



O.F.F. NEWS



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WATTLE DAY – 1ST SEPTEMBER

Wattle was proclaimed as the national floral emblem in 1988, with the Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, the selected species. In 1992 the Commonwealth and States agreed to hold Australia's Wattle Day on September 1st, the first day of spring. The golden wattle is an evergreen, spreading shrub or small tree, and grows in the under storey of open forest, woodland and in open scrub in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT. When in flower, it displays the national colours, green and gold.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Keith Muir director of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness notes that, "The Council of Australian Governments has decided to cut state and federal environmental laws at the request of mining and development interests. The Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, should distance herself from COAGs' Taskforce on environmental deregulation. To protect the environment adequately, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1979 should be strengthened, not weakened. For a start, Ms Gillard should consider legislative improvements to make the protection of national parks a national matter. If these COAG deregulation initiatives are implemented, future Federal Environment ministers won't be able to intervene when cattle grazing threaten national parks, or if a proposed dam would inundate a wilderness. The best way for nationally significant heritage areas, like South West Tasmania, to be protected is through a Federal Environment Minister who retains a full legal tool kit to stop the damage".

www.colongwilderness.org.au/

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF [GBR]

The GBR stretches 2,300 kilometres along the Queensland coast, includes over 2,900 reefs, and around 940 islands and cays. The GBR Marine Park is 345,000 square kilometers in size, five times the size of Tasmania and larger than the United Kingdom and Ireland combined! It is home to more than 1,500 species of fish, 411 types of hard coral, one-third of the world's soft corals, 134 species of sharks and rays, 6 of the world's 7 species of threatened marine turtles, and more than 30 species of marine mammals, including the vulnerable dugong. Add to that stunning marine suite as many as 3,000 molluscs and thousands of different sponges, worms and crustaceans, 630 species of echinoderms (starfish and sea urchins) and 215 bird species, of which 22 are seabirds. The GBR is listed under all four natural World Heritage criteria for its outstanding universal value. However, poor fishing practices, pollution, coral bleaching, and increased sea temperatures are seriously threatening the reef's future. www.wwf.org.au/. A World Heritage monitoring mission has been invited to the GBR to examine the Reef's health. Its report will be published soon. www.gbrmpa.gov.au/

OATLEY PARK'S FLOWERS IN AUGUST

There is an August list that can be found on our website. An example for this month is this twiner with veined leaves and violet pea flowers, commonly scrambling over shrubs or up small trees.



<http://off.oatleypark.com>

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

The lack of access to modern energy services condemns billions of people in the developing world to absolute poverty. About one third have no lights in the evening, unhealthy cooking equipment, limited communication, inadequate education and health facilities and limited power for work and business. Electric power grids can serve large urban utilities, but extending them into rural areas is very expensive, and not very efficient. New energy sources are needed. www.gvepinternational.org/. Ceramic Fuel Cells, Carbon Sink Reforestation, Carnegie Wave Energy and Algae technology are examples of developing new energy sources. [Sun-Herald 22nd July]. Gas "fracking" also needs urgent clarification so that gas can replace coal in electricity generation, without threat to other resources.

ALMOST THERE ON TASMANIAN FORESTS



The Wilderness Society reports that the recent announcement by Tasmanian Forest Agreement signatories is a significant milestone in the agreement process, and Tasmania is now close to achieving a sustainable future, and permanent protection for some of the world's greatest forests. www.wilderness.org.au/

MINING, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENT NEEDS

Health studies point to a negative environmental impact of coal mining and burning. However it is an area that is still under-studied, especially in light of the level of health problems shared by people in mining communities. Mining and power generation companies [not surprisingly] have not undertaken detailed studies of their health impacts, and there is a need for public health authorities to do so. www.lithgowenvironment.org/. Now an Independent Review of a Coalpac proposal to expand its operations near Lithgow has concluded that its "environmental assessment project" was based on economic benefits, not on the social and environmental. www.bluemountains.org.au/

KOGARAH COUNCIL TREE PRESERVATION

Kogarah's program for preserving trees is based on the NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979. This specifies that without Council consent it is a crime to ring bark, cut down, top, lop, remove, injure or willfully destroy any tree exceeding 3.5 m in height or with a branch spread over 3 m; significant penalties apply. If you notice possible offenders please urgently contact Graeme Storer. <mailto:graeme.storer@kogarah.nsw.gov.au> or T 9330 9410.

HURSTVILLE WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Hurstville City Council is committed to providing economical and sustainable waste service to residents. The main priority is waste minimisation and diverting waste from landfill. An audit conducted in 2011 revealed 41% of garbage bins contained recyclable food organics. Council is offering a series of free composting and worm farming workshops to encourage recycling of food waste. [Advice from Laurie O'Connor, Hurstville Council's Director of Service Delivery.]

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 28th Aug. 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

Aug 27th (Mon) 7.45pm, the 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, we hope, on another occasion.

Sept 1st (Sat) Field day: Wondabyne Wildflowers - 6 hour return walk from Wondabyne Station to Pindar's Cave in Brisbane Waters NP. There should be lots of wildflowers and some views of the Hawkesbury River. Catch the 7.56 am train from Mortdale station and 8:45am Wyong train from Central. We aim to catch the 3.44 pm train from Wondabyne back to Central. Wear sturdy shoes, hat and sunscreen. Bring plenty of water, lunch and snacks. 12 km walk includes some steep stairs and rocky scrambles. **Leaders: Graham Fry & Liz Cameron; ph. 9580 6621; 0427 169 490**

Sept 24th (Mon) 7.45pm, the regular monthly, meeting with David Kirshner speaking on Komodo dragons, the planet's largest lizards, over 10 feet long and weighing over 300 pounds. David is a noted expert on these dragons.

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

Sept 30th (Sun) Mt Whaite excursion organised by the Whaite family to commemorate the life of Harry Whaite.

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

Oct 20th (Sat) Oatley Lions Village Festival

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

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

***Early notes for diaries! Nov 9th OFF Annual Dinner, and Dec 3rd OFF Picnic in Oatley Park**

TALK: JORDAN AND SYRIA

OFF's July meeting featured a guided tour of Jordan and Syria, an area racked by dispute and violence. The theme of the presentation, "History and Conflict" showed how the present conflict reflects an instability stretching far back in time.

Scenes of great natural beauty such as Petra and Wadi Rum were featured, together with places of significant cultural value: Damascus, the crusader fortress of Krac de Chevalier and the wondrous Roman oasis city of Palmyra were shown and discussed.

Some may ask: why do Jordan and Syria feature on an Oatley Flora and Fauna program? The answer is world ecology. Having an understanding of the interrelated patterns, threats and disturbances across the globe gives those concerned about the dynamics of world environment a better appreciation of what has been happening and what may be in store for the planet.

Act locally, understand globally is the responsibility of a good citizen. [Summary by the speaker, Julian Sheen, OFF President]

FIELD TRIP: THE TWO VALLEYS WALK

A most pleasant time was had with 17 walkers experiencing the Wollie Creek area of the Two valleys Trail from Bexley North railway station. Many birds were sighted including curious Yellow tail Black Cockatoos Our knowledge was greatly expanded with a sit down introduction of history, progressive bush land regeneration, and threats of freeway expansion by local icon Judy Finlayson of the Wollie Creek preservation Society. The walk was an easy ramble and was topped off with extensive views from Nanny Goat hill. We recommend those of you who have not had the opportunity of visiting the area, to try it and support the locals in keeping this area as a natural resource for future generations to explore. [Report by trip Leaders Jason Cockayne and Sharon Pearson]

MENAI WILDFLOWER GROUP

OFF members are welcome to join the MWG October field trip to Lithgow to the Gardens of Stone. Note also the 25th birthday. [RSVP by Aug 17th]

More from Jason Cockayne. <mailto:jay.shaz@hotmail.com>



THE ANNUAL O. F. F. DINNER

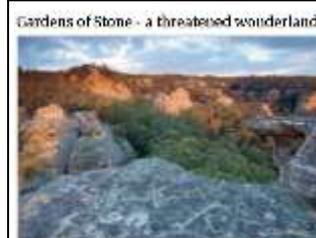
It will be held this year on 9th Nov, 7 pm at South-Hurstville RSL. The theme will be HATS. A hat of any sort decorated or not, will be required for entry. The price will be \$38 per person. Details of the menu will be in the next newsletter. We hope that you will be able to join us. Donations of things for raffle prizes will be gratefully accepted.

VALE JUNE UNDERWOOD

We were saddened to hear of the death of June Underwood who passed away after a long illness. June was O.F.F. Hon Secretary in 1983 and 1984, and committee member until 1986. She will be fondly remembered by OFF members and missed by her family and friends.

National Wilderness Conference [the sixth] 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/

Festival of Wildflowers at the **Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden** Sun 26 Aug, 9am - 4pm. This year's theme, Families in Nature; discover the great outdoors with the whole family.



The Greater Blue Mountains
World Heritage Experience

www.worldheritage.org.au

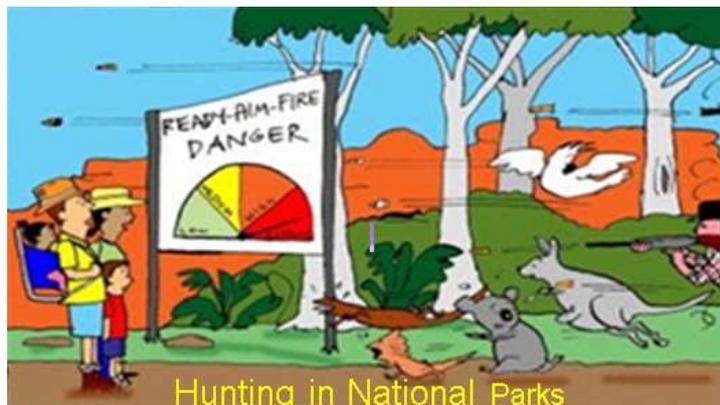
Blue Gum Forest 80th Anniversary Celebrations
Saturday/Sunday 1st/2nd September (See page 6)

Some of the many interesting items on the BMCS website at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/>

Mulga Road Books 89 Mulga Rd Oatley W, Rotary Club of Hurstville with a wide range of quality second hand books. <http://rotaricap.com/mrb/>.

Sydney Nature Carer? SNaC members receive regular e-bulletins every 2-3 weeks with information about environmental events. Joining is free and easy: simply <mailto:subscribe@yahoo.com>

Sustainable House Day Sat 9th Sept. The Australian Solar Energy Society is holding an Information Day at Alexandria Town hall from 10am auses.org.au/branch-news/



Hunting in National Parks