the birds you are feeding.

*Graham Fry*



### TREE NOMINATIONS

Unlike many Councils in Sydney, Georges River Council does not have a Significant Tree register for all valuable trees. It only has one for trees of heritage interest. If Council does not protect our significant trees, we are likely to eventually lose them.

A Significant Tree Register is being established by OFF to protect trees on public land. Trees may be assessed on the basis of: historic or natural value; social or cultural value; visual or aesthetic value; whether it is old or rare; whether it is part of an important natural cluster. You can nominate one or more trees on a form on the OFF web-site: [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com) and click onto "Tree Nominations".

## Coming OFF Events in February/March

### Monday 26 February 2018 - James Baxter-Gilbert - The Eastern Water Dragon - an urban survival story

First regular monthly meeting for the year. James Baxter-Gilbert (conservation biologist) from Macquarie Uni's Lizard lab talking about research into the remarkable ability of Eastern Water Dragons to adapt and thrive in the urban environment.

### Thursday 1 March 2018 - Visit to Victoria Barracks, Paddington - Walk Leader - Julian Sheen

This message is for those already registered for the excursion. The train leaves Oatley 8.25 and Mortdale at 8.27am (third carriage). Note: This time is different from that announced at the AGM. We alight at Central to catch a 440 or 373 bus that goes down Oxford Street. From Oxford St we walk round to the back of the barracks to the entrance on Moore Park Road (not the entrance on Oxford Street). We are due there at 10am. To get through the security gate you will need photo ID and \$5. The tour takes about 1 ½ to 2 hours. At the conclusion we can walk down to the excellent pub on the corner of Flinders St for some lunch and then walk down the hill to Central Station. Only a few places left. Ring Julian 0415428744 as soon as possible.

### Sunday, 4 March 2018 - Clean Up Australia Day. Jinna Reserve 8.30am -12.00pm

OFF members will be cleaning around the edges of Lime Kiln Bay. Everyone is invited. Stay for an hour or the whole morning. Meet at Jinna Reserve at the bottom of Pamela Ave, South Peakhurst after 8.30am. Bags provided but bring boots and rubber gloves. Sign in with Alan Fairley at the OFF marquee.

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL and Community Club, 23 Letitia Street, Oatley from 7:30 - 9:30pm usually on the fourth Monday. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.**

**Note that OFF meetings are now held in the sports room on the lower ground floor of the club, access is via the lift or stairs near the bar.**

## BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....

**SPECIAL REQUEST** - Cliff Crane would be glad to be get names, photos, and anecdotes to include in his September presentation "Oatley Bushwalkers of Yesteryear" - contact him 9580 3269 or banjopaterson@iprimus.com.au.

**TRIP TO TASMANIAN WILDERNESS - TARKINE** Expressions of interest were called for in last OFF News. Contacts for further information are : tporritt@tpg.com.au; 043 8620626 or Sharyn 0421 714391, go\_river@hotmail.com

**AUDITOR NEEDED.** OFF is looking for an auditor to check the Society's financial accounting processes. You do not need to be an accountant but should be confident with figures. Contact Liz Cameron, Secretary if you think you can help or know someone who might fit the bill.

**EARTH HOUR** will be held on Sat. 24 March between 8.30 and 9.30 pm.

**MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH.** Next session 9am Tuesday, Feb 27. Details Heather Stolle 0425291879. Come along to find out about the quality of the run-off into the Georges River.

**OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE** group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00pm. Meet up at the carpark at the top entrance gate off Oatley Park Avenue. Although this group is overseen by council, it is in essence an OFF initiative and so it is important that it is supported by members so we can be seen to be 'putting our money where our mouth is'.

**AUSTRALASIAN BAT SOCIETY CONFERENCE** 3-6 April at Western Sydney University, Richmond. Registrations close 28 Feb. Information at : inquiries@ausbats.org.au

**LIME KILN BAY WETLANDS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC** while the Georges River Council is undertaking maintenance work. The ponds are already drained of water and after a working bee organised by Neoklis Bloukos and friends earlier in February to collect the worst of the rubbish, council should be starting soon to remove sediment build up from the ponds. The work is scheduled to continue until the end of March.

**COMMON IN TASMANIA, THE BUMBLE BEE** has not yet established on the mainland but there was a sighting in Northern Sydney so the DPI wants the public to keep a lookout.



## BEE ALERT

Large earth bumble bee

See it? Snap it. Call us.  
1800 084 881



www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

## LOCAL PARK CLOSED DUE TO DIE-BACK DISEASE

Myles Dunphy Reserve has been forced to close because of an infestation of the die-back disease *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Signs have been erected forbidding walkers.

As first reported in the November newsletter, this mould disease can be quite serious, having the potential to kill many different species of native plants. It is mainly spread by water washing along the ground but also by shoes during human activity. Guidelines to prevent its spread, titled "Arrive Clean, Leave Clean", are on the Australian Government web-site : environment.gov.au/biodiversity.



## TRIP TO CAPERTEE VALLEY NP IN APRIL 2018

Oatley Flora and Fauna have booked the homestead and cottage (see photo) at Capertee National Park of the weekend of the 27- 29 April. As well as exploring the park we will also be carrying out some conservation work including weeding and maintenance of trees planted last year and hopefully doing some additional planting. As many people know, this park is a very important location for the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater. They frequently nest along the river and these trees will eventually provide additional food and nesting sites. At this time of the year the birds are not nesting and so it is unlikely they will be present but you never know! If you are interested in coming for the weekend and staying in the homestead or cottage, contact Graham Fry at fryg45@gmail.com or on 9580 6621.

**OFF Secretary: Liz Cameron, P O Box 52, Mortdale 2223 Tel: 9580 6621 Email: off@oatleypark.com  
Website: off.oatleypark.com**



## #TIME2CHOOSE MASSIVE STATEWIDE RALLY

Time2Choose is holding a demonstration in support of clean air, water and energy, and against new coal mines and CSG gas fields. It will be held on **24 March, 2018** from 12.00 pm to 2.00 pm. Meeting point at Hyde Park North. There will be representatives from right across NSW. The CBD will be packed with people demanding a different future.

For more details go to: [www.lockthegate.org.au/time2choose](http://www.lockthegate.org.au/time2choose)

## FEBRUARY MEETING UPDATE

We had a record number of attendees with 75 members and guests at our first general meeting which featured speaker **James Baxter-Gilbert**. His enthusiastic talk on the **Eastern Water Dragon** and their adaptability to a changing urban environment was fascinating. An interesting aspect of the presentation was the methodology applied by James and the rigorous testing used in his research. He captivated the audience with his story on the elusive nature of the dragon – taking him 6 months to capture candidates. It is anticipated that his impressive research will be awarded a PhD in Science.

James put the offspring of the originally captured and released lizards through all sorts of rigorous experiments to test nature over nurture. The research looked at whether genetic difference was the reason the dragons have survived and thrived in a man-made world or if a steep curve of learned behaviour was the key. In conclusion James believes it is a combination of both with final results ready in another month or so.

After such gruelling research and experimentation, the expectation of a PhD is particularly satisfying. A touching end to the presentation was to see James' dad throw his arm around his son in a show of admiration and pride.

## OFF CELEBRATION DINNER

The annual OFF Celebration Dinner will be held on **Thursday 28 June, 2018** at OAT MILL, Oatley RSL from 6.30 pm (commencing 7.00 pm). The cost is \$38 per person. Dinner includes bread roll, entree, main, and cupcakes. Special dietary requirements available on request. Guests are to purchase drinks at the bar. OFF will hold a raffle on the night. Donations most welcome. For further information please contact Vicki Bolling 9580 3107 or Sue Howard 9579 1718. **Note\*\*** Payment due by Monday, 28 May 2018 (meeting night).

## EXCURSION REPORT: VICTORIA BARRACKS

Thirteen OFF members plus friends were part of a tour through Victoria Barracks on 1 March, 2018. Victoria Barracks is located in Paddington, between Oxford Street and Moore Park Road. It is one of the best-known examples of military architecture in Australia.



Once inside our group was greeted by Sergeant Ryan and members of the Corps of Guides. We were divided into four groups and headed off to explore the many historic sites. We learned that Victoria Barracks is a major historic site built in the 1840's, and still an active military base where the headquarters of Australia's Land Army are based. We all admired the fine Georgian architecture of the original barracks buildings including soldiers', NCOs' and officers' accommodations. We enjoyed hearing stories of the soldiers of the past and present from our excellent guides, all retired soldiers.

After coffee we visited the museum where Sergeant Ryan gave us an excellent account of life in the NSW colonial army, the battle of Vinegar Hill, the Sudan expedition and other exploits from Victorian times. He proved an informative guide. Following what was a demanding but highly worthwhile four-hour tour most of us retired to the Captain Cook Hotel for a good lunch, before heading home. More information and photos at:

<http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7128>

Julian Sheen

## CLEANUP AUSTRALIA DAY

Another successful clean-up was held on Sunday 4 March, 2018 along the shores of Lime Kiln Bay. 27 people, including six guides and their leaders, gave up some of their time to scour the mangrove edges for rubbish. A total of 22 bags of rubbish were collected, plus car tyres, pipe, styrofoam and bits of wood. More information and photos at: <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7099>.



Alan Fairley and guides.

## OATLEY IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to those OFF members who were successful in getting an article on the development of Myles Dunphy Reserve in the *Sydney Morning Herald* titled "Plans to rezone land for seniors housing labelled environmental threat and 'a travesty'" - 18 February 2018. The article strongly argued for the retention of the reserve for passive recreation. To view full article visit: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/plans-to-rezone-land-for-seniors-housing-labelled-environmental-threat-and-a-travesty-20180217-p4z0oc.html>

## MORE TO CONSIDER WHEN FEEDING BIRDS

Georges River Council will be erecting signs regarding problems associated with feeding birds in Evatt Park, Lugarno at Webb's Dam. The sign is based on the following wording:

*"To prevent diseases and bird deaths, it is important that the birds feed from the natural environment. To keep the birds healthy, please refrain from feeding them however enjoy watching them in their natural setting. Feeding of the birds by visitors to the park increases their population to unnaturally high levels. Uneaten bread and an increase in bird droppings contribute to the high nutrient and bacteria levels in the dam. High nutrient levels in the dam increases the chances of avian botulism during the summer months which may result in the death of birds."*

In Graham Fry's article in the Feb/Mar 2018 issue of *OFF News* he wrote that feeding birds "was a way of compensating for the destruction that humans have inflicted on the environment". I too have that urge when I feed a local brushtail possum that has taken up residence in our old garage while all the urban gardens around us change to concrete and tiles. However, to ensure everyone is aware of the down side to feeding the fauna, I would further add to Graham's story the problems associated with feeding many birds in public places such as pigeons, ibis, feral and native ducks.

Unfortunately, many people are simply unaware of the mess, disease and loss of diversity in our environment, and problems associated with feeding birds. If feeding birds at home, I encourage the use calcium powder on meat and not to feed all the time, so that the birds do not become reliant on humans for food. Besides supplying clean water, also have the right vegetation and vegetation structure on your property or balcony to allow the birds to forage for themselves.

Heather Stolle

**21 March - FIELD DAY Walk from Edgecliff to Circular Quay via Royal Botanic Gardens.**

An easy walk exploring the city's eastern fringe. Starting from Edgecliff and then proceeding through Rushcutters Bay, Potts Point, and Woolloomooloo including the Finger Wharf, Royal Botanic Gardens and finishing at Circular Quay. The walk is 5km in length and should take about 3-4 hours. We are catching the 9:05 am train from Oatley, 9:07 Mortdale, third carriage from the front and getting off at Edgecliff. Bring any refreshments you may need although there will be opportunities to purchase food and drinks on the way. Leader Keith McRorie – 0499 186 651.

**26 March – (Monday Meeting) Emeritus Professor of Anthropology Richard Wright, Examines the Australian Climate and Environment of 10,000 Years Ago.**

In the 1970s and 1980s Em. Prof. Richard Wright ran excavations on the edges of swamps in Victoria and NSW. These excavations yielded insights into ancient archaeology, plants and mammals. He will illustrate the stratification and contents of these excavations, and their specific bearing on prehistoric climatic and environmental change.

**27-29 April – Trip to Capertee Valley.**

OFF have booked the homestead and cottage in the Capertee Valley National Park for the weekend. As well as exploring the park we will be carrying out some conservation work including weeding and maintenance of trees planted last year and hopefully doing some additional planting. As many people know, this park is a very important location for the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater. They frequently nest along the river and these trees will eventually provide additional food and nesting sites. At this time of the year the birds are not nesting and so it is unlikely they will be present but you never know! If you are interested in coming for the weekend and staying in the homestead or cottage, contact **Graham Fry at [fryg45@gmail.com](mailto:fryg45@gmail.com) or on 9580 6621.**

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.**

**Note \*\* The RSL Club management has requested that all meeting attendees be RSL Club members, so please join if you are not already a member. Fees are \$6 per year or \$12 for 3 years. Don't forget to ask for your parking sticker which provides you access to the RSL car park. Of course you can be signed in by a RSL member if you are not a member. To enter the club, you should do either of these things.**

**BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

EARTH HOUR will be held on **Saturday, 24 March 2018**, between 8.30 pm and 9.30 pm.

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet up at the carpark at the top entrance gate off Oatley Park Avenue. Although this group is overseen by council, it is in essence an OFF initiative and so it is important that it is supported by members so we can be seen to be 'putting our money where our mouth is'.

**PHOTOS NEEDED**

Do you have any 35mm slide photos of OFF activities from the 1980s, 1970s or even earlier? The Society would like to borrow them so we can make digital copies as part of our historical records. We would need them to be on loan for a few weeks. If you can help, see Alan Fairley at one of OFF's meetings.

**AUTUMN BIRD WATCHING**

Autumn is a great time for observing nature. Most birds have finished breeding and so there are more of them than at any other time of the year. More significantly, there is a lot of migration occurring at this time. The summer migrants are leaving for the tropics and Asia - remember the Koels when they arrived in spring! While birds from Tasmania and Victoria are heading for the warmer climates of NSW and Queensland.

Often in March and April you may be fortunate to have a Rufous Fantail visit your garden to feed on the insects it needs for energy, to make the trip to Queensland. They are very similar to the more familiar Grey Fantail but are brown and reddish, and generally feed close to the ground. They normally inhabit rainforests or wet gullies, but during migration will use open habitats.



It is thought many smaller birds migrate at night but the Yellow-faced Honeyeater is one exception and during April large flocks will often be seen flying through our area. A good spot to see them is Websters Lookout, Oatley Park as they often fly across the Georges River, and briefly land in the trees near the lookout. A good time to spot them is mid-morning around 9.00 am to 10.00 am. Another obvious indication of their presence is their chip-chip contact call.

Now is also the time that Powerful Owls are getting ready to mate and breed. They often call at this time of the year proclaiming their territory or trying to attract a mate, generally in the early evening or pre-dawn. For more information on birds visit the Birdlife Australia website:

<http://www.birdlife.org.au/all-about-birds/birds-in-backyards>

We are very lucky to live in an area where we can easily observe nature - enjoy autumn.

*Graham Fry*



## THE IMPORTANCE OF ROADSIDE GREENSPACES

Increasing urbanisation and development continues to exert pressure on land use in our cities. We can assume that remnant patches of vegetation such as in backyards, gardens and public parks are an important component of the suburban habitat, as well as improving our own well-being.

Interestingly, research reported in *Urban Forestry, Urban Greening* (Vol 30, March 2018) suggests that roadside greenspaces also support a unique community of ants, beetles and spiders, and notes that management practices like increasing habitat complexity are important. "Maintaining and enhancing the conservation value of these spaces requires both an understanding of the biodiversity they support, and the factors, including habitat traits, influencing species occurrence". The results highlighted the important role of a sometimes overlooked greenspace in the urban environment.



## BEVERLEY PARK GOLF CLUB APPLICATION TO REMOVE 156 TREES AND FENCE OFF COURSE

As at 27 March 2018 the residents' committee had recorded 238 submissions against the Development Application. OFF has also lodged an objection which states in part that the (Biodiversity Corridor) map shows vegetated areas of the BPGC as being Supporting Habitat and the grassed areas as Supporting Areas. Given the prominence of the site, and the number of trees to be culled, there is a distinct possibility that developers and home owners will seize on this council-sanctioned slaughter of both natives and exotics and will be quick to use it as a precedent to justify tree removals on their own properties across the local government area.

Our key concern however is the complete fencing off of the golf course. This is a public space and yet unless you are a golfer you will be effectively locked out of public land. This creeping privatisation of public land by quasi-public organisations is a major concern. The issue was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 8 April, 2018 'Residents see red over Sydney golf club's plan to build border fence'

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/residents-see-red-over-golf-club-s-plan-to-build-border-fence-20180406-p4z870.html>

Members are welcome to lodge individual submissions. An online petition against the perimeter security fence can be signed at:

<https://www.change.org/p/gail-conolly-objection-to-perimeter-security-fence-surrounding-beverley-park-golf-course>

## EXCURSION REPORT: EDGECLIFF TO CIRCULAR QUAY WALK

Sydney is arguably one of the best cities in the world for walking because of its spectacular harbour and coast. On 21 March 2018 despite the bleak rainy start for those of us keen to explore, we embarked on a walking excursion of the city's eastern fringe commencing at Edgecliff. Some highlights during the 5km walk included, Rushcutters Bay Park, so full of charm and activity, being set against the picturesque harbour provided an opportunity to admire the luxury yachts, whilst dodging dogs in the leash-free park. Next stops included Kings Cross and the El Alamein fountain.



According to the Office of Environment and Heritage "The El Alamein Memorial Fountain is of State significance as a war memorial to the Australian soldiers of the 9th Division who fought near the Egyptian town of El Alamein in two battles which helped turn the course of World War II towards victory for the Allies". We then walked through the back streets and lanes of historic Woollahroo. Our journey coming to a breathtaking end at the Opera House and Circular Quay. It was a good walk with good company.

Keith McRorie – Leader

## REPORTING TREE REMOVAL

OFF welcomes notifications from members of trees which have been removed, pruned or poisoned and we're happy to upload details, including photos, on the website and Georges River Trees Facebook page at:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/georgesrivertrees/photos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/georgesrivertrees/photos/?ref=page_internal)

We recommend you contact Georges River Council by emailing [mail@georgesrivercouncil.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@georgesrivercouncil.nsw.gov.au) or by phoning 9330-6400.

## NEW OFF NEWS EDITOR

We are pleased to welcome Adelina Cubelic as the new Editor of OFF News and thank her for the fine work she did in compiling her first newsletter, the March/April edition.

## PHOTOS NEEDED

Do you have any 35mm slide photos of OFF activities from the 1980s, 1970s or even earlier? The Society would like to borrow them so we can make digital copies as part of our historical records. We would need them to be on loan for a few weeks. If you can help, see Alan Fairley at one of OFF's meetings.

**Coming OFF Events in April/May 2018**  
OFF Full Year Events Calendar at: [off.oatleypark.com/program](http://off.oatleypark.com/program)

**23 April – The Old Burma Road to Shangri La with Julian Sheen**

Julian will take us on a journey that starts in the Irrawaddy delta at Rangoon amongst the aging grandeur of a dilapidated empire and the unspeakable richness of the Shwedagon Pagoda. His talk will also explore the traditional aquaculture of Inle Lake and the lost Hindu greatness of Bagan, once home to 6000 temples. Sharing his travels to Mandalay and Maymyo he will also cover his train journey to the Golden Triangle in eastern Myanmar and onwards to China, including the mighty Yangtze River. Finally, he will recall his experiences in the far eastern Himalayas and legendary Shangri La. A talk not to be missed - a celebration of cultural diversity, with the added treat of poetry.

**27-29 April – Trip to Capertee Valley**

OFF have again arranged a weekend at Capertee National Park. We have booked both the homestead and the cottage, but as in previous years this location is very popular and all our accommodation is now booked out. However, there is still plenty of camping space for those who want to get closer to nature. If you are interested please **contact Graham Fry at [fryg45@gmail.com](mailto:fryg45@gmail.com) or on 9580 6621.**

**3 June – Field Trip Advance Notice, an Exploration of Parramatta with Vicki Bolling**

More details to come.

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.**

**Note \*\*** The RSL Club management has requested that all meeting attendees be RSL Club members, so please join if you are not already a member. Fees are \$6 per year or \$12 for 3 years. Don't forget to ask for your parking sticker which provides you access to the RSL car park. Of course you can be signed in by a RSL member if you are not a member. To enter the club, you should do either of these things.

**BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet up at the carpark at the top entrance gate off Oatley Park Avenue. Although this group is overseen by council, it is in essence an OFF initiative and so it is important that it is supported by members so we can be seen to be 'putting our money where our mouth is'.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday after OFF General Meetings.

**FLYING FOX NUMBERS IN MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE**

On 15 February 2018 our regular flying fox watcher Geoff Francis, counted 3400 bats flying off in a northerly direction. This is the highest count since the all-time high of 4170 recorded flying out on 29 March 2011. Near-by residents have seen and heard them feasting on Figs, Palms and Bloodwoods.



Grey headed Flying Fox numbers are decreasing as a result of habitat destruction. They are important to the existing forest ecosystem as they pollinate and disperse seeds of many of our tree species.

Visit <http://off.oatleypark.com/?cat=7> for more information and photos.

**MAY FLOWERS IN OATLEY PARK**

Although it is off-season for most wildflowers, any short walk along the tracks of Oatley Park will reveal some flowering plants even at this time of year. There is a host of

wonderful low growing natives that add a splash of colour now. Most common are the small wattles; Flax Wattle (*Acacia linifolia*), Sweet-scented Wattle, (*A. suaveolens*) and Prickly Moses (*A. ulicifolia*).



The small yellow-green tubular flower of *Correa reflexa* is common in the understorey. They feature beautiful pendulous, bell-shaped flowers which are designed for bird pollination, so you can expect regular visits from several species of nectar feeding birds while they are in flower.

Close examination of the ground will reveal the dainty ground orchid known as Pixie Caps (*Acianthus fornicatus*), with a single small upright stem to 12cm tall growing from a heart-shaped single leaf. Spend more time this autumn enjoying the wildflowers in bloom.



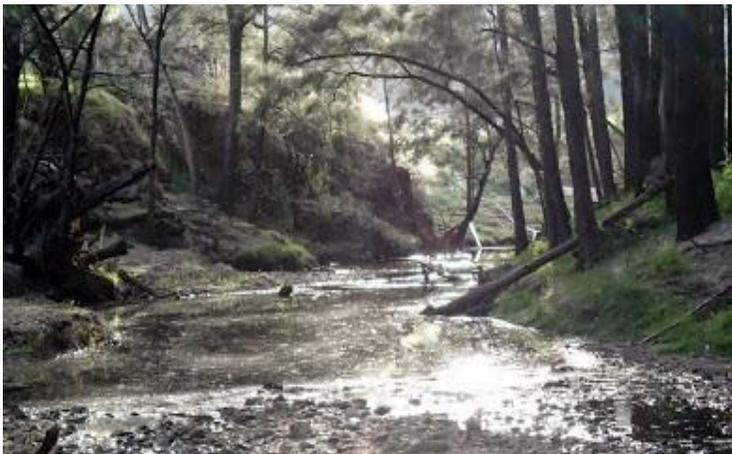
## HOPE IN CONTROLLING NATIVE DIE-BACK

As you may be aware Phytophthora dieback is caused by an introduced plant pathogen that causes disease and plant death in some native species. It is a water mould that attacks the roots of susceptible plants. Ben Hope has directed our attention to a study in *Austral Ecology* - January 2018 Issue, which looks at the beneficial effects of the use of phosphite on native vegetation in South Western Australia. Phosphite is an anti-fungal agent and fertiliser used to treat Phytophthora. It does not eradicate Phytophthora but helps plants survive it, by helping to control the impact of the disease. Phosphite has been found to also control and minimise the spread of the disease. The study looked at the results of treatment of vegetation over a seven to 16 year period. It found a significant reduction of the disease in shrub cover of 21 species - three increased in number, and only one decreased. Treatment with phosphite was found to enhance the survival of key susceptible species.

## CAPERTEE NATIONAL PARK WEEKEND

Sixteen OFF members and friends had a delightful weekend at Capertee National Park over the weekend of 27-28 April 2018. All accommodation was booked out, with two OFF members toughing it out camping – unfortunately, they didn't quite allow for the cool nights! The original idea was to do some tree planting and maintenance but the country was so dry that planting was not practical and even watering was not possible as the river was dry. The caretaker who has lived on the site for over 30 years said that he had never seen it so dry. Participants did enjoy some nice walks and saw a lot of wildlife including five bird species currently on the list of vulnerable birds in NSW. Capertee National Park is a beautiful spot to spend some time and offers spectacular birdwatching, walking, camping, as well as heritage homestead accommodation. It is located west of the Blue Mountains near Lithgow. Bookings can be made through the NPWS website at:

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/capertee-national-park>.



## OFF CELEBRATION DINNER

The annual OFF Celebration Dinner will be held on **Thursday 28 June, 2018** at OAT MILL, Oatley RSL from 6.30 pm (commencing 7.00 pm). The cost is \$38 per person. Dinner includes bread roll, entree, main, and cupcakes. Special dietary requirements available on request. Guests are to purchase drinks at the bar. OFF will hold a raffle on the night. Donations most welcome. For further information please contact Vicki Bolling 9580 3107. **Note\*\*** Payment due by Monday, 28 May 2018 (meeting night).

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

There will be a Special General Meeting at the end of the General Meeting on 25 June 2018. It should take approximately 15 minutes. The purpose of this meeting is to seek member's approval of the revised OFF Rules, henceforth to be known as the Constitution. Changes are required to ensure that OFF complies with *Associations Incorporation* laws. Note that changes to incorporated associations constitutions require approval by at least 75% of members attending the Special General Meeting. A copy of this new Constitution is available on the OFF website at: <http://off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/OFF-Rules-proposed-2018-amendments-to-OFF-Rules-as-amended-2006-changes-accepted-20180302-reduced-margins.pdf> If you do not have access to the web and would like to read the new Constitution, phone the President - Graham Lalchere on 9580 3107 to obtain a copy.

## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 5 JUNE 2018

World Environment Day will be on Tuesday 5 June 2018. Each World Environment Day has a theme that focuses attention on a particularly pressing environmental concern. The theme this year is "Beat Plastic Pollution" and was chosen by the 2018 host country - India. It provides a good opportunity to consider how we can make changes in our everyday lives to reduce the heavy burden of plastic pollution on our natural places, our wildlife, and our own health. If you can't reuse it, refuse it. For more information visit <http://www.un.org/en/events/environmentday/>



## WORKING TOWARDS A PLASTIC FREE OATLEY

OFF is working on reducing dependence on plastic and you can help.

**Refuse** plastic bags (Oatley IGA has phased out single-use plastic bags, Coles and Woolworths to follow mid-year).

**Reuse** storage items such as taking your own containers to the butcher, delicatessen and at the bakery. Buy an unsliced loaf and put it in your own bag and slice it at home. Buy a re-fillable coffee cup from a local shop. These are just some ideas.

**Reduce** plastic use by avoiding the purchase of fruit and vegetables wrapped in plastic – put unwrapped items in your own paper bags or clean used plastic bags.

**Recycle** take clean dry soft plastic bags and plastic wrapping to REDCycle bins in Woolworths and Coles. Cut furniture and appliance wrapping, bubble wrap, and large bags into A3-sized pieces. Most soft plastics are suitable but not foil-lined and silver plastic packaging e.g. chip packets and ground coffee bags. Note that dirty or ineligible items in a REDCycle bin can result in the entire contents being rejected.

**Lobby** government to ban single-use plastics including plastic bags, cutlery, plastic straws, disposable coffee cups and polystyrene packaging.

## OFF NEWS 50 YEARS OLD

The first edition of *OFF News* was produced by Beatrice Goldstein in February 1968. Articles each month reflected the widening interests and concerns of the Society. An indication of this was the addition of "Conservation" to the Society's name at the Annual Meeting of January 1967. The very first edition of the newsletter can be viewed at:

<http://off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/1968-02.pdf>

**28 May 2018 - Ecologist Dr Rod Armistead to talk about the Phytophthora Dieback in Myles Dunphy Reserve**

Dr Armistead's presentation will include a brief description of Phytophthora, its effects on native plants, how it is spread, and the need for quarantine, hygiene and the application of fungicide chemicals.

**3 June – Field Trip, an Exploration of Parramatta with Vicki Bolling**

Join Vicki Bolling on an exploration of Parramatta's heritage sites, including the farm and cottage built by the Macarthur's in 1793. We will be taking the 8.43 am train from Oatley Station, changing at Redfern Station and arriving Parramatta at 9.43am. It is then a 20 minute walk to Elizabeth Farm (entrance fee \$12 or \$8 concession). We can have morning tea in the cafe or BYO. At 11.00 am we can choose to join a guided tour or wander through the house and gardens at our leisure. After the tour we can have lunch in the garden, cafe or if people prefer we can go to cafes elsewhere. The return trip can be by ferry at 1.30 pm or 2.30 pm arriving Circular Quay an hour and a half later. If you prefer you can return by train or a bus to Hurstville. Phone 9580 3107.

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.**

**Note \*\* The RSL Club management has requested that all meeting attendees be RSL Club members, so please join if you are not already a member. Fees are \$6 per year or \$12 for 3 years. Don't forget to ask for your parking sticker which provides you access to the RSL car park. Of course you can be signed in by a RSL member if you are not a member. To enter the club, you should do either of these things.**

**BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet up at the carpark at the top entrance gate off Oatley Park Avenue. Georges River Council Bushcare Officer: John Kensitt 0435 963 643.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday after OFF General Meetings.

**GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL NEWS**

OFF Committee members have recently been in touch with the Georges River Council on a number of matters. Below is a summary of those meetings.

- Georges River Council has temporarily closed the walking tracks through Myles Dunphy Reserve to prevent the spread of Phytophthora. These tracks will remain closed until a Phytophthora Dieback Environmental Management Control Plan for the reserve is completed. Council will be mapping where the *Phytophthora* occurs within the reserve and is considering what actions can be taken to control it.

- Letters have been sent to Council regarding numerous illegal tree removals, including four large trees on Hurstville Golf Course.

- OFF has suggested to Council sites suitable for planting on National Tree Day.

- An informal meeting was held between three OFF Committee members and the Georges River Council Mayor. The issues raised included tree management, open space and pollution. Further meetings were suggested by the Mayor.

- A meeting was held between three OFF Committee members and MP Mark Courte to discuss such issues as tree removal, national park funding, removal of plastic bags, and other items.

- OFF is currently considering further planting of native shrubs in July, similar to the planting last year near the underpass at Oatley Station.

- Committee members met with Georges River Council officers to consult on the road works and car parking along Dame Mary Gilmore Road beside Oatley West Public School. The Society was concerned about possible tree removals, but the meeting allayed these fears.

**BIRD WATCHING IN AUTUMN**

The migration of birds to the north has been underway for two months now with plenty of yellow-faced honeyeaters moving through our area as well as some other species of honeyeaters. The Tasmanian silvereyes should be arriving shortly and can be identified by their very dark flanks compared to the buff colour of the local silvereyes. The ospreys have been trying to build a nest at Lugarno for some time but seem to lack basic construction skills – dropping a stick from a metre above a branch and hoping it will form the base of a nest, which has so far proved to be a fruitless task. We hope their skill levels will improve. The very dry conditions is stressing our local wildlife. One way to help them is to provide clean water. A simple bowl is all that birds require but try and change the water every few days and regularly clean the bowl. Good birding.



Graham Fry

**REPORTING TREE REMOVAL**

OFF welcomes notifications from members of trees which have been removed, pruned or poisoned and we're happy to upload details, including photos, on the website and Georges River Trees Facebook page at:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/georgesrivertrees/photos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/georgesrivertrees/photos/?ref=page_internal)

We recommend you contact Georges River Council by emailing [mail@georgesrivercouncil.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@georgesrivercouncil.nsw.gov.au) or by phoning 9330-6400.



## NOTICE OF SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

There will be a Special General Meeting at the end of the General Meeting on **25 June, 2018**. It should take approximately 15 minutes. The purpose of this meeting is to seek member's approval of the revised OFF Rules, henceforth to be known as the Constitution. Changes are required to ensure that OFF complies with *Associations Incorporation* laws. Note that changes to incorporated associations constitutions require approval by at least 75% of members attending the Special General Meeting. A copy of this new Constitution is available on the OFF website at:

<http://off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/OFF-Rules-proposed-2018-amendments-to-OFF-Rules-as-amended-2006-changes-accepted-20180302-reduced-margins.pdf>

If you do not have access to the web and would like to read the new Constitution, phone the Secretary – Liz Cameron on 9580 6621 to obtain a copy.

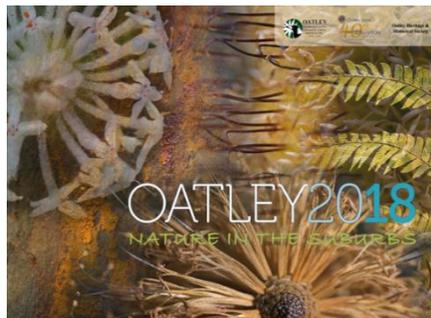
## OFF CELEBRATION DINNER

The annual OFF Celebration Dinner will be held on **Thursday 28 June, 2018** at OAT MILL, Oatley RSL from 6.30 pm (commencing 7.00 pm). The cost is \$38 per person. Dinner includes bread roll, entree, main, and cupcakes. Special dietary requirements available on request. Guests are to purchase drinks at the bar. OFF will hold a raffle on the night. Donations most welcome. For further information please contact Sue Howard 9579 1718.

## 2019 OFF CALENDAR

In previous years, OFF has produced a calendar that is released for sale at the Oatley Lions Festival held in October. The 2018 calendar featured wildlife of the Georges River area, and proved to be very popular with only a few copies left. Due to this success we are planning to produce another calendar with a similar theme for 2019.

The major difference is that there will not be a competition for the images. Instead, photographers will have the satisfaction of having their images published in the calendar. The criteria for the images is that they must be of flora or fauna in the St George area.



Entries will close on **Saturday, 1 September 2018** in order to meet the Oatley Lions Festival deadline. Entries can be emailed to [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com) so, all photographers should start clicking!

## MEHREEN FARUQI, MP NSW GREENS VISITS OATLEY

Dr Mehreen Faruqi, Greens MLC and environment spokesperson visited Myles Dunphy Reserve on June 3, 2018 and gathered information from concerned residents about the many issues affecting our park.

Consequently, Dr Faruqi will present a Notice of Motion to State Parliament on June 19, 2018 which asks "the Minister for Planning to reject the gateway determination for the former Oatley Bowling Club site and to protect the area in perpetuity as public recreational space in public hands". More information can be found

at <https://www.mehreenfaruqi.org.au/community-calls-for-oatley-open-space-to-be-protected/>

## ELIZABETH FARM – ROSEHILL

On 3 June, 2018 eight OFF members took part in Vicki Bolling's walk around Parramatta, which followed on from last year's successful outing. The first visit was to the Lancer Barracks near the station. The barracks are a historic military facility, built in 1818. Today they are an operational army unit as well as housing a museum, and are the oldest continuously used military barracks on the mainland of Australia. Its greatest claim to fame is that the Australian Light Horse was initially based at the barracks.

The primary destination of the walk was to visit Elizabeth Farm - the property of John and Elizabeth Macarthur. The house was built in 1793 and is recognised as the oldest European building in Australia.



After a welcome coffee, a volunteer guide Lyn, gave the group a wonderful tour of the restored homestead complete with many historical stories of the Macarthur dynasty. The size of the house and complex of buildings were a revelation. Being allowed to explore all the different rooms and even sit on the furniture gave the group an opportunity to experience what life was like in colonial times.

The tour lasted two hours and finished with a lovely lunch in the grounds. After lunch all participants returned to Parramatta railway station via another historic Macarthur property, Hambledon Cottage – which deserves more exploration, perhaps a visit for next year. More information and photos from the walk can be found at:

<http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7204>

## OFF BRINGS WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY TO GRC

World Environment Day is celebrated every year around the world on June 5. It came to the attention of some OFF members that the Georges River Council (GRC) didn't organise an event to celebrate it. So some of our dedicated OFF members decided to organise their own event outside the Hurstville customer service centre. They offered Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society brochures on local plants and birds to the public and council staff.



**25 June 2018 – Paul Irish, Author of “Hidden in Plain View”**

Author Paul Irish explores Aboriginal lives post 1788. Contrary to what you may think, Aboriginal people did not disappear nor lose their culture and die out within decades of Governor Phillip’s arrival in Sydney. They maintained a strong bond with the coast and its resources and tried to live on their own terms. Aboriginal people are prominent in accounts of early colonial Sydney, but then disappear from the historical record, re-emerging early in the twentieth century. Find out what happened to Sydney’s indigenous people between the devastating impact of white settlement and increased government intervention a century later.

**1 July 2018 – North Head Sanctuary, Manly Walk**

We will leave on the 8.43 am train from Oatley, in time for the 10.00 am ferry from Wharf 3 to Manly. The plan is to walk from Shelly beach up to the headland. The walk is around 8kms and will take most of the day if we stop to look at flowers, birds, views, whales and historic sites. Bring your binoculars, water, lunch and snacks. The only food available on the headland is the cafe at North Fort which might be an afternoon tea stop. There is an opportunity to get the bus back to the wharf from North Fort, or walk back to get the ferry at around 4.00 pm.

Walk Leader: Melina Amerasinghe Tel: 0400 300 662

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.**

**BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet up at the car park at the top entrance gate off Oatley Park Avenue. Georges River Council Bushcare Officer: John Kensitt 0435 963 643.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday after OFF General Meetings.

**30 YEARS AGO**

1988 not only marked Australia's Bicentenary but also 100 years since the proclamation of Oatley Park. The Society's activities that year focused on the Park. There was a special edition of *OFF News* in May and Hurstville Council reprinted 5000 copies of the Headland Track leaflet. At the time there was a more positive burning program underway in the Park with the National Trust setting alight to small strips of bushland to research the effects on plant re-growth.

During 1988-89 a whole new series of conservation problems arose with a newly elected State Liberal-National Government downgrading its environmental priorities. The *Crown Lands Act* allowed the sale of Crown Lands to the highest bidder and there were heavy staff cuts to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. On the national scene, the Hawke Labor Government was willing to grant Harris-Daishowa a further 15 years on its export woodchip licence, putting more pressure on the NSW south-east forest. To view the 1988 *OFF News* issues visit:

<http://off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/R-1988.pdf>

**BIRD NEWS**

Recently some OFF members have noticed a small grey/brown bird in Oatley Park and Poulton Park. These birds are normally found in flocks of up to 20 birds and they forage in the foliage, often along creek lines or in trees near the river. This species is the Brown Gerygone, also known as the Brown Warbler. According to the Atlas of Living Australia <https://www.ala.org.au> there are not many records of this species in our area. Only three records of this species are recorded - two in Oatley Park and one in Poulton Park. Therefore, it could be regarded as an unusual bird for our area.

These birds live in rainforests and are very common along the Hacking Valley in Royal National Park. But during the non-breeding season they form foraging flocks which move out into more open areas. It is likely that these birds are from Royal National Park and are enjoying the delights of our local reserves.



Source: Birdlife Australia

So if you see a group of small, and very active birds hovering around foliage in trees near a watercourse it is likely to be the Brown Gerygones. They will return to the rainforest habitat in spring to commence another breeding season. So enjoy the presence of these delightful little birds over the next few months.

**REPORTING TREE REMOVAL**

OFF welcomes notifications from members of trees which have been removed, pruned or poisoned and we're happy to upload details, including photos, on the website and Georges River Trees Facebook page at: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/georgesrivertrees/photos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/georgesrivertrees/photos/?ref=page_internal) We recommend you contact Georges River Council by emailing [mail@georgesrivercouncil.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@georgesrivercouncil.nsw.gov.au) or by phoning 9330-6400.



## NEW CONSTITUTION ACCEPTED

A Special General Meeting was held during the June meeting, where members accepted the new Constitution and Mission Statement unanimously. A copy of this Constitution can be found on the OFF website at: <http://off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/OFF-Constitution-adopted-25062018.pdf>

**Acknowledgement of Country.** The Committee resolved to deliver this important acknowledgement at all general meetings. The attendees at the June meeting witnessed the first acknowledgement.

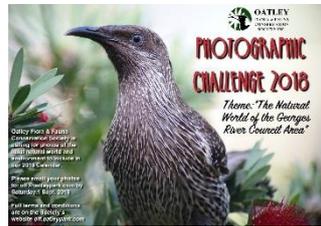
If you do not have access to the web and would like to read the new Constitution, please contact OFF President - Graham Lalchere on 9580 3107 to obtain a copy.

## OFF CELEBRATION DINNER

The annual OFF Celebration Dinner was held on Thursday 28 June, 2018 at OAT MILL, Oatley RSL. In attendance were 43 members and friends of Oatley Flora and Fauna. Everyone enjoyed a lovely meal followed by the annual raffle. Prizes were generously donated by members and as usual there were plenty for everyone. The evening ended with a delicious dessert of cupcakes made by Sue Howard. Thank you to all those involved in organising the fun-filled evening.

## 2019 OFF CALENDAR

As done in previous years, OFF is producing a 2019 calendar for sale at the Oatley Festival in October. The theme of this year's calendar is "Nature in the Suburbs" and will feature images of Oatley's natural environment. This is a chance for local photographers to see their images in print. If you have a nice photo, we would like to see it. The 12 best images will be chosen for inclusion. Images can be sent to [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com). The closing date for the submission of photos is 1 **September, 2018**. For more information, including photo entry rules visit: <http://off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-OFF-PHOTO-COMPETITION-Rules.pdf>



## WILD HORSES IN KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK

OFF sent a letter to the NSW Premier objecting the recent legislation protecting the brumbies in Kosciuszko, despite all scientific evidence showing the damaging impact horses have on this fragile environment. A reply from the Premier (via her Parliamentary Secretary Jonathan O'Dea) stated that the Bill does not propose to increase the population of brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park, and in sensitive areas brumbies will be removed and rehomed outside the park, or if possible relocated to less sensitive areas.

## KOALA PROTECTION

The Society has given its support to the Georges River Koala Network which is trying to protect the koala population between the Georges River and Campbelltown. Letters have been written to the planners of Mount Gilead Estate and the Minister for Defence regarding Holsworthy Military Area. Included in the letters are requests for wide bushland corridors, road fencing (especially along Appin Road) and the construction of overpasses and underpasses. The Army was asked if it has a koala management plan, whether a koala habitat has been cleared and whether safe movement corridors have been considered for koalas.

## OFF CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE LOCAL NATIVE VEGETATION

Show your support for OFF's campaign to increase local native vegetation in the Georges River local government area. Upcoming events include:

### National Tree Day – Sunday, 29 July, 2018 (9.00 am - 11.00 am)

Georges River Council will be planting 1000 native species in H V Evatt Park, Lugarno. Everyone welcome. For more details and to RSVP visit: <https://treeday.planetark.org/site/10018138>

### National Tree Day – Sunday, 29 July, 2018 (8.00 am – 2.00 pm)

Beside Penshurst Library, Forest Road, Penshurst. Council plant giveaway to increase the biodiversity of native flora and fauna in your garden. Residents only – bring your rates notice and a carry bag. OFF members will be helping Council staff label plants and provide gardening advice – if you can help please contact Liz Cameron on 9580 6621. For more details and to RSVP visit:

<https://treeday.planetark.org/site/10018147>

### OFF Planting Day – Sunday, 5 August, 2018 (10.00 am – 12 noon)

OFF members will be planting 500 native species in River Road Reserve, to extend our successful planting near the railway underpass in Oatley. Plants will be purchased from the Sutherland Shire Nursery with a grant from the Minister for the Environment's Conservation Fund, sourced through local member Mark Coure. Please bring gardening gloves, trowel, hat, sunscreen and water.

## NORTH HEAD SANCTUARY WALK

A dozen OFF members and friends enjoyed a brilliant walk to North Head Sanctuary on Sunday 1 July, 2018. The walk had something for everyone - spectacular views, flora and fauna, sculptures and history. The walk commenced from Manly ferry terminal, across to South Steyne Beach and then along Marine Parade which was busy with people enjoying the unseasonably warm day. Along the route were interesting sculptures highlighting the aquatic life in the Cabbage Tree Bay Reserve.

At Shelly Beach the group encountered some very bold Brush Turkeys who were keen to sample our morning tea cakes. The top of the hill offered spectacular views north. Cunningham's Skinks were spotted taking in the sun and view. The walk continued through the walled area with endangered Banksia Scrub. There were some flowering plants to keep our plant experts occupied. The flowering Banksia attracting little Wattlebirds and the New Holland Honeyeater.

The stop at North Head Sanctuary Foundation Information Centre was productive thanks to an enthusiastic and informative volunteer. The walk towards the centre of the headland kept history buffs happy, as they explored fortifications and military



buildings. After a lunch break, the walk continued to the Fairfax loop which offered some stunning views of the Sydney harbour headlands and city. The group also witnessed glimpses of whales frolicking amongst the flotilla of whale watching boats. A photo gallery of the trip can be found at <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7234>

**Coming OFF Events in July/August 2018**  
OFF Full Year Events Calendar at: [off.oatleypark.com/program](http://off.oatleypark.com/program)

**23 July 2018 – Establishing a Small Bird Habitat**

During the Monday meeting, Bev Debrincat will explain how easy it is to establish small bird habitat corridors in our own yards. She will describe corridors the Habitat Network have been working on at Ryde and Hunters Hill and then run a short workshop to illustrate how to plant small bird habitat havens.

**29 July 2018 – Field Trip to Bonnum Pic, Nattai National Park**

Bonnum Pic is a spectacular ridge jutting out over the Wollondilly Valley in the Nattai National Park. The group will meet at The Glass House coffee shop - Mittagong at 8.45 am, and then car pool to the trail head. The 12-15 km out-and-back walk is a combination of fire trail and bush track hiking, and optional rock hopping. The group will pass through a variety of landscapes, from classic bush land, to open ridge-top heath, to a series of wind and water-moulded rock formations. Return to Mittagong will be at approximately 4.00 pm. Leader Adrian Buzo.

*Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.*

**BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet at the entrance on Douglas Haig Street. Georges River Council Bushcare Officer: John Kensitt 0435 963 643.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday after OFF General Meetings.

**GEORGES RIVER CLEAN UP**

**Beauty Point Reserve, Padstow Heights Sunday, 19 August, 2018 from 9.00 am.** Access is via the gate adjacent to Roma Reserve, Playford Road. The closest cross street is Roma Avenue. Please note that access is difficult - steep and rocky grade and part of the track is muddy. Please bring sturdy shoes, hat, gloves, water and sunscreen.

**SAVE THE BLUE MOUNTAINS WILD RIVERS**

In 2016 the NSW Government announced plans to raise the Warragamba Dam wall by 14 metres – drowning 65 kilometres of wild rivers and 4700 hectares of national parks surrounding the dam. The dam wall raising is said to be for flood mitigation to justify new urban sprawl across 2355 hectares of Western Sydney floodplains.

The environmental devastation caused by raising the dam wall would see the lower Kowmung, Coxs, Nattai, Kedumba, Wollondilly and Little Rivers smothered beneath dam mud. This would kill many plant and animal species that inhabit the wilderness area, including the vulnerable Camden White Gum. Destroying a protected World Heritage site would be an international disgrace.

You can help to save the Blue Mountains wild rivers. Here are some suggestions:

- Sign an online petition at <https://www.wildrivers.org.au/petition>
- Write a letter to a newspaper or politician.
- Make a tax deductible donation to the Colong Foundation at: [wildrivers@colongwilderness.org.au](mailto:wildrivers@colongwilderness.org.au)

**BIRD NEWS**

The sea-eagles that have nested at Newington Reserve in recent years are back again and like previous years you can observe the action on the Internet by visiting <http://www.sea-eaglecam.org/video.html>. The female has laid two eggs, the first on the 11 June, 2018 and the second on the 14 June, 2018. The incubation period for this species is around six weeks and so the eggs should hatch in mid-July. This link enables you to view the birds on the nest and take part in an ongoing discussion about the eagles with people from all around the world.

Locally, our resident pair of Ospreys which have tried to successfully nest on the Georges River in recent years have had problems each year ranging from mobbing by ravens to jet-skies roaring close to the nest. They have now built a nest in a tree near the river and with a good pair of binoculars the nest can be seen from Webster's Lookout in Oatley Park. We hope they are successful this year as this is one of the most southerly locations in Australia where this species nests. Their continuing presence along the Georges River is a reward for the efforts of many people and organisations who have cleaned up the river and surrounds that has led to a healthy river with plenty of fish for the Ospreys.



Source: Dave Mercer

**OFF MEETINGS VENUE**

Some members have expressed disappointment with the switch to the downstairs area in the Club. Your committee is endeavouring to improve conditions there in several ways:

- Having a more reliable and independent sound system.
- Provision of at least 60 comfortable chairs for each meeting (early birds will still get the best seats).
- Conspicuous signage directing people who use the lift, on how to get to the Sports Bar.



## OFF 2018 RESEARCH GRANTS

OFF has again offered research students funds to assist with their projects. The research funds are provided by our members through donations. The Treasurer advised that there was \$4000 available. OFF contacted a number of the major NSW universities advising of the availability of student grants.

This year OFF received four applications. They were all excellent, making it difficult for the OFF research committee to prioritise them. Eventually, the committee agreed to fund two of the grant applications and with the agreement of the Treasurer, the funding was increased so that the two applications could be fully funded.

The successful applicants were Claudia Santori from Sydney University, whose PhD project involves the monitoring of juvenile Murray River turtles that were raised in captivity and then released into the Murray River. Turtle eggs are frequently predated, but there is very little knowledge on the survival of turtles once they enter the river. Radio tracking devices will be attached to 15 juvenile turtles and then tracked for a month. By tracking the released turtles it is hoped to significantly increase our understanding of their habitat requirements and survival rates, which will lead to better management of freshwater turtles in Australia. Claudia requested \$2,450.

The second successful applicant was Justin Collette from the University of NSW who is studying the germination of Australian flora, and in particular the influence of fire and smoke on seed dormancy. Justin's particular interest is the Rutaceae family (Boronia and allies). He will collect seed from eight species of Rutaceae including some that are threatened in the wild and propagate them in the laboratory simulating different growing conditions. Justin's research is aimed at understanding why this group of plants are so difficult to propagate. By experimenting with varying growing conditions it is hoped that new strategies will be developed in order to improve the ability to grow these and similar Australian species. Justin requested \$1,936.

In total, the OFF Research Fund will be expended \$4,386 this year. The OFF Committee wishes to thank members for their generous donations and hopes they support the selection of projects to be funded. As part of the conditions of the OFF research grant, candidates must present their research projects to OFF next year, something to look forward to in 2019.

## PLANTING NEAR OATLEY RAILWAY STATION

On Sunday 5 August, 2018 (the week following National Tree Day) 30 OFF members, family and community friends met back at River Road Reserve to continue our re-vegetation project, started last year.

State member for Oatley, Mark Coure, provided a \$1,000 grant covering the cost of 500 tube stock. The species planted replicates the original Endangered Ecological Community – Sydney Turpentine and Ironbark Forest (STIF) of which there remains only 0.5% of the original cover. Mr. Coure stayed on and helped plant some of the tubes with the group.

The success of the original planting conducted last year has been beyond expectations. Despite prevailing dry conditions over the past 12 months, the plants have positively thrived in the loamy transitional soil generally favored by STIF species. It is hoped that the newly planted species will grow just as well. As a thriving local environmental group OFF intends to continue its greening ventures. Another such project is 'in the wings' pending the award of a government grant to assist in the purchase of suitable plants - watch this space! Thank you to all involved in the planting.

## NATTAI NATIONAL PARK – BONNUM PIC WALK

A party of 18 club members assembled at Mittagong on Sunday morning, 29 July, 2018 to walk the Bonnum Pic track in the Nattai National Park. The Pic gained its striking name from the French engineer and explorer Francis Barrallier in 1802. For the most intrepid, the goal would have been Bonnum Pic itself, a narrow promontory of broken rock, bound on three sides by sheer 150 metre cliffs with breathtaking views north as far as the Blue Mountains and the Burragarang Valley.



The group opted for a more relaxing itinerary than the full 16km out-and-back walk to the Pic, and after a 25km car pool drive along the Wombeyan Caves road and the Wanganderry farm access road, a pleasant 1.5 hour walk was had through grazing land, bush and heathland out to the wonderful Wanganderry Walls. It took a further hour navigating along the cliff line across friendly, undulating rock domes in brilliant sunshine, mild temperatures and blustery winds, to the designated lunch spot, before retracing the path back to the cars.



Our expert fauna guide Deb Andrew was able to spot and record some fauna sightings for the Atlas of NSW Wildlife, including a Lesueur's Velvet Gecko (*Oedura lesueurii*) and an endangered Scarlet Robin. Also calls were heard from an endangered Gang Gang Cockatoo and a Red-browed Treecreeper, as well as feeding incisions on a grey gum made by the endangered Yellow-bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*). There were no previous records for those species in those locations in the Atlas. To view more photos from this field trip visit: <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7317>

Adrian Buzo

**27 August 2018 'Monday Meeting' – Movie Screening 'Secrets at Sunrise'**

Filmed entirely in Western Australia, this documentary tells the fascinating story of a team of conservation experts and dedicated volunteers working together to save one of the world's rarest birds, the Western Ground Parrot. The film captures the challenges of working in remote environments, trying to save a cryptic bird which wasn't photographed in the wild until 2004 and whose numbers are likely to be less than 150 individuals. The bird is an enigmatic parrot that chooses to live on the ground, generally only making its presence known when it calls at dawn and dusk. A \$5 admission on the night will be forwarded to the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot to assist with their fundraising campaign.

**2 September 2018 – Field Trip to Sydney Olympic Park – Heritage Railway Tour**

The trip will start with a tour of the Heritage Railway in Newington Armoury followed by visit to the Birdlife Australia Discovery Centre and walk around the wetlands. It is anticipated that the group will finish at 1.00 pm. There will be the option of exploring further, lunching at the Armory Wharf Café or catching a Rivercat back to Circular Quay (from Olympic Park Wharf).

The Rail tour starts at 9.30 am, with a duration of 1 hour 15 minutes. Car-pooling is recommended; all-day parking is available in Blaxland Riverside Park off Jamieson Street, just past Silverwater Correctional Centre. Meet at 9.00 am, at the main entrance to Armory, end of Jamieson Street, beside Parramatta River.

Rail tour costs \$15 (seniors \$12); bookings essential, please contact Leader Liz Cameron on 9580 6621 or 0419 280 473 by Monday, 23 August, 2018. For more information visit <https://www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au/Things-to-Do/Heritage-Railway-Discovery-Tour>

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.**

**BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet at the entrance on Douglas Haig Street.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings.

NATIONAL TREE DAY was on Sunday, 29 July 2018. Over 100 people planted 1000 trees, shrubs and ground cover plants at Evatt Park, Lugarno. Five OFF members also helped Council staff label plants and provide gardening advice to residents whilst they collected their free plants at Olds Park.

GEORGES RIVER CLEAN UP REMINDER Beauty Point Reserve, Padstow Heights Sunday, **19 August, 2018 from 9.00 am**. As detailed in last month's newsletter.

**2019 OFF CALENDAR**

As done in previous years, OFF is producing a 2019 calendar for sale at the Oatley Lions Village Festival in October. Oatley Lions are also assisting with the initial funding. The theme of this year's calendar is "Nature in the Suburbs" and will feature images of Oatley's natural environment. This is a chance for local photographers to see their images in print. If you have a nice photo, we would like to see it. The 12 best images will be chosen for inclusion. Images can be sent to [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com). The closing date for the submission of photos is 1 September, 2018. For more information, including photo entry rules visit: <http://off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-OFF-PHOTO-COMPETITION-Rules.pdf>

**OATLEY FLOWERS IN SPRING**

September is the ideal month to wander along the tracks of Oatley Park to observe the flowers in bloom. Why not make a list of what you see? Here are some of the more conspicuous plants flowering in Spring:

**Bitter Pea** (*Daviesia corymbosa*)- a shrub to 2 metres tall, with yellow and red pea flowers borne in clusters and with narrow lance-shaped leaves.

**Large-Leaf Bush-Pea** (*Pultenaea daphnoides*) – a shrub to 2 metres tall, with yellow pea flowers in terminal heads. Leaves are wedge-shaped to 25mm long.

**Small Plank Plant** (*Bossiaea ensata*) – a low shrub, apparently leafless, with flattened stems and yellow flowers.

**Rusty Pomaderris** (*Pomaderris ferruginea*) – a shrub to 3 metres tall. Flowers yellow in loose terminal heads; leaves elliptical, to 10cm long, hairless above and rusty below.

**Wedding Bush** (*Ricinocarpus pinifolius*) – shrub to 1.5 metres tall with narrow leaves and conspicuous white flowers (mostly 5-petalled) with yellow stamens.

**Trigger Plant** (*Stylidium graminifolium*) – basal clumps of grass-like leaves and an erect stem to 40cm tall bearing small pink flowers. Each flower has a sensitive trigger which is set off by visiting insects.

**Waxlip Orchid** (*Glossodia major*) – a mauve-blue ground orchid with a solitary hairy leaf. Found in open woodland near the oval.

Find more information and photos of current seasonal blooms at: <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=1524>



## STREAMWATCH PROGRAM IN JEOPARDY

Streamwatch is a long running, citizen science water quality monitoring program, which empowers community groups to monitor and protect the health of local waterways. The program involves regular testing of waterways for pollution by the community and is popular with teachers and students. For almost 10 years, OFF volunteers have tested the water in local creeks. Unfortunately, the Australian Museum which runs this valuable program across metropolitan waterways, has advised that funding will cease at the end of June 2019, and if a new funding source is not secured, it's likely the program will no longer continue. The committee will approach the Premier and relevant ministers in a bid to secure funding for this vital program.

## MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE RESTRICTIONS

As many OFF members may be aware, the Georges River Council has fenced off the Oatley Bowling Club site, allegedly due to asbestos contamination. As public access to the bushland site has also been restricted (to contain the spread of the *Phytophthora* pathogen), this entire reserve is effectively closed to the public. OFF will be requesting Council to re-open the northern part of the site, as it has been tested as asbestos-free.

## PEOPLE POWER CLEANS GEORGES RIVER

On Sunday, 19 August 2018, 24 volunteers from OFF, Bankstown Bushland Society and Oatley Kayak Crew participated in a clean-up of the beach and surrounds at Beauty Point Reserve, on the Georges River at Padstow Heights. In four hours, volunteers collected 49 large bags containing hundreds of straws, bottle tops, lighters, syringes, and glass and plastic bottles, along with thousands of polystyrene pieces. The group were perplexed as to how a tyre and wheel, a suitcase and even furniture ended up in the river. An incredible effort by all those involved, which was recognised in 'The Express' (Canterbury Bankstown) local newspaper. To view, visit <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7342>



## SCREENING OF "SECRETS AT SUNRISE"

This documentary was screened during the August OFF meeting, and described the plight of the endangered Western Ground Parrot. The audience was captivated as the film documented the efforts of a dedicated team of volunteers, national parks and zoo staff, to conserve these elusive birds in the face of a series of disasters. A voluntary donation of \$5 collected at the screening raised \$260 for the Western Ground Parrot Rescue Fund. The DVD also includes footage of many other beautiful Western Australian plants and animals such as the tiny Honey Possum. OFF's copy of the DVD is available for loan to individuals or groups willing to make a donation to the Rescue Fund.

## OATLEY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

Oatley West Public School Community Festival was held on 25-26 August, 2018. At the invitation of the school's Festival Committee, OFF hosted a stall which was conveniently positioned and advertised by an OFF banner made by Val Douglas. At the stall was a model lent by the Australian Museum, to demonstrate the effects of good and bad water usage on the water quality in Georges River catchment - it proved a popular attraction.



OFF also publicised local collection sites for recycling beverage containers (Return and Earn), and soft plastics. Also on display was James' shopping bag crafted from a cotton T-shirt as an alternative to single use plastic bags. Six calendars were sold, a membership renewed, and many brochures handed out. OFF was pleased with the high number of visitors to the stall and their level of environmental awareness. Thanks to the many committee members who helped to promote OFF and its objectives at the Festival.

## HERITAGE RAILWAY TOUR: SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK

On a cool drizzly Father's Day, (Sunday 2 September, 2018) nine members took the 75-minute Heritage Railway tour on an electric-powered train from Newington Armory. The group travelled through an area of Sydney Olympic Park not accessible to the general public. A knowledgeable guide shared the history of this former armaments maintenance and storage site. The tour passed small isolated buildings featuring safety structures to prevent explosions, and stopped in at a shed housing disarmed torpedoes, shells and missiles.

At the conclusion of the tour, the group visited the nearby Birdlife Australia Discovery Centre which is open to the public on weekends. A highlight was watching live coverage (via remote cameras) of a White-bellied Sea-Eagle's nest in the adjacent Nature Reserve. Two adult birds were feeding a nestling in a large stick nest, found in this small remnant of Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Woodland.

After lunch at Newington shops, five remaining group members drove to a bird hide overlooking the Waterbird Refuge where they saw a variety of waterbirds including Avocets, Stilts, Spoonbills, Dotterels, Sandpipers and Godwits.

**Coming OFF Events in September/October 2018**  
OFF Full Year Events Calendar at: [off.oatleypark.com/program](http://off.oatleypark.com/program)

**23 September 2018 – Field Trip to Quarantine Station North Head**

A tour of heritage buildings and colonial history. The group will leave on the 8.43 am train from Oatley or 8.45 am train from Mortdale, in time for the 10.15 am ferry from Circular Quay - Wharf 3 to Manly. At Manly the group will take bus number 135 (from Stand D) at 11.19 am, arriving at 11.49 am at the Q Station Reception where maps can be obtained: [www.qstation.com.au](http://www.qstation.com.au).

The group will explore the 30-hectare site on foot (walking downhill), while enjoying the beautiful views across to the city skyline, as well as visit the free Quarantine Exhibition at the Visitor's Centre. BYO lunch or purchase at the Visitor's Centre Café or at the Boiler House Restaurant & Bar. There is a free internal shuttle bus service to and from reception, and it is suggested to take this bus for the steep climb back.

The visit will take most of the day. Return bus 135 departs from outside the Q Station at 3.59 pm, arriving at Manly Wharf at 4.07 pm, in time for the 4.25 pm ferry back to Circular Quay. First Time Leader: Yvonne Penn, call on: 9579 1760 or (preferably) 0449 798 974.

**24 September 2018 – Oatley Bushwalkers of Yesteryear, with Cliff Crane**

Cliff Crane (The Banjo) reminisces on famous and little known Oatley bushwalkers of yesteryear. Cliff's talk covers some of the many Oatley bushwalkers from the 1920s and 1930s through to more modern times. It will be interesting to hear about the early bushwalkers during an era of no or few marked tracks, few reliable maps, no GPS, no mobile phones, and no rescue helicopters. An anticipated highlight will be hearing about the original TIGER WALKERS.

**Advance Notice – OFF Outing to Mount Tomah Botanic Garden 27 October 2018**

The OFF outing planned for October will be a trip to the Mount Tomah Botanic Garden. This garden is located in the Blue Mountains and contains plants which naturally occur in cool areas. The gardens contain a mixture of Australian plants and exotics such as Rhododendrons. At this time of the year the gardens should be most spectacular with many plants in flower. OFF plans to hire a minibus to the gardens due to the distance involved and the lack of public transport to the area. Alternatively, members are welcome to drive themselves. For those planning to use the minibus there will be a fee of \$25 per head to cover the cost of the vehicle hire. The bus can only hold 20 people, so if you are interested please contact Graham Fry on 9580 6621 or [fryg45@gmail.com](mailto:fryg45@gmail.com) to secure a place.

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.**

**BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet at the entrance on Douglas Haig Street.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings.

**INVITATION TO JOIN AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY MEMBERS AT SYLVAN GROVE NATIVE GARDEN Saturday 22 September, 2018**

The East Hills Group is hosting a regional gathering of Australian Plants Society (APS) members that includes a guided tour of Sylvan Grove at Picnic Point. OFF members are invited to join this free tour which will run from 10.30 am to 12 noon. Sylvan Grove is operated by Canterbury Bankstown City Council and has over 1500 species of native plants, many of which will be flowering.

Visit: <https://gardendrum.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Sylvan-Grove-Native-Garden-Picnic-Point-Sydney.pdf>

At 1.00 pm, Alan Fairley will be speaking to APS members on the topic of rare plants in Greater Sydney. The talk will be in the Peakhurst Lugarno Uniting Church, 909 Forest Road, Lugarno. Afternoon tea will be served and there will be plants for sale. OFF members are also welcome at this event, for which there is an entry fee of \$5.

**BIRD NEWS SEPTEMBER**

Spring has sprung, fortunately with a little rain and already the bush has reacted, looking a little healthier. Let's hope the rain continues. A reminder that as the weather warms up, leave out water for the birds – a simple bowl or dish in a secluded spot, preferably off the ground will be appreciated by our feathered friends, especially in dry times.

Spring is also a great time for bird watchers as the summer migrants are arriving from northern Australia and Asia. One of the most obvious migrants is the common Koel – I am sure you cannot wait to be awoken at 3.00 am by the penetrating calls of this bird! Given that the Koel is a brood parasite - that is, it lays its eggs in the nests of other bird species, the Red Wattlebirds are none too happy to see them. Red Wattlebirds are common hosts for the Koels, but by the time the Koels arrive, the Wattlebirds have already had one nesting attempt and can sometimes afford an interloper.

Another migrant is the Channel-billed Cuckoo, which parasitises Pied Currawong nests, and they have already been spotted in Sydney. They are often referred to as a flying walking stick with their long brown curved bill. Also, at this time of the year we are losing our winter visitors such as the southern form of the Silvereye, Golden Whistlers and Brown Gerygones, as they head back to their breeding grounds down south, which can be as far away as Tasmania. Good birding.

Graham Fry

**OFF Secretary: Liz Cameron, PO BOX 52, Mortdale 2223 Tel: 9580 6621 Email: [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com)**

**Website: [off.oatleypark.com](http://off.oatleypark.com)**

**OFF Newsletter Editor: Adelina Cubelic**



## STREAMWATCH PROGRAM FUNDING DEBACLE

OFF member Sharyn Cullis wrote an excellent letter to *The Leader* printed 26 September 2018, regarding the funding debacle jeopardising Streamwatch. In her letter, Sharyn argued that funding this water testing program should be a 'core' business for Sydney Water, who originally set up Streamwatch and encouraged the local community to become involved. Yet decades later, raw sewage overflows continue every time it rains. The Sydney sewer system is collapsing under the pressure of growing population, making the continued monitoring of waterways vitally important.

Interestingly, Sharyn points out that Sydney Water reported a record profit of \$447 million in 2016-17. It would cost only \$100,000 per annum to support the entire network of more than 50 Streamwatch groups testing more than 150 waterway sites throughout Sydney. The Australian Museum is currently looking for a new organisation to host the program from mid-2019. To read the letter visit:

<https://www.theleader.com.au/story/5660413/water-scrutiny-unwanted/>



## NSW BACKDOWN OVER SYDNEY'S MARINE PARK

A month after announcing a plan to further protect sea life, the State Government has abandoned plans to ban or restrict fishing in new protection areas in the proposed Sydney Marine Park. The proposal to increase marine life protection in 25 zones from Newcastle to Wollongong would have imposed restrictions on line and spear fishing in some zones, and banned fishing in others.

The Government has caved-in to a noisy fishing minority and pre-empted the public consultation process. Conservation groups condemn the decision as it makes the new park potentially ineffective in protecting marine life. Proposed additions to the Reserve include Cabbage Tree Creek and areas off Royal National Park.

## OATLEY PARK NATURE BASED PLAYGROUND PROJECT

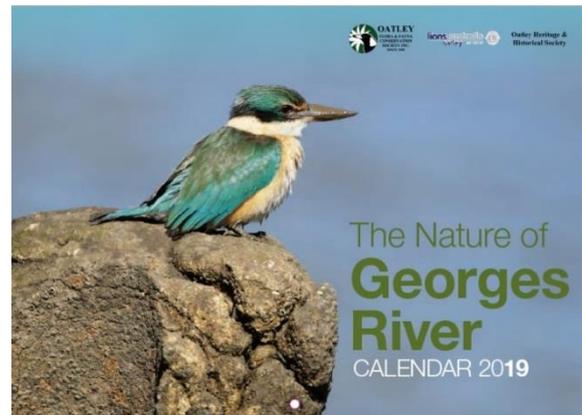
Georges River Council is seeking public comment on the design of a "nature-based adventure playground" in the Steamroller Park (however there are no designs on the council website). The project includes replacement of the old existing playground with a new nature-based inclusive adventure playground.

Submissions close on 20 October, 2018. For more information, visit:  
<https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/About-Your-Council/Local-Projects>

## Oatley Village FESTIVAL

**SATURDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2018**

A reminder that OFF will have a stall at the Oatley Village Lions Festival. Come along and have a chat – the new 2019 Oatley calendar will be available for sale.



## QUARANTINE STATION NORTH HEAD FIELD TRIP

Six OFF members and their guests participated in a field trip to Quarantine Station at North Head on Sunday, 23 September 2018. It was a glorious spring day which coincided with the 10th birthday of the Q Station's new chapter. There were free history tours, stalls, entertainment, and various 'mock' re-enactments of historical events.



The complex operated as a quarantine station from 1832 to 1984. The concept behind its establishment was that the Colony of New South Wales (as it was then known) was susceptible to ship-borne diseases. Those who might have an infectious disease would be kept in quarantine until it was considered safe to release them. The importance and future role of North Head was reinforced by Governor Darling's *Quarantine Act 1832*, which set aside the whole of North Head for quarantine purposes in response to the 1829–51 cholera pandemic in Europe. For more information and photos visit: <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7382>

**Coming OFF Events in October/November 2018**  
OFF Full Year Events Calendar at: [off.oatleypark.com/program](http://off.oatleypark.com/program)

**22 October 2018 – Conservation Success Stories from Bhutan, with Adjunct Professor Ross Jeffree**

Adjunct Prof. Ross Jeffree shows what is possible with “*Conservation success stories of Bhutan*.” Dr Jeffree is an Adjunct Professor in the School of the Environment at the University of Technology, Sydney and fellow of Ecoethics International Union. Bhutan is a Buddhist kingdom in the Himalayas determined to live sustainably and in peaceful co-existence with the natural world true to the metaphysical beliefs and environmental perceptions of its culture. The original religion of Bon Shamanism inculcates reverence for the local deities and spirits that are believed to inhabit components of the landscape.

**27 October 2018 – Field Trip to Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens, Blue Mountains**

The Mt. Tomah Botanic Garden is located in the Blue Mountains and contains plants which naturally occur in cool areas. The gardens contain a mixture of Australian plants and exotics such as rhododendrons. We are hiring a minibus to provide transport to the gardens due to the distance involved and the lack of public transport to the area. The bus can only hold 20 people and is now full. Pick up details will be emailed to participants. Additional members are welcome to drive themselves if they wish and should aim to arrive at the gardens at 10.30 am. If you have any queries please contact Graham Fry on 9580 6621 or [fryg45@gmail.com](mailto:fryg45@gmail.com).

**Advance Notice – Trip to Snowy Mountains in January 2019**

As has been the tradition, OFF will again be going to the Snowy Mountains in January. OFF have reserved rooms at Pygmy Possum Lodge at Charlottes Pass for the period 6-13 January, 2019. If you would like to come for the week or any number of days during that period contact Graham Fry on 9580 6621 or [fryg45@gmail.com](mailto:fryg45@gmail.com) for booking arrangements.

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.**

**BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet at the entrance on Douglas Haig Street.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings.

GREATER SYDNEY COMMISSION CITIZENS PANEL Applications close Sunday, 14 October 2018. Visit: <https://www.greater.sydney/citizens-panel>

**OFF ENDORSEMENT OF POLICIES FOR NEXT ELECTION**

OFF has decided to endorse the Nature Conservation Council's top five priorities to take to the next State election set for March 2019.

It is calling on all parties to commit to:

- Establish a Sydney Marine Park to protect this world-class coastal region.
- Create a Great Koala National Park on the north coast and save the species from extinction.
- Set up a \$2-billion regional renewable energy fund to fast-track the transition to clean energy away from dirty coal.
- Set up a \$1.5-billion land and biodiversity fund to protect and restore bush land and forest habitat.
- End logging of public native forests to protect what is left.

OFF also adds two additional priorities:

- Removal of feral horses from Kosciuszko National Park.
- Legislate to ban single-use plastic bags.

**PRESCRIBED BURNING STUDY**

Prescribed burning is the most widespread management tool for reducing fuel loads and thus decreasing the intensity and extent of wildfires. Fuel hazard is often assumed to increase with fuel age, but a recent study comparing fuel hazard in recently burned and long-unburned forests has put doubts over this assumption.

Research conducted by the CSIRO and published in the *International Journal of Wildland Fire*, 2018 measured overall fuel hazard in Eucalypt forests and woodlands at 81 sites where the time since fire spanned 0.5 years to 96 years. The probability of high fuel hazard was highest 0.5-12 years post fire, and lowest where the fire had not occurred for at least 96 years. Frequent burning maintains forest understorey leading to higher overall fuel loads. Thus protecting long-unburned sites from fire may benefit fuel-hazard management within forests in the long term.

**AUSSIE BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 22-28 OCTOBER, 2018**

The #AussieBirdCount is a great way to connect with the birds in your backyard no matter where your backyard happens to be — a suburban backyard, a local park, a patch of forest, down by the beach, or the main street of town.

Each count should be for a 20-minute period; you can count as many times as you like during the week. Your bird counts will help BirdLife Australia to understand more about the birds that live alongside people.

You can register online and download the Aussie Bird Count app at: <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>

**OFF Secretary: Liz Cameron, PO BOX 52, Mortdale 2223 Tel: 9580 6621 Email: [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com)**

**Website: [off.oatleypark.com](http://off.oatleypark.com)**

**OFF Newsletter Editor: Adelina Cubelic**



## PROTECTING KOALAS FROM EXTINCTION

As koalas in NSW are a threatened species under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act*, the committee asked the Federal Environment Minister Melissa Price, to consider the impacts of two proposed housing developments on colonies near Campbelltown. An adviser promptly responded and undertook to take our submissions into account.

OFF member Sharyn Cullis (who recently received a St George Community Award as a long standing active OFF member for her dedication to conserving the koala) liaised with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, resulting in this article being published:

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/scam-developer-to-use-parkland-to-offset-koala-habitat-destruction-20181028-p50cfz.html>

*Note: An offset is often a parcel of land set aside and 'conserved' in order to compensate for a consent that allows an owner/miner/developer to damage or destroy another parcel of natural land. Biobanking is a scheme whereby a proponent is given permission to destroy natural lands, so long as they purchase bio banked credits, that they can be used in a range of flexible ways to purchase or restore natural land elsewhere.*

Lendlease wish to use their Koala credits (gained as a result of destroying Koala habitat on Gilead) to commit to rehabilitate and maintain the public reserve adjoining. They may be restoring habitat that already exists, but arguably that should be done by council anyway. Critics also claim they are not finding or saving an additional Koala habitat in compensation for what they are destroying, so there is a net loss.

Further bringing attention to this issue, OFF members Peter Mahoney, James Deli and Sharyn Cullis also featured in the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* on 10 October, 2018 calling for action in establishing a Koala National Park after koala deaths on Heathcote Road. With koala numbers in national decline, their conservation and the protection of their habitats is a matter of urgency.

## PUBLIC INSECT AND SPIDER SURVEY

Dr Lizzie Lowe, an invertebrate's researcher, along with a team of researchers from Macquarie University and the University of Sydney have developed an online public survey about insects and spiders. They want to know which insects and spiders you see in and around your home, and which products (if any) you use to control them. The survey will be open all summer. By taking part in their survey, you will help them develop guidelines for people to effectively and safely manage insects and spiders around their homes. You will also have the chance to win one of five \$100 Coles Myer group gift vouchers!

If you are curious about the insects and spiders living around your house, you will also have the opportunity to volunteer your household for a biodiversity survey conducted by researchers from Macquarie University. For more information and to complete the survey please follow this link <https://www.surveymonkey> or contact the research leader Dr Lizzy Lowe at [lizzy.lowe@mq.edu.au](mailto:lizzy.lowe@mq.edu.au) Lizzie hopes to have the survey written up by mid next year, and will share the results.



## PLANTING SATURDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2018

Georges River Council councillor Sandy Grekas has provided a grant of \$750 for planting in Moore Reserve which will take place on Saturday, 17 November from 10.30 am. Come along and help with the 'greening' of our area.

## MOUNT TOMAH BOTANIC GARDEN WALK REPORT

To begin we had morning tea at a café in Richmond, after which we arrived at Mt Tomah Botanic Garden at 11.30 am. What a contrast to OFF's last visit here in June 2008 when the fog and mist surrounded the area. The low visibility created its own special magic on that cold day as we made our way through the garden. This time however, a perfect spring day greeted us, with the sun shining on a wonderful vista over the garden to the Blue Mountains.

We agreed that we would all go our separate ways and meet again for the return journey. Small groups headed off in different directions, consequently there were varied experiences throughout the day. We all enjoyed the wonderful waratahs which were at their best as were the rhododendrons. It was very difficult to come up with favourite garden sections as the area is wonderfully diverse owing to its former use as a cut flower farm and private European style garden. The property was gifted to the Botanic Gardens Trust in 1972 and after bicentennial grants were obtained in 1983 the challenging development of the garden we see today began. The garden was opened to the public in 1987.

Thanks to Graham Fry for arranging the day and driving the bus without which some members would not have been able to attend. Those of us who had visited ten years earlier noticed how the plants have matured and multiplied. A perfect day enjoyed by all! To view photos visit <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7443>

Robin Dickson



## OFF CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

### Pop-Up Street Stalls

The Society plans to run pop-up street stalls in Oatley and possibly one in Mortdale, on Saturday mornings in December (1, 8 and 15) between 8.30am -12.00pm. We will be selling Oatley 2019 Calendars, greetings cards, and of course promoting our campaigns and projects, alongside Oatley Lions who will be selling their Christmas cakes. **If you can spare some time on any of those days, please email Liz Cameron at [elsmere02@gmail.com](mailto:elsmere02@gmail.com)**



### Annual Christmas Get-Together

Members are invited to the annual Christmas get-together on Monday, 3 December from 5.30 pm at the Steamroller picnic area in Oatley Park. BYO food, drinks, chairs tables etc. Should it rain, the group will move to the Castle near Oatley Baths.

### Oatley 2019 Calendar

A great idea for a Christmas gift, the 2019 Oatley calendar is now available through OFF, or can be purchased at AdventureCo, Mullane's Pharmacy, Povel's Deli and Sienna on Forest. Only \$8.00 for members.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS FOR 2019

A reminder that this is the time when we are calling for members to form a new Committee for 2019. You are invited to nominate at the Annual General Meeting on Monday 4 February, 2019. In particular the Society is looking for someone to manage the OFF website.

### 18 November 2018 – Field Trip to Stony Range Botanic Garden near Dee Why

This garden is an oasis of Australian native plants (many sign-posted) from many areas and is located in the heart of the northern beaches. In the 1950s, Stony Range was a disused stone quarry. Had it not been for a few visionary locals with a green thumb, the reserve may never have been established. We will meet at the garden car park at 810 Pittwater Road, Dee Why at 10.00 am. To access the car park coming from the south, turn right into Delmar Parade, the first street after passing the Warringah Rd/ Harbord Rd intersection with Pittwater Road. You can then do a U-turn back onto Pittwater Road and turn left into the garden car park. After the longish trip from Oatley (less than 1 1/2 hours), we can start the day with a coffee if desired; there is a cafe in Delmar Parade and/or a picnic area in the garden (don't forget your keep-cup). Viewing of the impressive garden should take about 2 hours. Easy walking with some sections wheel-chair accessible. If participants wish, we can then also do a slightly more energetic walk from Curl Curl Headland to Dee Why Headland along the cliff tops. If you have any queries please contact Graham Lalchere on 9580 3107, 0430 968 260 or [glalch@gmail.com](mailto:glalch@gmail.com). (Note: this is before the next general meeting).

### 26 November 2018 – Monday Meeting and Social Supper

We will be joined by PhD candidate Reannan Honey, from The University of Technology Sydney, who was awarded an OFF grant last year. She will give us a brief overview of her research project on *Habitat Restoration for Hollow Dependant Fauna*. Please bring a plate of food to help with supper; tea and coffee provided.

### Advance Notice – Trip to Snowy Mountains in January 2019

As has been the tradition, OFF will again be going to the Snowy Mountains in January. OFF have reserved rooms at Pygmy Possum Lodge at Charlottes Pass for the period 6-13 January, 2019. If you would like to come for the week or any number of days during that period contact Graham Fry on 9580 6621 or [fryg45@gmail.com](mailto:fryg45@gmail.com) for booking arrangements. We still have space for anyone interested.

*Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) 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.*

### BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet at the entrance on Douglas Haig Street.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings.

OFF PROGRAMS 2019 The Society's Program Officer, Matt Allison is looking for interesting speakers on subjects related to plants and animals for some of our meetings next year. If you have any suggestions contact him by email at [cohabitat6@bigpond.com](mailto:cohabitat6@bigpond.com)

The Activities Officer, Graham Fry is putting together the OFF program for 2019. He is looking for more outings for the program. They don't have to be walks but can be visits to interesting sites, ferry cruises, etc. Please contact Graham Fry [fryg45@gmail.com](mailto:fryg45@gmail.com) with any suggestions.

### SAMPLES NEEDED FOR FOX RESEARCH

Dr Alex Carthey, Macquarie University, Dr Thomas Newsome, Sydney University, and Dr Alison Towerton, Greater Sydney Local Land Services are continuing to research the urban and peri-urban red fox. OFF has received a request for assistance in the collection of the samples listed below, should anyone come across them.

#### Samples they are in desperate need of:

**Fox ears:** A whole ear or just a 1-2cm tip. Frozen or refrigerated, we will pick them up as soon as possible. These will be used to study fox population genetics (which will give us information about fox movements and genetic intermixing), across highly urban to more rural or natural areas. Therefore, we are interested in fox ears collected from any of these environments.

**Fox carcasses:** The fresher the better (however, all but very decomposed carcasses are of interest). The carcasses can be at room temperature, frozen, or refrigerated. The very freshest carcasses are the most valuable, if

you have a very fresh carcass please call us ASAP and we will come straight away - a matter of hours makes a difference. These will be used to intensively survey DNA expression revealing diseases and parasites carried by foxes across urban to more rural or natural areas.

**Fox scats:** Fresh fox scats are also of interest, please call us and we will collect. These can be stored in a refrigerator or freezer, or we can just collect as soon as possible so you don't have to store them at all.

If you do collect a few, it is best to stick them in the freezer and then contact Dr Alex Carthey on 0421 319 443 to arrange their collection. Note that the following information will need to be recorded for each sample collected:

- Date.
- Location, as specific as possible (an address, cross streets, or GPS point is ideal).
- Sex.
- Age where obvious (adult/juvenile).
- Any other information is also very helpful.

It is requested that the items are placed in double plastic bags and that the details listed above are written on the bag with a permanent marker and then put into the freezer.

You can also post the items to Dr Thomas Newsome at:

The University of Sydney  
Faculty of Science, School of Life and Environmental Sciences  
Rm 312, Heydon-Laurence Building A08,  
The University of Sydney, NSW, 2006

#### Contacts:

Alex Carthey 0421 319 443, [alexandra.carthey@mq.edu.au](mailto:alexandra.carthey@mq.edu.au)  
Tom Newsome 0476 042 069, [thomas.newsome@sydney.edu.au](mailto:thomas.newsome@sydney.edu.au)  
Feel free to contact them even just if you have any questions.