



O.F.F. NEWS



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MORE ON BIKES AND OATLEY PARK

Again in this *OFF News* we highlight the plight of Oatley Park and the damage being done to it by mountain bikes. We make no apology for the space given to this issue as Oatley Park has a special place in the Society's heart – it was in 1955 that, in response to threats to the bushland of Oatley Park that this Society was formed. Now, nearly 50 years later, mountain bike damage is looming as one of the biggest threats to the values of the park.

In response to our letters to Hurstville Council, the Manager, Parks and Recreation has replied : (in part) "I accept their [the bikes] right to use the Park at this stage, but don't accept the damage to vegetation, creation of new tracks or widening of existing trails... At this stage mountain bike riders will not be prohibited from using the Park. We will hopefully [through the Management Plan] reach a solution which meets the needs of all user groups whilst preserving the irreplaceable asset that is Oatley Park."

The Society finds this a totally unsuitable response.

One of our long-time members, David Koffel, has written a strongly worded but very apt letter to Hurstville Council. Extracts of this letter are quoted below with his permission.

"The damage caused by these mountain bike riders is amongst the worst damage caused to the park in the last 30 years. It is therefore particularly disturbing to hear from you that 'they have a right to use the tracks'. Some residents have seen up to 20 bikes at a time cutting through the bush. This is high impact activity.

I don't believe the pre-existing tracks were *entitled* to be used by mountain bikers. They were walking tracks. Never in all the time that I have lived opposite Oatley Park (30 years) has the use of the walking tracks by mountain bikes been considered to be even legitimate, much less 'legal'.

There should be no place in Oatley Park for these destructive bikes. Use of the park by mountain bikes is vandalism masquerading as sport. I wish to emphatically state that under no circumstances should the Council even entertain the idea that the forthcoming Management Plan could include the use of the park by mountain bikes.

In conclusion, this issue brings into question the role of the Council in relation to the park. Its role is not to balance various uses of the park, but to protect the park. The Council has a duty of care to protect the park."

National Tree Day – Sun. 27th July

OFF members are invited to a wetland tour and planting day at Freshwater Creek Wetlands, Chullora between 9.30am and 12.30pm. The entrance is between TAFE property and the storage site for Olympic demountable homes in Muir Road, Chullora. Ring Gary Blaschke of South West Enviro Centre on 9759 0997.

Fox Sightings in Hurstville Council area. Report the sighting on 9330 6222.

OFF activities.

- ❖ 17 people attended John Blake's walk around the north shore of Sydney Harbour. It was an excellent day, made better by John's information about places seen.
- ❖ Melina Amerasinghe attended a two day conference, "Urban Bushland and Remnant Vegetation" organized by Nature Conservation Council.
- ❖ OFF's Annual Dinner will be on Friday evening, 10th October.

Storage Space Needed

Do you live in or near Oatley and have space in a garage for the Society's display boxes – the size of two largish suitcases? If so, please let Cliff know on 9580 3269.

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**
(near the corner of Letitia Street)
Please make yourself known as you come in.
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

July 23 (Wednesday). Mid week outing. Petersham and vicinity with Keith Robinson. Details in last *OFF News*. Cost: \$22.00 including lunch. Telephone Mamie Clark on 9546 3570.

July 28 (Monday). The unique scenery and wildlife of the **ANTARCTIC PENINSULA AND SOUTH GEORGIA**. A talk and photos by SUE BULLOCK of the Royal Botanic Gardens, including the retracing of Shackleton's expedition. A winter's night special!!

August 2 (Saturday). **FIELD DAY.** A walk through **Empire Pass at Lawson** in the Blue Mountains. Visit Dante's Glen, Fairy Falls and Frederica Falls. Distance for the circuit: 7 km. Grade is moderate, although the track is eroded and rough in places and there is a steep drop of 150 metres with a gradual ascent of the same height. Wonderful scenery in a narrow rainforest ravine. Travel by train. Catch 9.02am train from Central (second carriage from the back). This means we must take the 8.05 from Oatley to Central. Arrive Lawson at 10.38am. If you are traveling by car, meet at Lawson Station on side away from the Highway. Check for trackwork on 131 500. Be prepared for cold weather and wet tracks. Bring lunch and drinks. Leader : **Alan Fairley**, tel 9570 8332.

August 25 (Monday). **Peter Olde**- The History of *Grevillea* Collecting in Australia.

MID-WEEK OUTING

Another trip organized by Keith Robinson.

Wed. 20 August – to Muogamarra Nature Reserve, near Cowan.

Meet 9.00am at Oatley Uniting Church for a car pool. Arrive about 10.30 am at the entrance gates to Muogamarra Nature Reserve.

Plan Proceed along dirt road to the big shed and car park. Enjoy morning tea before walking. Two walks are available. One, very easy, is around the loop track; the second is to Lloyds Trig. On both walks we will see how the bush has recovered from the December 2002 bushfires. Good views of Hawkesbury River from the Lloyd Trig walk. Carry your lunch on this walk.

Cost per person : \$5.00 (goes to NPWS)

Register with Mamie Clark on 9546 3570.

On our web page

Check out OFF's web for some new entries. These include an article by David Waterhouse with a chronology of the success of Lime Kiln Bay wetlands in bringing back native birds over the last 2½ years. Log on to:

off.oatleypark.com

A book of interest

OFF members will probably be interested in the book "*Myles and Milo*" by Peter Meredith (1999) as it is the story of the Dunphys, the great father and son conservationists who lived in Oatley. It gives fascinating insights into their lives, with a few glimpses of life in Oatley in the 1930s and 1940s. The book also documents the great conservation battles, from Myles's Greater Blue Mountains National Park plan to the establishment of Nattai N.P. in the 1990s. It is the political and personal story of two men to whom we owe so much for the preservation of our natural environment. The book is held at Oatley Library under 92 DUN.

Whale-watching success

It was pleasing to see the public interest in whale watching this year. On any June day at Cape Solander, Kurnell, there were 40 plus cars near the new viewing platform and hundreds of people on the weekends. It was so busy that NPWS put on a regular shuttle bus from the Discovery Centre. Geoff Ross, who spoke to us at our April meeting, has done a good job in promoting the whale migration.