



O.F.F. NEWS



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KIMBERLEY BY SEA

Gary Schoer spoke of the Kimberley Coast at the last OFF meeting. Travelling on the ship "Coral Princess", he took spectacular pictures that he showed during his talk. On the Wandjina rock art sites he spoke of the need for traditional "refreshing" of the paintings when white pipeclay, of limited durability had been used as backing. He mentioned as an example of this art the paintings of Donny Woolgoodga the designer of the spectacular 35 meter high Wandjina for the Sydney Olympic Games. The red Gwion Gwion (Bradshaw) figures, on the other hand, are more firmly held in the rock grains and some have survived for an astounding 17,000 years.

Gary described his travel up the Prince Regent River to King's Cascades, where a crocodile had taken Ginger Meadows soon after Australia won the Americas Cup. The threat of crocodiles has prevented a full assessment of the marine values of the region, now threatened by a major LPG plant north of Broome. He made the case that further industrialisation of the region would compromise one of the world's longest unspoiled coastline.

GARDENS OF STONE

To promote low impact visitor experiences and its reservation as a state conservation area, the Colong Foundation and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society have developed a Visitors Map in full colour, covering the entire Gardens of Stone region. Priced at \$7.50 plus \$1.50 postage it has much of interest about the other side of the Mountains. More at www.colongwilderness.org.au/ and www.bluemountains.org.au/

NEW CONSERVATION AREAS?

The Colong Foundation reports that Genowlan Mountain and Mount Airly in the Capertee Valley have been included in the Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area. With colonies of endangered plants, interesting canyons, large pagoda mazes and the relics of diamond and gold mining, it is a key part of the Gardens of Stone Reserve proposal. Its inclusion in the conservation area seemed to promise the end to proposed intensive coal mining, but Premier Kenneally said on 4th March that mining would still be permitted there.

SYDNEY WILDFLOWERS

A new website presents a collection of Sydney-region wildflower images, almost all from National Parks. Many of the flowers are quite small and easily overlooked and the focus is to present the small detailed structures of the flowers together with varying conditions of light and shade. www.sydneywildflowerimages.com

EARTH HOUR 2011

On March 26th, hundreds of millions of citizens, from a hundred different countries, will unite in lights out. Earth Hour is a call to action. It starts with a flick of the switch at 8:30pm, in a collective display of commitment to protect the planet, sending a message about saving electricity, rather than about actually saving any electricity during that one short hour! www.earthhour.org.au/

BIRDS IN BACKYARDS WORKSHOPS

This year OFF is conducting four FREE Birds in Backyards workshops, an initiative of Birds Australia. The workshops educate people on the importance and means of attracting smaller birds into their gardens. Bookings are essential. More information from Jason 9570 8559 <mailto:jay.shaz@hotmail.com> or Liz 9580 6621 <mailto:lizc@pacific.net.au>

COAL AND GAS STRATEGY

The NSW Department of Planning is inviting feedback from community and industry on the directions and issues relating to coal and gas strategy.

The Department is leading the preparation of the strategy with assistance from key Government agencies, and seeking community, industry and other stakeholder input.

The main aims of the strategy will be: i) To guide sustainable development of the coal mining and coal seam gas industry, ii) To minimise adverse health, environment, agricultural and land use impacts of the industry and iii) To strengthen communication between Government, industry and the community on coal mining and gas production matters. See www.planning.nsw.gov.au/. You can respond to coalandgasstrategy@planning.nsw.gov.au or post: Coal and Gas Strategy Department of Planning GPO Box 39 SYDNEY NSW 2001 Closing date: Friday 15 April 2011

TASMANIA'S SO CALLED MORATORIUM

The Tasmanian State and the Federal Government announced on 15th December 2010 that within three months there would be a moratorium placed on logging of high conservation value trees in Tasmania. On March 17th, three months and two days later, eight conservationists took action to halt continuing logging operations in the Counsel Forest in Tasmania to highlight the urgent need for logging operations to cease immediately. See more at: <http://www.nativeforest.net/>

HENRY GOLD'S IMAGES OF THE WILD

An exhibition of wilderness photographs will be at the Bondi Pavilion Gallery, Bondi Beach, May 31 to June 12 to raise funds for wilderness conservation by the Colong Foundation. Henry will be featuring his colour images of wilderness, including colour panoramas for the first time, and his stunning black and white photography. Since 1967, countless numbers of Henry Gold photographs have served to publicise nature conservation. www.colongwilderness.org.au/GoldGallery/

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Have you paid your OFF subscription for 2011? Subs remain at \$25 per person, or family living at the same address. You can pay by cash or cheque at the monthly meeting, post [cheque or money order] to the Secretary [address below] or by direct bank transfer [details on your yellow renewal form -do not forget to include your name]. March 31st is usually the cut off date.

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

Mar 26th (Saturday) Birds in Backyards workshop, an initiative of Birds Australia at Carss Park [fully booked]

March 28th (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Louise Egerton publisher and co-author of "Wildlife of Australia", speaking on **Counting Our Blessings: Biodiversity in Australia**.

April 2nd (Saturday), Field day to La Perouse to Malabar via Cape Banks and Little Bay. Approx 11 km. Moderate walk along coast and cliff tops. See Henry Head fortifications, historic Coast Cemetery, Little Bay, coastal scenery. Meet 9.30am at La Perouse bus terminal. Drive or take 7.43am train from Oatley to Central, then bus 393 from Eddy Ave at 8.59am to La Perouse. **Leader: Alan Fairley** Tel. 9570 8332.

April 16th (Saturday) Birds in Backyards workshop [fully booked]

April 17th (Sunday) Additional Field Day: Bird walk along Lime Kiln Bay Circuit Walk (See OFF website at: <http://off.oatleypark.com/limekiln.html>). The walk will start at 8 am and take 1-2 hours. Please notify Jason Cockayne phone 9570 8559 or <mailto:jay.shaz@hotmail.com> if you wish to take part.

This activity complements the Birds in Backyards workshops sponsored by OFF as a 'getting greener' project, and funded through the Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative. A second bird walk will be held in Poulton Park, on Sunday 8th May - [details later].

April 18th (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Matthew Mo** speaking on **Sydney Region Lizards**

May 1st (Sunday), Field day to Lane Cove National Park - Boyles Creek Leaders: Janet & Graham Austin

May 23rd (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Brendon Bell**, Education Officer, Sutherland Astronomical Society.

DHARAWAL STATE CONSERVATION AREA

On the day before Clean Up Australia Day, we had a great turn-out of 28 curious walkers to see what the little known Dharawal State Conservation Area has to offer. The north-western end has some magnificent pools accessed by short walks along fire-trails and tracks from a road put down originally for a housing sub-division (thankfully still-born). The plan was to go to 3 of these pools, with easy exits available between each, for those who did not feel like tackling the increasingly steep and slippery trails as we progressed from Stokes Creek crossing pool (good), to Minerva pool (better) (also on Stokes Creek) to the O'Hares Creek pool (best!) at the bottom of the Jingga Track.

And this plan worked well, with most participants going to the first two pools and some swimming in Minerva. Since OFF member Sharyn Cullis had organised a clean up day, we also made a point of picking up a bag of rubbish to leave the area better than we found it. Thanks to Matthew for going the extra distance to the end of the pool! As a reward, Four Black Cockatoos greeted us with a flyover at Minerva Pool.

The majority of walkers then made it down the Jingga track for a look at this splendid pool, approximately 70-80 by 30-40 metres. While some went swimming again, the rest started back up the track in light rain, which had been threatening for much of the day. Thanks to Trevor for collecting more rubbish while swimming.

This area contains some outstanding pristine bush and streams, and deserves to become a National Park to protect it from long-wall coal mining and coal seam gas extraction as proposed by BHP and other companies. [Note Anti Coal Seam Rally in the next column.]

Note. On this walk OFF successfully trialled a method of disinfecting footwear with 70%/30% mentholated spirits/water to restrict the spread of Phytophthora, a devastating plant killer attacking plant roots, destroying the food and shelter of many animals. OFF will continue this practice in all future walks in our precious bushland areas. Graham Lalchere reporting on DSCA walk and clean up

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

This year OFF decided to attempt two clean up sites: Myles Dunphy Reserve and an area below Websters Lookout in Oatley Park. Myles Dunphy should not have needed as much attention this year following its clean up in 2009 and cleaning up by Bushcare as they go about their work. So, we decided to target the considerable amount of rubbish in Oatley Park that was

hidden in the bush and appeared to have been thrown off the lookout or left by surreptitious users of the bush. So, thirty eight OFF members and friends, including some on kayaks, toiled away from 8.30am to 1pm and collected the equivalent of approximately 35 bags of rubbish and recyclables (6), including a tyre, chairs, a folding bed frame, a microwave, an air conditioning unit, milk crates, an ironing board and a hockey stick. The amount collected from Myles Dunphy was a surprise, and more may have been collected in the OFF area in Oatley Park as the Lions Club, who ran the after clean up BBQ, also had a clean up site in the park. Following their hard work, participants then enjoyed the BBQ in the Oatley Park "Castle".

Briefly

Sue Howard, nominated as a member of the OFF Committee, was warmly welcomed by the other members at their March meeting.

Caring for the Coast, the Environmental Defenders Office publication on threats to coastal environments and on how to apply the law to achieve better environmental outcomes is available free. T9262 6989 or <mailto:education@edo.org.au>

Earth Hour is on Saturday March 26th between 8.30 pm and 9.30 pm local time. [See the note above]

Anti Coal Seam Gas And Mining Rally Several hundred protestors gathered on March 20th in Martin Place to send a strong message to politicians and political parties that destructive mining is a major issue in NSW. secure.wilderness.org.au/

Things often look different in hindsight!

