



O.F.F. NEWS



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SAVING OUR TREES



If we can inspire residents to pay attention to the plight of the lost trees and celebrate those still standing, we hope it might help in a small way to repair the damage we are doing to our environment. Please send photos or information on lost or endangered trees to

off@oatleypark.com. More at: off.oatleypark.com/projects/losttrees.pdf

TREE POSITIVES

The shade provided by trees drops temperatures by up to 8°C, reducing air conditioner use by 12-15%. 11 million trees planted in the Los Angeles basin, save US\$50 million yearly on air conditioning. Large trees were removed "for safety sake" from school grounds after Victoria's Black Saturday fires. The decision overlooked the shade they provided, and they had to be replaced by large shade sails to protect students from excessive summer sun. Reduced wind speeds (up to 10%), and protection from hail are other tree positives. [Gregory Moore, Doctor of Botany at University of Melbourne] More of Moore at <http://theconversation.edu.au/>

UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS IN OATLEY

David Waterhouse reports seeing in March a pair of White-throated Needle-tails (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) along Hurstville Road near Judd St. They are non-breeding migrants to Australia from the north. They usually come across the Torres Strait, populating the east coast of the continent plus Bass Strait and Tasmania, and can fly at speeds of up to 130 km per hour. He also saw eight Royal Spoonbills (*Platalea regia*) on the island in the Moore Reserve wetland

ARE MORE DAMS THE ANSWER?

The famous Three Gorges Dam in China spans the Yangtze River near Sandouping in the Hubei province of China. It is currently the world's largest hydro-electric power station based on an installed capacity of 22,500 MW. The dam's principal functions are to produce electricity, increase the Yangtze River's shipping capacity, and reduce the potential for downstream flooding. It is marketed as an engineering, social, economic and environmental success. However, *Hut News* reports that there is much controversy. The dam has flooded cities, towns and villages, displacing nearly 1.3 million people. It has a major impact on river-associated ecosystems, creates an increased risk of substantial landslides, and the likelihood of seismic events. Poorly controlled effluent is polluting the Yangtze and may ultimately affect the fish resources of the East China Sea.

[Selected quote from a talk to the BMCS by Brian Marshall who taught Engineering Geology at UNSW and UTS, Associate Professor of Geology.] www.bluemountains.org.au/

SUSTAINABLE CITIES

The Total Environment Centre [TEC] notes that the environmental footprint of cities is many times larger than their physical size. Cities are a drain on limited resources, polluting vast areas. Without careful management they degrade and destroy biodiversity. City residents are entitled to a healthy environment. TEC is campaigning for sustainable cities with clean air, improved public transport, protected parks and bush land, sustainable water use, and binding environmental principles. TEC notes that claims of Australia's packaging recycling rate are significantly overstated. "Recent industry and government data shows container packaging is missing, meaning the APC is even further away from achieving its target of 65% which was a black hole in reports from the Australian Packaging Covenant (APC). Over 320,000 tonnes of used beverage was supposed to be reached in 2010," said Jeff Angel, National Convenor of the Alliance of 17 environment groups. www.tec.org.au/urban-sustainability

COAL SEAM GAS [CSG]

The scale and speed of growth of the CSG industry in Australia is astonishing: Billions of dollars have poured into regional areas; new jobs have been created; state and national coffers have swelled; export contracts signed and sealed; and massive liquefied natural gas facilities approved. It is difficult to determine an appropriate and healthy balance between mining and the environment. Miners and some politicians say CSG offers a much greener energy choice. Environmentalists and other politicians question this, and there is growing community scepticism about CSG. www.abc.net.au/news/ However, in 2007-08, CSG accounted for around 10% of total gas consumption in Australia. Some 80% of this in Queensland, where at least 13% of its grid connected power generation is gas fired. The rapid growth of the industry follows a rapidly growing demand and the realisation of just how much CSG we have. The NSW Government has recently released a number of draft plans and policies seeking to protect high-quality agricultural land and water sources from inappropriate mining projects. www.ga.gov.au/

THE COLONG FOUNDATION CHALLENGE 2012

It is your last chance to support the Colong Foundation's membership drive before we draw the raffle at our April OFF meeting. The prize is a framed print by Henry Gold. Tickets are available to all new 2012 Colong Foundation members. The membership is \$30 and goes to supporting the valuable work the Colong Foundation does in the Blue Mountains area, including campaigning successfully for the Gardens of Stone National Park. Contact Jason Cockayne on 9570 8559 or at jay.shaz@hotmail.com to enter the draw if you have already made payment for membership. Membership is available from Jason or through the Colong Website www.colongwilderness.org.au.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [corner Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

COMING EVENTS

April 23rd (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with local photographer, **Chris Rehburg** of *Wildlife Monitoring* speaking on **The Use of Camera Traps in Fauna Monitoring**. He will have lots of photos and video footage as well. He photographed the wallabies in Oatley Park. His website is: <http://www.wlmd.com.au/>

April 27th (Fri) Field Event: Night Walk in Oatley Park. The broad-tailed gecko is one of the reptile species that has continued in the urban areas of Sydney. Local animal handler, **Matt Mo** documented their habits in his university study in early 2010. The group will meet at the corner of Baringa and Barwon Roads, Mortdale at 7pm. The walk will be slow-paced and take 1½ to 2 hours. There will be opportunities to handle geckos. Bring warm clothes and closed footwear. If sensitive to contact with thick undergrowth, wear long-sleeve clothes. Head-torches or hand-held torches are recommended. Mosquito repellent will keep you comfortable, but gecko handlers should use as little as possible around their hands. Children must be under adult supervision. **Leader: Matthew Mo.**

May 6th (Sun) Field day: Kiama Coast Walk, Loves Bay to Werri Lagoon and return [12 Km]. Meet at Kiama Railway Station at 9.45 am. We will then drive to the walk start in Elanora Street. The walk is grassy, with some steep hills and spectacular coastal scenery. There are some boggy and uneven patches and the track is fully exposed to sun and wind. We may be unable to cross the lagoon to Werri Beach. Wear sturdy footwear hat, sunscreen, bring first aid and water, lunch, snacks for a full day. **Leaders: Lesley and Peter Cox** Phone on 0438 878 774 or 0427 949 817 for more details.

MADAGASCAR

The March meeting included an illustrated tour of southern Madagascar by OFF member **Graham Fry**. He and **Liz** travelled there last October, the season when the island's photogenic lemurs are raising young. They range from tiny mouse lemurs to the dog-sized black and white Indri, whose far-reaching call **Graham** played. The tropical rainforest of the east coast contrasts with terraced rice paddies of the central highlands and spiny forest in the arid west. The resourceful Malagasy people work largely with their hands - blacksmithing tools, growing rice, spinning and weaving silk, pounding corn, breaking up granite rocks, building ox carts and mining for sapphires. A display of Malagasy-crafted souvenirs complemented the talk.

FIELD DAY: CUMBERLAND STATE FOREST

On 1st April, a beautiful sunny autumn day, eight OFF members assembled at the State Forest Information Centre at 9:30 to explore the only State Forest in the Sydney metropolitan area, a small one of only 40Ha. Most of Forest was cleared prior to State Forests purchasing the area in 1938, and planting the majority of its tall trees. Due to family circumstances, the leaders were late, but there was plenty to look at in the nursery and information centre before setting off. When all participants arrived, the appeal of the café was too strong, and we had morning tea before moving on. We then set off on the Forestry Trail, all 1.3km of it. It may be short but there was plenty to look at, and it took an hour and a half to complete. We meandered along through gullies and past tall Sydney blue gums, Blackbutts and an interesting mix of native pines, eucalypts and others, some native to the area, others from outside. We took time watching the king parrots and satin bower birds, and it was a quite (and quiet) beautiful ramble. We stopped for lunch near the information centre, where there are a number of facilities including the open hut; apparently set up to run the demonstrations and talks arranged by State Forest officers. Two of our group left before we tackled the Palm Gully trail. The highlights of this short track were the many very tall Bunya and Hoop Pines. This track had been closed until the day before our walk because of falling cones from the Bunya Pines. They are the size of footballs, and we saw many smashed at the base of the trees. On both tracks, many trees had identification plaques and knowledgeable OFF members, **David Crawford** and **Jan Douglas** were able to identify many of the rest. We finished our tour early, at about 2.30 pm. It was a pleasant and enjoyable day with two easy walks. [Report by Leaders **Graham Lalchere** and **Vicki Bolling**]

ASBESTOS AT BARANGAROO

A report commissioned by the NSW EDO, by the chemical engineer **Wayne Davies**, reported last year that it would take at least 30 years to get rid of a plume of toxic chemicals from the \$6 billion Barangaroo development.

BEING GREEN - THE FIRST 50 YEARS OF OFF

Alan Fairley wrote the story of this grass roots organization begun by a small band of local residents who loved the bush and trees giving their suburb its special character and concerned at the deterioration of their environment. It is the story in microcosm of what has happened all over Australia when growing suburbia encroaches on natural landscapes, destroying or degrading the bushland, with varying responses to these changes by the local communities and municipalities.

The chequered history of conflict and co-operation between residents and officialdom which emerges from these pages is the inevitable result of the different attitudes to the conflicting pressures for development and the need for environmental action to protect natural systems and a desirable urban lifestyle.

You can download it from off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/

ISSUES BEFORE HURSTVILLE COUNCIL

Council is providing very little clear information on its proceedings with two long standing matters of significant environmental impact. They are the Plan of Management for **Myles Dunphy Reserve**, and the reclassification of the former **Oatley Bowling Club** site.

BRIEFLY

Mulga Rd Books operated by Rotary of Hurstville. It has a wide range of quality second hand books. [2/89]

Oatley Flora and Fauna Soc website. You can see interesting items there. off.oatleypark.com/

The Environmental Defenders Office [EDO] is now an official Food Connect City Cousin. You are welcome to sign up to collect boxes of fresh, seasonal, fruit and vegetables locally grown by farmers near the city from EDO's office in Clarence St from 3 to 6pm Thursday.

FOR ANY WHO MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN, REMEMBER YOUR OFF MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2012



What rubbish, you are just so wrong!