



O.F.F. NEWS



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SEEDBANKS FOR THE MILLENIUM

Amelia Martyn, the seed research officer at the Mount Annan Botanic Garden, is our speaker at the October 22nd meeting (see over). Amelia is part of the team *SeedQuesting NSW* conducting a program for storing seed of native plant communities to be used for regeneration. Amelia's role is to improve understanding of the seed biology of common and threatened NSW plant species. *SeedQuesting NSW* is a collaborative project of NSW SEEDBANK and the MILLENIUM SEED BANK of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK. (for further details, go to <http://www.kew.org/msbp/>)

THE WHAITES HONOURED AT DINNER

A feature of the very enjoyable **O.F.F Dinner** at Penshurst RSL Club on 21st September was the formal recognition of the outstanding contributions to the Society made by Harry and Olive Whaite since 1969. Harry was a **Committee member for 29 years** from 1972 to 2000 during which he was Hon. Treasurer for 21 years and Membership Officer for 7 years. Olive was a Committee member for 11 years, **Vice-President for 4 years** and Newsletter Editor for 4 years. Both are **esteemed life members** who have continued to play very significant roles in the Society's success.



SPOTLIGHTING IN OATLEY PARK

As shown in the 2007 Program, the field day at Barren Grounds (see over) was originally intended to include spotlighting in the evening. However, it has been decided now to have the spotlighting as an extra field event on the evening of **Thursday, 8th November** in Oatley Park. Further details of this event are overleaf.

HELP REQUESTED: VILLAGE FESTIVAL

The 2007 Oatley Village Festival, organised by Oatley Lions, will be held on Saturday, 20th October in Oatley Memorial Park. As in previous years, Oatley Flora & Fauna have been allocated a stall (SO 9) and will have a display there. **Volunteers** to help set up the stall about 8 am, or to man (?) it for short periods during the day (up to about 2.30pm), would be very welcome.

LUCKY 13 FROM LOFTUS TO ENGADINE

Thirteen of us started our walk on a beautiful spring morning (Sept. 29) at Loftus station, first crossing the highway then through a casuarina forest and past a very dilapidated Bedford Cottage. We continued on beside the tram tracks to the Field Study Centre before descending the Honeymoon Track through various grevilleas, epacrids and acacias to Audley Weir. Here we had morning tea with a couple of very friendly sulphur-crested cockatoos. After this break we ascended Robertson Knoll and crossed the plateau above Kangaroo Creek, passing through spring flowers of many types. We then descended to Kangaroo Creek for lunch, noting the abundant Dog Rose (*Bauera rubioides*) on the wet rock faces. An hour or so later we set off up the steep track above Kangaroo Creek, spotting our first Waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) near the top. Pushing on up the track we crossed two or three rills, passed more Waratahs and glades of Wax Flowers (*Eriostemen australasius* ?), and soon arrived at Engadine station. A great day! (report by Janet Austin)

PEAKHURST WEST SCHOOL PLANTINGS

Alan Fairley and **Matt Allison** have recently spent some time with students and teachers of Peakhurst West Public School to stimulate their interest in native plants. This activity included the establishment of gardens in the school grounds with plants purchased through our grant from Hurstville Council. A very nice **letter of thanks** has been received from the school informing us that the students are 'extremely proud' of the gardens and 'caring for the young plants with enthusiasm'.

XMAS 2007 PICNIC IN THE PARK

Our annual Christmas 'Picnic in the Park' will be held this year in 'Steamroller Park' after about 5.30pm on **Monday, 10th December**. Further details will be given in the next issue of O.F.F. News.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2008

Robin Dickson would like to get some idea of how many members may be interested in our annual trip to **Smiggins Chalet** for a week in **January 2008**. If you are thinking of going on this trip, please contact Robin on 9580 5663, or at the meeting on 22nd October.

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

October 22 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm. Amelia Martyn (Royal Botanic Gardens) will speak on '**Seedbanking: investing for the future**' (see overleaf).

October 27 (Saturday) FIELD DAY- Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. Meet 10am Picnic area carpark at end of track 500m inside Reserve entrance. We will be walking the Griffiths Track, a circuit of **about 7 km** of undulating firetrail featuring Illawarra Lookout, Saddleback Trig, a natural stone bridge and spectacular wildflowers (if still in bloom). About 4 hours of leisurely walking time including a 45 minute lunch break. There is an optional extra 1 hr walk to Cooks Nose and back for **magnificent scenery** over Kangaroo Valley. Bring lunch, snacks, water, hat, jumper, walking shoes, binoculars, etc. Barren Grounds N. R. is about **2 hrs drive from Oatley**. Turn off Princes Highway at Albion Park roundabout, continue on for about 12 km passing through Albion Park and along Jamberoo Road to the Jamberoo Mountain Road turnoff. Proceed another 8km along Jamberoo Mountain Road to the N.R. entrance just after the crest of Jamberoo Pass. Leader: **Debbie Andrew 9570 2695**.

November 8 (Thursday) SPOTLIGHTING EVENING - Oatley Park. Meet at the top gate of Oatley Park (near the ovals) at **8.00pm**. The spotlighting is expected to take 2-3 hours and will include inspection of some **bat traps** along the way. Any trapped bats will be **released on Friday** about 8.30pm, and anyone is welcome to see this also. Leader: **Debbie Andrew 9570 2695**

November 26 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm. Dr Howard Wildman will speak on '**Fungi - the environment's quiet achiever**'.

MORE LOCAL WALLABY SIGHTINGS

Wallabies were believed to have disappeared from the Oatley area in the first half of last century but during the past decade three or four sightings have been reported. A knowledgeable local resident insists he has seen one on several occasions in recent weeks in Oatley Park, and has identified it as a **Swamp Wallaby** (*Wallabia bicolor*). He suggests the bushland remnants along Georges River provide sufficient habitat to support a small population moving around the waterways. He also claims to have several good photos from his sightings and we will try to obtain a copy of one of these for our website.

MORE BOTANY BAY CONCERNS

Conservationists have lost all confidence in the present NSW Government's concern for Botany Bay. Much of this follows from the Government's environmentally irresponsible decision last year to **ignore the recommendations** of the Commission of Inquiry and to proceed with the Port Botany extension. The resulting community anger has been reinforced and intensified by a recent proposal to **deepen additional areas** of the Bay beyond the Port extension. This is to accommodate regular oil tankers of similar size to the huge 'Energy Sprinter' that visited the Bay in September.

VERY BRIEFLY

Nature Conservation Council 2007 Walk Against Warming: On Sunday, two weeks before the Federal Election. Further details from Marnie Kikken, NCC, 9279 2466 or ncc@nccnsw.org.au

National Water Week: October 21-27, Details: Australian Water Association nww@awa.asn.au.

Inquiry into Environmental Impact Reporting in the NSW Public Sector: Submissions close 12th November. Terms of Reference and other details: Pru Sheaves, 9230 3382, pbrc@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Recommended book (new edition): 'Rainforest Trees and Shrubs - A field guide to their identification' by G. Harden, W. McDonald and J. Williams. From Gwen Harden Publishing, P.O. Box 186 Nambucca Heads NSW 2448, (02) 6569 5958. \$44.00 (incl postage etc).

DID YOU KNOW ?

The **Gippsland Earthworm** (*Megascolides australis*) grows to **nearly 3 metres in length** and is claimed to be the largest earthworm in the world. It is found only in moist patches of blue-grey clay in part of the **Bass River valley** of eastern Victoria, and is officially listed as a threatened species. (from Museum Victoria)