



O.F.F. NEWS



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MYLES DUNPHY'S VISION

From the 1920s Oatley's own Myles Dunphy was concerned about conserving the Blue Mountains and began developing a conservation strategy. In 1932 he published his ambitious proposal for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park. It took a long time to be implemented; the Grose Valley Park was declared in 1959, the Blue Gum Forest added in 1963, the Warragamba Catchment Area in 1977, Wollemi in 1979, Yengo in 1988, and the Gardens of Stone in 1994. The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, over a million hectares of reserve, twice the area of Dunphy's 1932 plan, was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000. www.greaterbluemountainsdrive.com.au/. Sadly the battle goes on, with a number of areas again under threat, including the Gardens of Stone. www.bluemountains.org.au/

KOALAS ON THE RISE

Gunnedah has one of the largest populations of koalas in NSW, when numbers are declining dramatically elsewhere. The increase there appears to be related to the restoration of agriculturally degraded land with beneficial effects for both farmers and wildlife - including Australia's most iconic species. www.australiangeographic.com.au/

CITY AND COUNTRY SONGBIRDS

Melbourne University research into Silvereye songbirds (*Zosterops lateralis*), in many city and rural areas around Australia [including our Poulton Park] shows that these common little green birds sing higher and more slowly in cities to be heard above the urban din. They also sing in a different "dialect" to their country cousins, untroubled by the din. m.smh.com.au/environment/animals



OATLEY PARK FLOWERS IN JULY

The July list, (with the other months), can be found on our website. An example is this Eggs and Bacon Shrub (*Dillwynia retorta*). It is usually about one metre tall, the leaves are narrow and crowded, and the flowers yellow with red centres.



off.oatleypark.com/128

ANIMALS IN THE PARK

The Atlas of NSW Wildlife records 8 species of lizards, 6 species of snakes and 2 species of frogs for Oatley Park and its surrounds but many of these records are old and most are rarely if ever seen today. The Eastern Water Dragon is one species often sighted along the creek which flows into Dairy Creek, near the rack designed to collect rubbish washed down from the catchment

SYLVAN GROVE NATIVE GARDEN

This displays gardens of wonderful flora from various parts of Australia while focusing on plants endemic to our region. The site was established in 1964 and is now under the authority of the Bankstown City Council and the Georges

River Parkland Trust. It features the diverse flora of a typical Hawkesbury Sandstone outcrop. For further information go to: www.bankstown.nsw.gov.au/

DOGS WORKING FOR CONSERVATION

The Australian Ecosystems Foundation [AEFI] newsletter

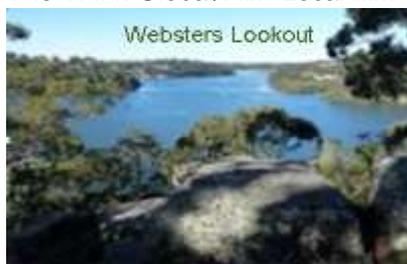


reports that they are preparing to use domestic dogs for wildlife conservation. Dogs have been used in Australian commercial industries for many years, for narcotics, explosives, and termite detection. Their talents and amazing noses are now being put to good use in helping to find threatened and declining

species. Traditional wildlife survey techniques have, become less reliable as wildlife populations decline and become more difficult to detect. However, dog's noses don't miss much' and they can be used to carry out non-invasive surveys, identifying significant "scats". A koala detection dog will soon be assisting in locating koala populations in the Greater Blue Mountains area.

ST GEORGE FILM COMPETITION 2012

The Think Global/Film Local film competition and festival is



about showing our local environment and what the local community is doing to protect it. Make a short film about 'What is important to you about your local environment?' and/or 'What are you doing to

protect the environment?' The competition is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in the St George area and prizes will be given to the best two films in various categories. Entries close 5pm Friday 26th October. [For more information go to the OFF website]

WASTE DISPOSAL AND TAXES

Newcastle is one of a number of Councils moving to reduce carbon tax and waste levy payments by upgrading its technology for waste disposal. It is diverting waste from landfill and harvesting methane to fuel two generators that produce electricity that is then fed into the grid. [SMH July 10]

HELP CUT PLASTIC BAGS

It was noted by several of our members while touring that England has made it illegal for shops to offer free plastic shopping bags. Large thick bags are available for a fee. When you head for the supermarket, collect essential items - your wallet, keys and two or three strong reusable bags. It is easy and responsible!

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH

This is a regular testing program by volunteers of the creek lines flowing through to the Georges River. The Group gathers on the Tuesday after each OFF meeting, making the next at 9am Tuesday 24th July. For more detail ring Sharyn (9579 1262) or Heather (0425 291 879).

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

July 23rd (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Julian Sheen** speaking on **Travels through Syria**, Conflict and History in Syria and Jordan.

July 28th (Sat) Field day: Wolli Creek: Two valleys walk –Meet at Bexley Nth railway station at 8am and walk to Tempe station along the valley to see where the Wolli Creek Preservation Society has been remediating degraded bushland. See many birds, and possibly climb Nanny Goat Hill, Turrella. Finish about 1pm; bring morning tea and lunch. **Leaders: Jay Cockayne & Sharon Pearson**

Aug 27th (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Rodger Robertson** speaking on the **Oatley Heritage Group**, its history, objectives, and current work. Some old photos will prompt some stories about Oatley. **Gary Schoer** who was to have been the speaker on **Ecology of Botswana** will appear on another occasion.

Sept 1st (Sat) Field day: Wonderful Wondabyne – **Leaders: Graham Fry & Liz Cameron**

Sept 24th (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **David Kirshner** speaking on **Komodo dragons**, the world's heaviest living lizards.

Sept 29th (Sat) Field Day: Collaroy to Manly walk **Leader: Julian Sheen**. [Changed from the Blue Mountains]

Oct 13 -14th Field Weekend with Menai Wildflower Group to Lithgow [see note below]

Oct 22nd (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with **Glenda Wardle** speaking on **The Simpson Desert**

Oct 27-28th Field Weekend at Capertee National Park. – **Leader: Deb Andrew**

SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE CLIMATE DEBATES

At the 25th June meeting John Davoren explored the socially polarising effect of the climate change debates waging off and on since the 1970s. While most scientific sources agree that the global climate has changed over the last hundred years, and rising greenhouse gas levels are most likely contributing, there are many [mostly non-scientists] who strongly disagree. He spoke of the confusing arguments, ranging, at one end to complete rejection of change, or of any from human cause, to the other calling for immediate closure of all coal-fed electric generators. One end rejects the evidence of science, and the other overlooks how limited are acceptable alternative power sources.

Social surveys show community attitudes shifting sharply away from environmental protection. Widespread concern about the cost of reducing carbon emissions, especially during the global financial crisis, is then confused by the many conflicting arguments about what is happening, and what (if anything) can and should be done. He quoted one view that environmentalism is an hysterical pseudo religion and addressing change like King Canute changing the tide. Unexpected variations in the joint contributors to climate - the galaxy, sun, earth, air and sea - could alter the nature of the change, but not necessarily for the better. John concluded that while we wait for the issues around climate to be further clarified, priority must be given to reducing damage to the planet, cutting back on pollution levels and wasteful consumption of scarce resources. To this he added the further development of appropriate technology.

FIELD TRIP: WHALE WATCHING 30th June

A beautiful winter's day – sunny, blue and little wind – greeted the 20 participants as they gathered at Wattamolla car park for the walk to Big Marley Beach. Although only 5 km each way, the eroded and wet track and the stops to gaze out to sea for passing whales meant that it was 12.30pm before the group reached its destination. And it was a great spot for lunch, on top of a tall dune overlooking freshwater Marley Lagoon, with sand stretching in the distance towards the sea. An additional reward was a pod of whales frolicking out at sea, flipping their fins up as if waving to us. Another small group was spotted on our way back. The coastal scenery, the whales and the companionship made it a very rewarding day. [Report by Alan Fairley, Trip Leader]



A PAIR OF OSPREY

Debbie Andrew reported in early July a pair of Osprey sitting on a eucalypt on the Lugarno shoreline. A tagged Osprey from Clarence River was spotted at Lugarno previously, but this is the first report of a pair.

HURSTVILLE COUNCIL'S TREE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Four OFF Committee members and three other community representatives met with Council officers for an hour on 19th June to discuss matters relating to trees within HCC.

The meeting opened with Council officers detailing the extensive tree plantings undertaken this year, 1200 mixed indigenous trees and shrubs on Hurstville Golf Course, 1000 trees and shrubs for Evatt Park, at the rear of Webbs Dam, and the Tree Give-away for 29th July when about 2000 plants will be given to ratepayers. They noted that the Tree Preservation Order is to be changed to make it more difficult to remove dead trees (often poisoned, then cut down). In the last 12 months, 5 penalties each of \$1500 have been levied against illegal tree removal.

The OFF members present raised a number of matters of concern to the Society: a) the need for openness and accountability in decisions about tree removal, b) the number of street tree removals in Oatley West, when many seem not to conform to Council criteria, c) the ease with which trees are removed from private property for development applications, d) the Council position on cash bonds for trees, e) the need to investigate apparent poisoning of large trees, f) the qualifications and contract procedures for consultant arborists, and g) the need to enforce the mandatory replacement of trees.

In sum, it was felt that the meeting was positive and a useful exercise.

BRIEFLY

National Wilderness Conference [the 6th] will be held in Sydney on 21-23rd Sept, co-presented by the NSW National Parks Association and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW www.colongwilderness.org.au/news/

National Tree Day Sun 29th July & **Schools Tree Day** Friday 27th provide an opportunity to do something positive for the environment and reconnect with nature. In 2011, thousands planted over 1 million native trees, shrubs and grasses. <http://treeday.planetark.org/about/>

Menai Wildflower Group Trip To Lithgow OFF members are welcome to join this MWG weekend trip in October to explore the Gardens of Stone. [More detail later. Contact Jason Cockayne or Sharon Pearson at: <mailto:jay.shaz@hotmail.com>]

