



# O.F.F. NEWS



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## OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

OFF News in March 2007 first noted that Hurstville Council was to begin detailed studies of this site, for the purpose of redevelopment. *The Leader* recently reported [12<sup>th</sup> August] that, despite continuing community opposition, Council is now moving to demolish the Bowling Club buildings, and will spend \$90,000 of ratepayer's money to do so. In the four years, all applications for community use have been refused; destructive vandalism followed. Demolition is the first step in handing over to developers this iconic public land. It served the community for more than 50 years, and is part of (but oddly carved off from) the Myles Dunphy Reserve.



[Up to date detail in [www.friendsofoatley.com/](http://www.friendsofoatley.com/) and *The Leader*]

## COAL AND GAS

"A Coal and Gas Plan needs to provide a framework where mining intensity will be reduced to protect the other natural resources of a region. Why should low value coal with high ash content always be mined, as dirty coal produces more greenhouse gases per unit energy? And why should long wall mining developments always propose full extraction under drinking water catchments and vital headwater swamps or under cliffs? The answer is that obviously the political process steps in and mining intensity is moderated, as we have seen in relation to sensitive water supply catchments" [Keith Muir in [www.colongwilderness.org.au/](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/) ]

## FOOD VERSUS FUEL

Biofuels currently account for about 0.5 per cent of Australia's transport fuels, according to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics. These are sourced mainly from the wastes that accrue when wheat and sugar crops are processed into food. However, to devote entire plantations to energy production is controversial because of the potential to displace important food crops. Warren Flentje, an expert on carbon capture, University of Melbourne, says fuel from the agave plant, from which tequila is derived, is not likely to cause such a problem. "With food crops there is the 'food versus fuel' issue. However, agave is a marginal crop growing well in semi-arid regions that are otherwise useless for food crops." [www.australiangeographic.com.au/](http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/)

## WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

There is no simple definition of 'sustainability'. In fact, there may be as many definitions as there are people trying to define it. Most definitions will include: a) living within the limits of what the environment can provide, b) understanding the many interconnections between economy, society and the environment, and c) equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainingourevironment.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainingourevironment.htm)

## WATTLE DAY – 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER



Wattle as the national floral emblem was virtually accepted as a floral emblem to mark Federation in 1901, but was not proclaimed as such until 1988, when the Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, was the selected species. In 1992. the Commonwealth and States agreed to hold

Australia's Wattle Day on September 1<sup>st</sup>, the first day of spring. The golden wattle is an evergreen, spreading shrub or small tree. It grows in the under storey of open forest, woodland and in open scrub in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. When in flower, the golden wattle displays the national colours, green and gold. As one species of a large genus of flora growing across Australia, the golden wattle is a symbol of unity. Wattle is purpose-built to withstand our country's droughts, winds, and bushfires. The resilience of wattle represents the spirit of the Australian people. [www.australiaday.org.au/](http://www.australiaday.org.au/)

## MARINE SANCTUARIES

The Australian Government is about to establish a national network of marine sanctuaries in federal waters right around our coast. The Wilderness Society notes that



the plan could result in the largest network of marine sanctuaries in the world, but that recently released plans for the proposed sanctuaries off WA and SA miss critical hotspots for marine life. These include threatened blue whales, dolphins, and sea lions [pictured], and allow for oil drilling off Kangaroo Island and Margaret River. [www.wilderness.org.au/](http://www.wilderness.org.au/)

## PREVENTING UNSUSTAINABLE LOGGING

Environmental regulations intended to prevent unsustainable logging and protect threatened species are frequently breached in NSW's native forests, according to an Environmental Defender's Office report to the Nature Conservation Council NSW [www.nccnsw.org.au/](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/)

## DOGS' FUR SALE

The Humane Society International notes a widespread and rapidly growing selling of dog fur clothing from China across Australia. The Society is asking people to let the Government know that its current inaction is unacceptable, and that stronger labelling laws and greater border diligence is needed. [www.hsi.org.au/](http://www.hsi.org.au/)

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

**August 22<sup>nd</sup> (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting** with **Margaret Bradhurst** speaking on **Sydney's Native Orchids** - month by month

**August 27<sup>th</sup> (Saturday), Field day: Burning Palms** Magnificent coastal scenery of the Royal National Park, brilliant views and wonderful flora and fauna. Some uneven track and a challenging climb out. Total distance about 10 km. Wear stout walking shoes and bring lunch and water. Meet 9.30 am at parking area at the Garie Road turnoff at Bertram Stevens Drive. We will then drive to Garawarra farmhouse. The walk starts there.  
**Leaders: Julian Sheen and Ian Pitt** 0415428744

**September 11<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) Additional Field Day. Bird walk in Poulton Park. Hurstville Grove** to complement Birds in Backyards workshops. It involves looking at small birds needing dense shrubs for shelter, food, and nest sites, with the aim of inspiring the walkers to plant bushier backyards to attract these birds. Walk starts at 8 am for 1-2 hours. Meet at steps (opposite 38 Whitfield Pde) leading down to Poulton Park.  
**Leaders: Liz Cameron & Graham Fry.** Ph. 9580 6621 [lizc@pacific.net.au](mailto:lizc@pacific.net.au)

**September 17<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) The final free Birds in Backyards Workshop** will be at Illawong Rural Fire Service Brigade Station from 10 am to 12 noon. Bookings are essential. Please contact **Liz Cameron** (ph. 9580 6621, [lizc@pacific.net.au](mailto:lizc@pacific.net.au)) or **Jason Cockayne** (m: 0411 744 715, [jay.shaz@hotmail.com](mailto:jay.shaz@hotmail.com)).

**September 26<sup>th</sup> (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting** with **Dan Bickel** of the Australian Museum talking on "Tears of the Gods", the history and science of Amber

**October 9<sup>th</sup> (Sunday), Field Day: Royal National Park - Karloo Pools** **Leaders: Jan Douglas and Dave Crawford.**

**October 24<sup>th</sup> (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting** with **Philip Moore** speaking on a Trip to the Great Victoria Desert (WA).

**October 29-30<sup>th</sup> Field Weekend: Gardens of Stone National Park - Lithgow.** **Leaders: Keith Muir and John Watters.** [See note below]

**November 4<sup>th</sup> (Friday) OFF Annual Dinner** Early note for diaries!

## PHOTOGRAPHING NATURE

Ken Griffiths spoke on wild life photography at the July 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. He described some technical developments in cameras and the photographic advances that followed. He demonstrated how improvements in timing and focus allowed detail and precision that was previously not possible.



His marvellous examples included pictures of crashing waves, with a view of the splashing water previously only available to a spectator for a fraction of a second, and some delightful birds landing and taking off, with one snapping at a tiny insect, and both bird and insect in view. We also saw a lovely picture of a curiously friendly goanna in its very correct colours [not quite the one pictured]. <http://www.australianphotography.com/>

WALK 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY "LOCKLEY'S PYLON"

Thirteen people enjoyed morning tea at Highland Rd Leura, before driving the 11kms along the Mount Hay Rd to the start of the walk in the northern side of the Blue Mountains National Park. The weather was cloudy initially, but sun was lighting up the wonderful sandstone cliff line by lunchtime, giving wonderful views west to Govett's leap, and Perry's Lookdown, to the east right down the Grose Valley, and to the north across to Mount Banks. On our return, vistas were also to be seen right down to the harbour bridge.

The vegetation was quite varied, with heathlands interspersed with woodland. Boronias (both pink and white), banksias, and many wattles were in flower. There was evidence of wind shaping up on the ridges, as the prevailing winds were from the south-west. We were back at the cars by 15.00. [Report: Leader Alison Gilroy]

## RECYCLING FOOD SCRAPS

Food scraps such as banana peels, apple cores, vegetable trimmings, bones, eggshells, and pizza crust are a wasted resource in landfill. As they decompose,

they generate methane, but when composted, they produce oxygen, valuable to soil and plant health. They can now be safely collected and processed, and a growing number of municipalities provide special food scrap bins. [www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/)

GARDENS OF STONE WEEKEND OCT 29-30<sup>th</sup>

Participants will be travelling to the area in 4WD vehicles and will arrange their own accommodation for the Saturday night. There are a range of cabins at the Lithgow Tourist and Van Park, [58 Coerwull Road, Lithgow, ph.6351 4350 [www.tourism.lithgow.com/accommodation.html](http://www.tourism.lithgow.com/accommodation.html)] and Lithgow has five motels. Details of meeting places and vehicle sharing will be available closer to the date.

Please let Alison Gilroy [9580 5557] or John Watters [9534 1096] know if you are interested in taking part in this weekend away.

## Briefly

**N**ative plants, vegetation and climate change topic for the Friday Aug 26, 8pm meeting of the Australian Plants Society Parramatta & Hills District, Barton Hall, Hopetoun Village, off David Rd Castle Hill [Details from Wendy Goonan, ph. 96863149]

**O**atley Park & Surrounds Photos on the OFF website <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=1413>.

**R**ed Dog now in cinemas, about a dog that made a significant impact in the Pilbara in the 1970s.

**W**ildflowers, Kuring-Gai Festival of 28<sup>th</sup> August 420 Mona Vale Rd St Ives <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/>



Do you know who I am?