



O.F.F. NEWS



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THE AGM 2nd FEBRUARY

Congratulations to Julian Sheen who was re-elected as President. Congratulations, also, to the committee members for this year. Their names are listed in the enclosed 2009 Program of Events.

In his presidential address Julian reminded the meeting of the goals and objectives of the Society and the benchmarks by which the success of the Society can be measured. He stressed that the Society is a unique and mature organisation respected in the local and wider community with its goals directed to the protection of the natural environment. The various activities of the Society were then presented to the meeting to illustrate the manner in which it is seeking to achieve its goals.

The monthly guest speakers, the field days, the Newsletter and the activities of the OFF Committee, with its financial management, its advocacy of conservation issues, its local council contacts and its organising of field days and social events are each directly related to the goals.

Julian offered thanks for their generous service to those retiring from position: - to past president Jan Douglas, leaving the OFF committee after ten years, to Faye Coughlan, finishing as secretary after four years, to Judith Malcolm as committee member, and to Heather Mackie as hospitality officer.

WIRIMBIRRA: NEW DINGO SANCTUARY

Wirrimbirra has been of interest to OFF over many years. The Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, at Bargo, a National Trust property, opened this addition to its wildlife refuge in October, in conjunction with the Australian Native Dog Conservation Soc. The sanctuary will assist in helping educate the public about Australia's top predator and conserve this endangered native animal. Studies indicate that the dingo came to this continent as a domestic dog with the Austronesian people from south China in prehistoric times. For bookings phone 4684 1112, Tuesday – Sunday <http://www.wirrimbirra.com.au>

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Have you paid you OFF subscription for 2009? If not, please post your cheque to the Secretary PO Box 52 Mortdale. It remains \$25 per person or per family living at the same address.

RED CROSS BUSHFIRE APPEAL

There will be a collection point at our 23rd Feb meeting for those who would like to make a donation or a further donation to the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal.

TREES

As Sharyn Cullis wrote [in part] in a recent letter to The Leader, "Beyond sentimentality, there is a real economic value in urban trees. The Local Government Association said in a 1994 policy that urban trees benefits include microclimate influence, stormwater management, oxygen production, and pollution filtering, preventing heat absorption and soil decontamination". Sharyn called for Councils annually to audit and report on tree loss and replacement – already a declared target in the Sydney Catchment Management Authority Action Plan. However, despite the great value of trees, some in the current debate are already demanding the removal of forests as a way to avoid another bushfire disaster!

DEFORESTATION

National Geographic Australia notes the massive scale of the clearing of Earth's forests, and the resulting damage to the quality of the land. Forests still cover about 30 percent of the world's land area, but areas the size of Panama [i.e.78,200 sq km] are lost each year. The world's rain forests could completely vanish in a hundred years at the current rate of deforestation. nationalgeographic.com/

AN OSPREY ON THE GEORGES RIVER

Debbie Andrew took this photo. The website below lists actions people can take to help conserve the Osprey.

www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/



NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE REG 2009

This proposed new regulation is to replace the former 2002 Regulation on 1 September 2009. It is on public exhibition until 27 March 2009.

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/consult/DecPublicConsultation.htm

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Since OFF's program for 2009 is attached,
this month's edition is being distributed by post to members.
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Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

Feb 23rd (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Paul Irish** speaking on "**Water Front Living - Shell Middens and Aboriginal People in Sydney**" [See notes below]

Feb 28th (Saturday) Field Day- Menai Area: Upper Mill Creek - Bardens Creek. It is about 5 km of easy to moderate walking through a fascinating area with rare and endangered species, and important Aboriginal sites. Meet on eastern side of New Illawarra Road, Lucas Heights in front of ANSTO (4.4 km South of Menai) at 8.30 am. Cars will then take us near to Gandangarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre on Heathcote Road. We will follow good tracks through Little Forest to a unique patch of Dry Ironstone Heath; then into Bardens Creek Valley for lunch. We will finish early near ANSTO. Bring morning tea, lunch, water, hat and walking shoes. **Leaders: Joan and Fred Bell**, 9525 0552 or 0409 449 770. The Menai Wildflower Group has prepared a guide and map to the Bardens Creek section. See it at Bardens 'n Bush:

<http://people.aapt.net.au/~hedges/Menai-APS/bardensbook.pdf>

March 1st Clean Up Australia Day -OFF will be in the **Myles Dunphy Reserve**. [See details below]

March 23rd (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Jane Tarran** speaking on **Biodiversity in Urban Sydney**

March 27th (Friday evening) Field Day Spotlighting in Oatley Park. **Leader Debbie Andrew**

The enclosed 2009 Program of Events provides the list for the year.

SHELL MIDDENS AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Paul Irish is our speaker at the Feb 23rd meeting. He works in and around Sydney as a consultant archaeologist conducting Aboriginal archaeological surveys and excavations, and researching Aboriginal history. He has been regularly involved in finding previously undocumented Aboriginal sites and forgotten pieces of historical information. He is currently running two research projects in the Sydney area – one on post-European Aboriginal sites in the Sydney region, and the other on Aboriginal archaeology and history on the Kurnell Peninsula.

MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE: THE FORMER BOWLING CLUB SITE

OFF has been writing to Hurstville Council since 2006 with recommendations on the future of this site. Each time Council has replied that there will be "public consultation" on the future of the site", later adding "soon after the council elections". Councillor Wagstaff asked about the issue at the Dec 2008 meeting of Council [minute ref Q80-90], noting the ongoing vandalism of the vacant building and its virtual demolition by neglect. OFF supports community use of the site and was disappointed to read that requests for such use have received the strange reply that "*there are no suitable premises available at this time*". It is understood that the issue will be discussed at the Council meeting on 25th. If so a gallery of people interested in community use of the site would help to make the point. There will be more news on this at our meeting on 23rd Feb.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY, 2009.

Be rewarded (with satisfaction and a free BBQ)! Help clean up Myles Dunphy Reserve on Sunday, 1st March, 8.30 am to mid-day. Meet at River Road, just down from Mulga Road. Bring hat, gloves, sturdy shoes/boots/gumboots, water, sun-screen, etc. HCC will provide a free BBQ at Oatley Park "castle" for participants from mid-day.

BRIEFLY

Permaculture South inaugural meeting this Friday, 20 February at 7pm at Mortdale Pensioners' Hall, 76 Pitt St, Mortdale.

Tourism In National Parks Thursday 26 February, 18:30-20:30 at the Footbridge Theatre, Parramatta Rd, University of Sydney. Hear experts including Dr Martin Taylor (Protected Areas Policy, WWF-Australia), Ralf Buckley (Griffith University), Andrew Cox (National Parks Association of NSW) and others. Please RSVP to this free event on 02 9299 0000 notforsale@npansw.org.au from- www.wilderness.org.au/

A National Carbon Offset Standard Paper has been released by the federal Department of Climate Change. Responses must be in by 27th Feb. Details: www.climatechange.gov.au/nav/carbon_offset.html
Climate Change and Global Warming: Saturday, March 21, 2.00pm at Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts 280 Pitt St Sydney. Cameron Eren of the Total Environment Centre will speak on Australia's response to the climate threat, the adequacy of our targets and the challenges in meeting them.

Forecast: Consequences of Climate Change from the Amazon to the Arctic by Stephan Faris addresses effects of change on the world in the near future. www.stephanfaris.com

OFF NOTE

