



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Issue: 2006/7

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Price: 10 cents

July/ August 2006

HELPING THE GEORGES RIVER

Simon Annabel, Riverkeeper, is the speaker at our next **monthly meeting on 24 July** (see over).

OFF MEMBERS AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

The Society has always had a strong commitment to environmental education. In recent weeks this has been put into practice at local schools. Three members, Robin Dickson, Alan Fairley and Melina Amerasinghe, assisted with field work being done by a class from Peakhurst Public School at Salt Pan Creek. This was part of a broader environmental technology program conducted by Dr Kathy Stewart of Sydney University.

As part of a program funded by a grant to OFF from Kogarah Council, Oatley Public School had lessons by Sharyn Cullis (on animals and their habitats), Alan Fairley (on native plants and their names), Fred Bell (on bush tucker), and Matt Allison (on bush regeneration, including a planting session). Feedback from all these activities has been very positive.

WATTLE DAY: AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER ?

Recognition of the many wattle species (750+) as a distinctive feature of the Australian flora and an inspiring focus for spring festivities was evident in the Australian colonies well before Federation. By 1910, branches of a 'Wattle Day League' were active in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, and held simultaneous festivities each year on 1st September lavishly decorated with bunches and sprigs of wattle, and marked by the planting of wattle trees in schools, parks, etc. Although the day was not officially gazetted, the festivities intensified during World War I when wattle sprigs were widely used as a symbol of national patriotism. In 1916, however, Wattle Day festivities for NSW were put forward to 1st August. This was because the main period of flowering in NSW is June to August and the demand for bunches and sprigs became so great that it could not be met on 1st September. After WW I, interest in Wattle Day gradually declined but 1st August remained a day of celebration in NSW up to 1991. In 1992, 1st September was officially proclaimed National Wattle Day. This followed much argument and debate after initial proposals in the Bicentenary year, and a final agreement by all State Premiers.

BALMAIN FORESHORES FIELD DAY

On Saturday, 1st July, despite some early confusion over train and ferry times, the group of 36 eventually came together for morning tea beside Birchgrove Park. A more perfect day weather-wise could not have been ordered and Inner Sydney Harbour was sparkling. The eclectic mix of architectural styles along Balmain's streets was most interesting, as were the Dawn Fraser Pool, the views to Cockatoo Island and Hunters Hill, and the new walkways and apartment developments (or over-developments) on former industrial sites. Lunch was on a delightful headland overlooking Iron Cove. This was followed by an inspection of the former Callan Park Hospital, with its impressive sandstone buildings dating from 1880s and the ha ha walls, which allowed inmates to look out to the greenery without feeling confined by high walls. In all, a very pleasant winter activity, with pleasant company, in what was for many a new area to discover. See photos of the walk on our website off.oatleypark.com. (Alan Fairley, walk leader)

OATLEY PARK THIS MONTH

In mid winter the wattles are putting on a good show. Gosford Wattle (*Acacia prominens*) has abundant yellow flower heads and is found on the exit road near the oval. Queensland Silver Wattle (*A. podalyriifolia*), although not a local native, is making a brilliant show near the picnic area. The widespread Sydney Golden Wattle (*A. longifolia*) may be identified by its flower spikes (not balls). Myrtle-leaf Wattle (*A. myrtifolia*) is a low wattle scattered throughout the park.

Other flowers you might see include those of Broad-leaf Geebung (yellow flowers), *Leucopogon ericoides* (tiny white flowers), Rusty Petals (clusters of brownish flowers), Grey Grevillea (grey spider flowers), Bitter Pea (yellow pea flowers with red centre) and the yellow pea flowers of *Pultenaea stipularis* and *Pultenaea daphnoides*.

NOTABLE QUOTES

"O.F.F. News is O.K. It doesn't have any advertisements". Joan Bell (editor's wife).

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

July 24th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Simon Annabel will speak on **Keeping the Georges River healthy.** Simon is the Riverkeeper for the Georges River. Find out what a Riverkeeper does, and what is currently happening to the area's most important natural resource.

July 29th (Saturday) FIELD DAY. DRAWING ROOM ROCKS (NEAR BERRY) AND BEYOND. A short steep walk up the Illawarra Escarpment at Woodhill with some level sections at the top before we reach the intriguing rock formations that are our first destination. We can admire the splendid views here while we have morning tea. For the more adventurous of us, there is then a little-known and slightly overgrown side track to explore. This will take us down, across and up to the main Barren Grounds Nature Reserve where we can follow one of the main tracks there until we reach the "End of the Track". Distance of the first section is 4-5 km. Total distance about 6-7 km. Meet at 9.45 am at Apex Park - on the Sydney side of Berry just over the bridge before town, about 2 hours drive from Oatley. Bring water, morning tea and lunch. Hat and strong walking shoes are advisable. Note that there are no toilets after Apex Park. Leader: Graham Lalchere, tel 9580 3107 or 0427 870 240 (on the day). Those without cars may be able to arrange a lift at the July meeting.

August 28th (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. 7.45 pm. Denis Gojak - Joadja shale oil mining site.

NEVERFAIL BAY PROTECTION

Some OFF members attended two public meetings to discuss restoration work along the shoreline of Neverfail Bay, Oatley. Kogarah Council intends to :

- rebuild the embankment to prevent flooding and protect coastal saltbush;
- develop a walkway with signboards indicating the natural and human history of the area;
- remove unsightly old oyster barges from the bay and perhaps use one on shore as an historic feature;
- reconstruct the storm water pipes which enter the bay;
- erect bollards to prevent cars from entering the new area.

Work will affect only the bay margin. Negotiations with Railcorp may result in railway land on the slope and the important wetland becoming public land. The Society will be following progress with interest.

ANNUAL DINNER 2006

Our 50th Anniversary Dinner last year at Roslyn Gardens was so enjoyable that we have decided to make a return visit – slightly scaled down, of course. The 2006 Dinner will be held on **Friday, October 20** at 7.00pm, at a cost of \$30 per person for pre-dinner savouries, a two course meal and tea/coffee.

Robin Dickson will be taking names and accepting payment at both the August and September monthly meetings or can be contacted on 9580 5663.

OATLEY TRAFFIC FLOW

Kogarah Council has invited discussion about making Oatley Avenue one-way traffic and creating angled parking near IGA and the hotel. OFF has expressed concern that this may impact on Oatley Memorial Gardens and require the removal of some trees.

VERY BRIEFLY

Jack Beale Memorial Lecture: July 25, 6pm Clancy Auditorium, University of NSW. 'Wicked Problems, Clumsy Solutions: diagnoses and prescriptions for environmental ills' (Global Environmental Problems) by Professor Steve Raynor, University of Oxford. Bookings: 9385 5728 or BealeRSVP@unsw.edu.au

National Schools Tree Day: July 28.

National Tree Day: July 30. Local sites include Hurstville Grove and Riverwood. Details: your local council, or www.planetark.org/campaignspage.cfm/newsid/3/story.htm.

Peter Olde's grevillea garden: August 13. Rare opportunity to visit this magnificent garden at Oakdale. Details: Jan Douglas at July meeting or phone 9533 2187 by 1 August.

Sustainability information: August 26. St. George Councils (Hurstville, Kogarah & Rockdale) are holding Sustainability Festivities at the Kogarah Spring Festival in the courtyard at Kogarah Council, 2 Belgrave Street. Topics include: hybrid cars, water and energy saving, composting and worm farms; plants to attract native birds to gardens; native animals, children's activities. More information: Alexandra Vandine on 9330 9510.