



O.F.F. NEWS



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

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Price: 10 cents

Issue 2003/05

May/June 2003

O.F.F. JOINS THE ELECTRONIC AGE

The Society now has its own web page. You can access it on

[http:// off.oatleypark.com](http://off.oatleypark.com)

The page has upcoming events, the latest *OFF News*, lists of Oatley Park birds and other animals, membership application, a photo gallery (which will be updated so we can see ourselves on walks and at other activities) and some links to other organizations and web pages, such as Kogarah and Hurstville Councils, NCC and , in the future, other environmental groups.

HUTCHISON TOWER LATEST

At the time of writing, Hurstville Council was still taking Hutchison to the Appeal Court on 28 May. Hutchison is making the veiled threat that if its tower has to be moved from Oatley Park, then it might have to go along Mulga Road.

Residents around the park received a letterdrop from Hutchison with details of the results of a survey into the electro-magnetic radiation from the tower. This was in response to community concern about the public health impact of the operation of the "3" network antennas in Oatley Park. The survey found that the radiowave signals are well below the public health and safety limit. (I hope this survey was more rigorous than the flora survey made before the tower was erected!!) A copy of these results will be available at the OFF meeting for those who did not receive it.

The issues of damage to Oatley Park's ecology and whether a private company should be allowed access to a public park still have not been resolved.

PRESTIGIOUS AWARD TO OFF MEMBER

We congratulate one of our members, Jim Douglas, who was recently awarded the degree of Doctor of Science *honoris causa* by the University of NSW. Jim is one of the founders of the field of Statistics in Australia, with an international reputation for his pioneering

contributions to both the discipline and the profession.

The University Council, noting this outstanding contribution, agreed to recognize him publicly by admitting him to the University's highest honour.

MILL CREEK, GEORGES RIVER

The Society has long been interested in the fate of former defence lands on the southern side of Georges River near Mill Creek. The latest news is that Sutherland Council has exhibited a draft LEP in which this land has been zoned Environmental Conservation (Bushland). This makes it harder to develop and less attractive to any purchaser.

However some areas have been left unzoned, including Gandangarra Aboriginal land, a pistol club and model airplane club land. It is important that this unzoned land be included in the Env. Cons. (Bushland) zone. Environmental groups see the latest LEP as a step in the right direction, but the ultimate objective is to have all this land transferred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for inclusion in Georges River National Park.

FROM THE JOURNALS

The Dunphy Wilderness Fund has initiated a campaign to raise \$1.2 million to purchase Green Gully, 13,000 hectares of rugged wilderness in the Macleay Gorges region of northern NSW. For the importance of this area, see the article in *National Parks Journal*, April 2003. OFF will gladly remit any donations to the Fund .

Did you read in the newspaper recently that Blue Mountains City Council may adopt an order that will protect native plants in residential backyards? The new policy for the first time in NSW would prevent clearing, mowing or damaging native grasses and shrubs. Owners would be only able to landscape with exotic plants within 35 metres of a residence, thus protecting indigenous bush on large blocks. The rose growers may not like it, but it sounds like an excellent way to protect the environment.

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

May 26 (Monday). **Craig Morrison**, Urban Bushland Officer from Nature Conservation Council will talk to us on **Public Lands Issues**, with reference to ADI site at St Marys, the North Head Quarantine Station and Rockdale wetland areas. He will also tell us about an upcoming Conference on "Urban Bushland and Remnant Vegetation" (see below for details).

May 31 (Saturday). **Field Day. Coastal Walk Bondi to Coogee.** A repeat of last year's walk which was washed out by a big storm. Easy to moderate on a wide and well used track. Length : 6.5 Km. Highlights : beautiful scenery and poetry reading with Henry Lawson at Waverley Cemetery. Bring lunch and plenty to drink. Catch the 9.05 am train from Oatley or Mortdale to Bondi Junction, then bus to Bondi Beach, arriving about 10 am. Return by bus from Coogee. Leader : Cliff Crane, tel 9580 3269.

June 23 (Monday). Alan Fairley's talk and slides on South-east Asia.

Report on Field Day, 3rd May

Darkes Forest-Woronora Dam. 22 attended

A most enjoyable autumn day was spent first walking to Maddens Falls. Half way along the track, a metal walkway is being constructed with a viewing platform at the end. Christmas Bells were the flower of the day and the orchard across the road did a good trade. We moved on to Woronora Dam for lunch and for a relaxing afternoon. Most people walked across the dam wall. Built between 1927 and 1941, the reservoir is currently only 56% full. .

Heather Mackey

Two Day Conference (which may interest some OFF members) 19 & 20 June

"Urban Bushland and Remnant Vegetation : Tool Kits for a Sustainable Future"

Where? Centenary Lecture Theatre, Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards.

Check NCC website for more details or ring Craig Morrison on 9279 2466

SOCIETY NEWS

*** OFF has purchased a display board. It was on view at our last meeting. It will be very useful for our Lions Festival Days and other functions where we need to publicise our activities. Cliff Crane and Fred Bell have got it at a bargain price.

*** The Society has applied for grants from Kogarah Council for purchase of a digital camera, photocopier and to support tree planting activities at local schools.

*** We have written to Hurstville Council expressing our concern about the amount of damage being done to Oatley Park by trail bikes and mountain bikes. Members living around the park have also been shocked at the damage being done.

*** Steps are being taken to have Oatley Park nominated as a Heritage site. This will give it greater protection legally, something clearly required after the Hutchison communications tower problem.

*** Members with some free time (are there any?) are urged to become whale watcher volunteers at Kurnell, perhaps for one day a week at Cape Solander, Kurnell. Phone the Botany Bay Visitor Centre at Kurnell for details.

*** New plant record for Oatley Park. The Greenhood *Pterostylis acuminata*. A small colony was observed flowering on the plateau behind Websters Lookout by Alan Fairley on 20 April 2003. (Have you got the complete list of Native Plants of Oatley Park ? Just \$4.00 at our meeting nights).

*** Have you got a digital camera? Now that OFF has its own web site, we are keen to take photos of our walks and to put them on the site. Melina Amerasinghe and husband Michael will update the site, but we need digital photos to include. See Melina or Alan Fairley at the meetings.