



O.F.F. NEWS



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DR PHILIP MOORE: NEXT SPEAKER

Philip Moore is co-author, with Alan Fairley, of the well-known reference book 'Native Plants of the Sydney District'. Early retirement has allowed Philip to extend his botanical interests from Sydney to the inland and other parts of Australia. He has now made 10 journeys to the inland (totalling 110,000 km) and has completed a new book entitled 'A Traveller's Guide to the Plants of Inland Australia'. At our next monthly meeting on November 22 Philip will speak about this book and describe, with coloured slides, the adventures he encountered in preparing it.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2005

Once again members will be able to enjoy a welcome break from summer conditions in Sydney by heading for Smiggins Chalet in the Snowy Mountains.

Dates: Saturday 22 to Saturday 29 January

Accommodation: Fully self-contained apartments

Tariff: \$45 per person per night, double / twin share
\$70 per person per night, single.

For more information and bookings please phone Robin Dickson on 9580 5663. If you already have your name on the list please phone Robin to confirm.

ASBESTOS STOPS O.F.F. FIELD TRIP

As reported in last month's media, an old asbestos dump has been discovered on the Kurnell Peninsula at the entrance to Towra Point. While the public risks and possible remedial measures are being investigated, the Department of Environment and Conservation will not issue permits for people to enter Towra Point Nature Reserve. Unfortunately, that applies to O.F.F. as our next field day was scheduled to go through this very area. The field day of November 27 will therefore now take place in other parts of the Kurnell Peninsula heritage area. See 'Coming Events' on p.2. for details.

ARE YOU NOW ON EMAIL ?

.....And happy to receive your O.F.F. News by email ? (hot O.F.F. the press !!). If so, Cliff Crane, our Membership Officer, would like to hear from you on - 9580 3269 - or preferably cliffcrane@iprimus.com.au

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE OUR SECRETARY ?

Robin Dickson, our dedicated honorary Secretary for the past 11 years, announced last February that she would not stand for re-election in 2005. If you are interested in the position please have a talk to her on 9580 5663. She will gladly tell you what is involved and how personally satisfying the position can be.

O.F.F. COMMITTEE CHANGES

Sharyn Cullis has resigned from O.F.F. Committee and John Watters has rejoined it. In responding to Sharyn's resignation, the Committee expressed appreciation of her continuing conservation activities, not only for O.F.F. but also for other community groups such as the Georges River Environmental Alliance. John was our Treasurer for many years and we are very pleased that the Society can continue to benefit from his knowledge and abilities.

NEW THREATS TO THREATENED SPECIES ?

After a limited and selective consultation process with 'key stakeholders', a *Threatened Species Legislation Amendment Bill 2004* was passed by the NSW Legislative Assembly on October 30. This essentially supersedes the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* which was widely criticised (especially by developers and farmers) and was not very effective. The changes include:

- threatened species habitat and management actions are to be clearly specified on Local Environment Plans (LEPs) and Catchment Management Plans (CMPs), replacing site-specific assessments,
- a process of 'Biodiversity Certification' for LEPs and CMPs will be implemented,
- social and economic factors must be considered in the Biodiversity Certification process.

Environment groups are generally unhappy about the changes which they believe could unduly compromise threatened species conservation in favour of land development and agriculture.

PORT BOTANY INQUIRY

On October 28 Graham Austin and Fred Bell presented O.F.F.'s submission to the Port Botany Commission of Inquiry (see June/July OFF NEWS). John Watters also addressed the Commission. Copies of O.F.F.'s submission may be obtained by email from joanmariebell@aol.com

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

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

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

Coming Events

November 22 (Monday). Regular monthly meeting at 7.45pm. **Dr Philip Moore** will speak on **writing about wildflowers of Central Australia.** This is the last monthly meeting for 2004, ending with a social supper and bargain stall. Please bring a plate of finger food and some money for the bargains.

November 27 (Saturday). Field Day. **Kurnell Peninsula heritage features and threats.** This will be a car-based tour with some short walks (no more than 2km return) to inspect features of the recent heritage proposal and related conservation issues. **Meet** 9.30am at Wading Bird Reserve, Captain Cook Drive, opposite Cronulla Golf Driving Range (0.6km from Eloura Road junction). **Lunch** about 12.30 pm near the Discovery Centre, Botany Bay National Park at Kurnell. Bring water, morning tea, lunch (or buy lunch at Kurnell) and binoculars. Some coastal features are very exposed so a hat etc. should be worn. Further details at meeting on November 22. Leaders: Fred and Joan Bell, 9525 0552

December 6 (Monday). Annual Picnic/Barbecue in the grounds of Oatley Bowling and Recreation from about 6pm. Bring your own food and drink and, if you wish, a gas barbecue (provided there is no fire ban). A donation of \$1 per person will be collected for the Bowling Club.

February 7 (Monday) Annual General Meeting - election of officers, slide night and social supper.

GREAT FIELD DAY AT SOUTH HEAD

On the cloudy but pleasant morning of 30th October, 23 members gathered at Circular Quay for a relaxing ferry ride to Watson's Bay. From Watson's Bay wharf the walk took us to Green or Laing's Point where evidence of the World War II anti-torpedo boom was found. More significantly, a plaque to the first landing in Port Jackson by Captain Phillip and the First Fleet on 21st January 1788 was also found. This was adjacent to Camp Cove Beach.

From there we walked past an 1872 gun emplacement and Lady Bay to South Head where a 500m circuit took us past an 1858 lighthouse keeper's cottage, Hornby Lighthouse and defensive emplacements. The setting, at the portal to the harbour, was magnificent. And as we looked towards North Head, like a dream of old, a tall sailing ship came into view and headed out of the heads. It was the *James Craig* and looked perfect as it pitched into the rising swell.

The day went from good to brilliant as we walked back to Robertson Park for lunch. Some members explored the Gap area before we departed on the afternoon ferry. It was a most successful excursion.

HIGH AWARD TO O.F.F. SPEAKER

Dr Edward Duyker, the speaker at our April monthly meeting this year, has won the 2004 Premier's General History Prize for his book *Citizen Labillardiere: A Naturalist's Life in Revolution and Exploration*. This was also the topic of his very impressive presentation to our meeting. We extend to him our warmest congratulations and best wishes.

SYDNEY METROPOLITAN STRATEGY

The NSW Government has released a Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper outlining major issues facing Sydney with growth and change over the next few decades. It may be obtained from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources or downloaded from www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au. Public submissions are invited up to November 30.

UPDATE ON 50th

Remember, next year O.F.F. turns 50! Perhaps you have old photographs of O.F.F. activities we could scan and reproduce, or you may have some recollections to share? If so, or if you would like to help with the anniversary arrangements, please call Lesley Cox on 9579 3782.

VERY BRIEFLY

Wolli from Creek to Crest: November 20, 9am-12.30pm, kayak and walking tour with Wolli Creek Preservation Society, \$20. Bookings: Peter, 9554 3176.

December 1-7: Coastcare Week

December 4: Ocean Care Day.

DID YOU KNOW ?

On Threatened Species Day 2004 (September 7), there were 1547 native plant and animal species and 29 ecological communities listed as threatened under the *Australian Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. This was an increase of 50 species since September 2003. More than half of the listed species occur, or used to occur, in New South Wales.