



O.F.F. NEWS



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KEITH STEVENSON

The Society mourns the sudden death of a Life Member, Keith Stevenson, on 26th January. Sincere sympathies are extended to his wife Sandra, son Keith, and daughter Roslyn. Keith, a professional architect, was a man with wide interests and an extensive knowledge of flora and fauna, particularly native orchids. Very sadly, we also report the sudden death of his sister, Merrelyn, on 7th February. (John Watters)

NOTES ON THE AGM

At the Annual General Meeting of 7th February Jan Douglas was re-elected President and Robin Dickson retired as Secretary. **Special thanks were given by Jan to Robin** for her dedication and competence over the past 11 years. This would be strongly endorsed by all members of the Society. Faye Coughlan was elected the new Secretary and will also continue as the Society's Welfare Officer. Cliff Crane retired from the Committee but will remain an active Society member. David Koffel was elected a new Committee member. All other Committee members from last year were re-elected and will be listed on the **2005 program to be issued soon.**

NEXT MEETINGS: PROGRAM CHANGES

As shown overleaf, the program previously announced for the meetings of 28th February and 21st March has been changed. The talk on **the effects of fire on flora and fauna in Royal National Park** has been put forward at the request of the National Parks speakers. Note that the March meeting is on the **third** Monday in the month because the fourth is Easter Monday.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2005 SUB ?

If not, please post your cheque to P.O. Box 52, Mortdale 2223, or pay Carolyn at the meeting on 28th February. The annual subscription is now \$25 per person or family (living at same address).

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA SUNDAY, 6th MARCH

A special appeal is made this year for members to help clean up the creek on the Peakhurst side of the Oatley Park pedestrian bridge and along the boardwalk. Just half an hour or more of your time would be appreciated. **Register in the Reserve at the bottom of Pamela Avenue from 8.30am.** Bring boots, gloves etc. We should finish about 12 noon and all volunteers are invited to a barbecue by Hurstville Council at Evatt Park from 12.30pm.

AWARD TO GRAHAM QUINT

Congratulations are extended to Graham Quint, Deputy Conservation Director of The National Trust, who has received an **Australia Day Achievement Award** for community services. Graham was O.F.F. President from 1991 to 1994 and has been a member of the Society for many years.

PORT BOTANY INQUIRY CONTINUES

To deal with questions arising from earlier hearings, the Port Botany Commission of Inquiry was reconvened from 14th to 18th February for a 'Submissions in Reply Session'. Presentations to this session were made by O.F.F. members Graham Austin and Fred Bell on behalf of the Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance. Further details will be placed on our website www.off.oatleypark.com

NEW NATIONAL PARKS STRATEGY

A 32-page document is now on display at the Hurstville NPWS office entitled 'Living Parks-draft sustainable visitation strategy for NSW national parks'. There is some **concern this will pave the way for greater commercial exploitation of our parks** at the expense of nature conservation. It would be desirable for interested O.F.F. members to examine it and respond to the invitation for comments **before 8th April**. Free copies may be obtained by calling NPWS on 9585 6444 or by downloading from: http://www.nationalparks.gov.au/PDFs/Living_Parks_draft.pdf

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 children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

Coming Events

February 28 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. Leigh Moses and Andrew Jennings, Rangers at Royal National Park, will speak on **Effects of Fire on Flora and Fauna in the Royal, and Bush Regeneration** (note that the program in the previous O.F.F. News has been changed).

March 5 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. The **Forest Path and Palona Cave**, Royal National Park. A walk through rainforest vegetation and tall eucalypt forest with plenty of shade. First section, mostly flat, about 6 km with lunch at Palona Brook Picnic Area on Lady Carrington Drive. Second section to Palona Limestone Cave, on a track which climbs about 60 metres - 3km return to Lady Carrington Drive, then 1.7 km back to the cars. About 50 metres upstream from the cave we will explore the waterfall and the stream above. Meet at 9am at Waterfall Station Car Park (about 40 minutes by car from Oatley). Bring water, morning tea and lunch. Leader: Janet Austin tel. 9579 2375.

March 6 (Sunday) CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY. See details overleaf (page 1).

March 21st (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. Dr Fred Bell, Environmental Scientist, will speak on the **North Queensland World Heritage Area.**

NEW HIBBERTIA SPECIES AT MENAI

O.F.F. Vice President Alan Fairley has found yet another new species! During 2003 the Menai Wildflower Group obtained permission from RTA to remove native plants in the path of the Bangor Bypass, then under construction. Alan was invited there to advise on species to save, and **noticed an unusual Hibbertia in flower.** A sample was sent to an expert reviewing the genus who confirmed that it was a new species 'in the *H. stricta-riparia* complex'. Subsequent searches have revealed about 90 other specimens in the area but the species is apparently **endangered because of its very small population.** Lloyd Hedges of the Menai Group has recently described the discovery in the newsletter 'Bushcare Link', suggesting the plant should be named *Hibbertia fairleyii*.

ALAN'S NEXT PRESENTATION

A talk and slide show entitled '**Rare Plants of Greater Sydney**' will be given by Alan Fairley to the Sutherland Group of the Australian Plant Society at Gynea Community Hall, 39 Gynea Bay Road (near Station) on Wednesday 16 March, 8pm. This will feature many of the fascinating plants and photographs in his recent book '**Seldom Seen**', and also the new *Hibbertia* species (see above). The admission is free and O.F.F. members are welcome to attend.

WHAT'S ON OUR WEBSITE NOW ?

(www.off.oatley.com)

See photographs and reports on recent field days. Also, check out David Waterhouse's study of waterbirds at Moore Reserve during 2004.

VERY BRIEFLY

UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014, <http://portal.unesco.org>

Sea Week - SOS Save Our Sharks: March 4-13, www.mesa.edu.au/seaweek.asp

NCC Metro Strategy Conference: March 12, Nature Conservation Council, 9279 2466.

New National Parks Strategy: closing date for submissions is April 8. See overleaf.

Oatley Park Guided Walk: Sunday, April 17, with National Trust. Details in next OFF News.

Secrets of Barrington Tops: April 27, 8pm. NPA

Slideshow, Sutherland Multipurpose Centre.

Sedges & Rushes Identification: Two-day workshop for Bushcare volunteers, Kirrawee, April 30 & May 1, details & bookings 9710 5790.

DID YOU KNOW ?

According to ABC Gardening Australia's new book 'Native Plants' there are more than 1,200 Orchid species native to Australia in 100 genera. Worldwide there are about 30,000 Orchid species in 600 genera. This is about 10% of all flowering plant species.