



# O.F.F. NEWS

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## RAIN FORESTS AND RAIN

There is a lot not known about how nature works, and when a new theory is introduced it may be rejected because it conflicts with the existing widely held theory. The popular theory on rain fall is that the winds from the sea bring precipitation over land as warm air rises, and cool air with water vapor from the sea blows in to replace it.

The *Biotic Pump Theory* [BPT] first published in 2007 postulates that precipitation occurs over land, because of the condensation that forests produce, not just because of variations in temperature. Its view is that winds are actually created and controlled by rain forests, and the condensation they produce. Forests push vapor into the air, and it condenses from gas to a liquid.

It notes that natural forests have evolved a complex set of genetically encoded traits over millions of years. Their root system facilitates storage and extraction of moisture from soil; and biogenic aerosols produced by trees control the intensity of water vapour condensation over the forest. Thus forest evaporation produces water vapor more efficiently than open water surfaces. The ancient forests [not their modern "replacements"] create an ocean-to-land moist air flow, and stabilize this flow at an optimum level, reducing extreme fluctuations like hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe droughts or floods. The BPT has been considered controversial since its introduction, and, until now, largely ignored. However, it has been critically examined in the intervening years, and is gradually gaining more traction in the scientific community. Recent findings that deforestation caused the droughts ending the ancient *Maya* civilisation may be relevant. Destroying our forests could prove to have more serious consequences than previously thought. [rainmakers](#)

## FUTURE OF RAIN FORESTS

National Geographic reports that half of our rain forests have been lost to the insatiable human demand for wood and arable land. Rain forests, once growing over 14% of the land, now cover only about 6%. If current deforestation rates continue, these critical habitats could disappear by 3012. [//environment.nationalgeographic](#).

## OATLEY PARK'S FLOWERS IN OCTOBER

The flowers in the October list on the website include this Twisted Mat-rush (*Lomandra obliqua*). [Obliqua refers to the leaves being asymmetrical]. It is a low, sprawling plant growing in clusters in open forest on sandy soils. The blue-grey leaves are short, 2-4 cm long, flat and twisted, on stiff branches. The flowers are yellow, stalkless, and lie evenly spaced along the branch, all in one plane. The tips of the leaves are not toothed. <http://off.oatleypark.com>



## LESS PAPER

The internet may at last be having the long predicted effect of reducing paper use. As paper circulations drop and the iPhone technology makes it easier to read digitally, publishers are turning more towards a paperless format. [//www.foliomag.com/](http://www.foliomag.com/)

## OATLEY BUSHLAND PARK ?

Oatley Park was set aside in 1888 to preserve 45 hectares of bushland. It is one of the most significant bushland parks left in the St George area, containing some 300 species of native plants, 106 of birds and home to fascinating wildlife including leaf-tailed geckos and swamp wallabies.

We would like to enhance the park's name, and in light of its history and its nature the title of *Oatley Bushland Park* does seem appropriate. If you agree with such a name change we would value your signing the supporting document. Copies will be available at our stall at the Oatley Lions Festival on 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.

## FIGHT FOR BAMBARA

Bambara is an area of about 73 hectares at Kariong near Gosford, where a group is fighting to protect important bushland from development. It has 35 known species of threatened flora and fauna, many Aboriginal engravings and curious rock carvings known as the Egyptian Hieroglyphs. Most of the area is wooded but privately owned. Development applications have been made over the years, but all, so far, have been rejected by the Land and Environment Court. Earlier this year, a small part was purchased by Gosford Council and will be included in a national park. The group continues to battle for the preservation of the remaining unprotected bushland. See photos and an outline of the campaign @ <http://www.bambara4nationalpark.com/>

## THE KIMBERLEY REGION

The Wilderness Society notes that the Kimberley region of northern WA is one of the world's great natural and Indigenous cultural regions, and one of very few in Australia, to have retained its native fauna diversity without extinction since European settlement.

Unfortunately it is now staring down the barrel of full-scale industrialisation as Woodside seeks to make it the world's second largest gas hub. This will involve drilling a series of offshore gas mines, and blasting multiple reef systems to allow the dredging of a massive sea port. It will become a marine 'dead zone' with gas super-tankers as the only things moving through the water. Woodside and its partners plan to clear an area of Aboriginal land around James Price Point some 24 times larger than Melbourne's CBD.

Yet there are economically-viable ways to extract gas much more responsibly, both environmentally and socially.

[www.wilderness.org.au/](http://www.wilderness.org.au/)

## COAL SEAM GAS

CSG produced in NSW represents a small but growing proportion of our gas needs. The main supply comes from other States, but, on current forecasts, the supply will soon fall short of the winter peak demand. Because gas-fired electricity can be turned on and off to meet fluctuations in demand, it is more efficient than coal fire that cannot be turned off, and compliments intermittent sources of renewable energy such as solar and wind. The NSW Government promises to ensure that the growth in the CSG industry is responsibly managed so that the expansion of CSG production will help meet growing energy needs.

[www.resources.nsw.gov.au/coal-seam-gas](http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/coal-seam-gas) However, the many proposals for environmentally dangerous mining in sensitive areas are sparking anti-mining protests across Australia, and even in the Sydney region.

[www.nogasminingsydney.com/](http://www.nogasminingsydney.com/)

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St Oatley [cnr Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

### COMING EVENTS

**Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting** with **Associate Professor Glenda Wardle** speaking about her desert experiences and highlighting the unique landscape with a PowerPoint presentation. Glenda is an ecologist from the Desert Ecology Research Group, and has travelled extensively throughout the Simpson Desert studying its endemic plants and animals.

**Oct 27-28<sup>th</sup> Field Weekend: Capertee National Park.** There is accommodation for 12 people, more if some are prepared to share; there are two rooms for sleeping four. Activities will include bird watching and some short walks along the Capertee River. There will be some owl call play back equipment, bat traps and spotlighting. **Leader: Deb Andrew** T 9570 2695 mob 0432834057. Those wishing to participate must let Deb know before the 24<sup>th</sup> [message bank only on the home phone, not on the mobile].

**Oct 28<sup>th</sup> (Sun) Cruelty Free Festival** 10 to 5pm Belmore Park, Haymarket Sydney

**Nov 26<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting** with **Gary Darby** speaking on Aboriginal Art

**Dec 1<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Field Day to Warragamba Dam - Leader: Alison Gilroy**

**Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) Christmas Picnic / BBQ**

**Feb 4<sup>th</sup> (Mon) AGM 7.45pm.** election of officers. followed by members' photos and social supper

### SEPTEMBER TALK: KOMODO DRAGONS

Following a nail-biting technical malfunction resolved at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, our speaker, Dr David Kirshner, gave a very entertaining

presentation on the Komodo dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*). It is the largest living monitor lizard species, up to three metres long and 130 kilograms.



David, a monitor lizard expert, with two companions, travelled to Komodo, Rinca, Flores, Gili Motang and Padar, the islands of Indonesia inhabited by these giants. We saw video footage aplenty in a very interesting PowerPoint presentation of the dragons in their natural environment. Particularly keen eyes and focused cameras captured well camouflaged lizards and snakes. There was, however, no footage of the largest snakes in the world found in Snake Palace Cave on West Flores. Perhaps this is an opening for one of our more intrepid members to speak at a future meeting! [Summary Matt Allison Program Manager]

### WALKS IN SEPTEMBER

1. On Sept 29<sup>th</sup> Julian Sheen led an 11.5 km walk covering five beautiful beaches from Collaroy to Manly

2. On 30<sup>th</sup> Sept the Whaite family led an excursion to the mountain named after Harry, to honour his memory and scatter his and Olive's ashes. They were accompanied by five OFF members and ably led by Ian Pitt.



### OATLEY CALENDAR

This is the cover page of Oatley Heritage and Historical Society's soon to be published calendar. It will be available at the Lions Festival and from the Oatley Heritage and Historical Society. [\$15 for 1 or \$25 for 2]



### HASSAN'S WALLS ORCHIDS, LITHGOW

Hassan's Wall Reserve of just 770 hectares is an important centre for native orchids. Three enthusiastic amateur botanists have collated considerable detail of orchids in the Reserve, and a 40-page paperback has just been published, sponsored by the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority. It has colour illustrations and notes on 60 native orchids including a table of flowering times. [www.lithgowmercury.com.au/](http://www.lithgowmercury.com.au/). The booklet will be on sale for \$10 at the next OFF meeting and at the Oatley Lions Festival.

### HASSAN'S WALLS WALK

OFF is planning a guided walk to see the orchids at Hassan's Walls in November next year. Details will be in the 2013 program when it is published.

### MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH

This is a regular testing program by volunteers of the creek lines flowing through to the Georges River. The Group next gathers at 9am on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. For more detail ring Sharyn (9579 1262) or Heather (0425 291 879).

### FOR NOTING [NB]

**Oatley Lions Village Festival** on Sat Oct 20<sup>th</sup>

**Cross Currents Festival** at Garrison Point, Georges Hall, on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov celebrating National Water Week.

[waterinthelandscape.org.au](http://waterinthelandscape.org.au)

**Speakers:** Our Program Officer is looking for interesting speakers on subjects related to flora and fauna for some of our meetings next year. If you have any suggestions please contact Matt on 9570 8271.

**Walks:** Our Field Officer is looking for people to lead interesting walks. Please contact Alison on 9580 5557

**Cruelty Free Festival** Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Oct. Find out how to save animals Belmore Park in Haymarket. [//crueltyfreefestival.org.au/](http://crueltyfreefestival.org.au/)

**Membership** You can opt to renew your membership for 2013 by direct bank transfer - [more detail when the renewal notice is sent out]. OFF is also inviting and encouraging donations. These to go into the "President's Fund" and it is from this fund that OFF donates to dynamic environmental groups.

**New members** are most welcome. If you are on the internet, click here for [some details for joining](#).

**Mulga Road Books** 89 Mulga Rd Oatley W has a wide range of quality second hand books. <http://rotarcap.com/mrb/>.

**Oatley Heritage & Historical Society:** The next meeting is on Monday, 29th Oct 12, 2-4 pm [www.oatleyheritagegroup.com](http://www.oatleyheritagegroup.com)

**OFF Annual Dinner** is on 9<sup>th</sup> Nov, 7 pm at South-Hurstville RSL.

The theme will be HATS. A hat of any sort decorated or not, will be required for entry. The price will be \$38 per person. Details of the menu will be available when booking at the October meeting. We hope that you will be able to join us. Donations of things for raffle prizes will be gratefully accepted. As we have to prearrange the catering **your pre-booking is a must.**

