



VALE GRAHAM AUSTIN [6 Dec 1933 – 15 Nov 2013]

It is with great regret that we advise that after a long battle with cancer Graham passed away on Friday 15th. Graham and Janet joined OFF in 1975 and served the Society strenuously for 38 years. Their many involvements included *Clean up Australia Day*, and the planning processes for Moore Reserve and Port Botany.

They played a significant role in having the old Como Bridge rail line opened as a walkway in 1985. Graham led an OFF walk over the bridge in April - one of the best attended in this year's program.

Graham served on the OFF committee for eleven years, with four as Vice-president.

The funeral will be on Friday 22nd Nov at 3pm at South Chapel, Woronora Cemetery Sutherland. For further details, please see the notice in the SMH.



FIRE SURVIVAL HOUSE DESIGN

In recent bushfires, the media focused on the trauma and the number of houses destroyed. No mention was made of the solution of building houses able to withstand fire. After more than two centuries, we still reject the obvious: that we live in an extreme, fire-prone environment. We still act as though we live in Britain, where rain falls gently through the year and the land is green. Even our standard rainwater gutters are incorrectly sized. The solution requires a rethink of Australian house design, and a new approach to the layout and construction of settlements in the bush, avoiding isolated dispersed dwellings, and adopting an intelligent design for a fire survival house. Philip Drew: www.smh.com.au/

RISKS OF EXTREME EVENTS AND DISASTERS

Sydney Law School is hosting climate scientist Professor Chris Field from Stanford University to deliver a Distinguished Scholar address. The title of his address is *Climate Change: Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters*. Prof Field is the Co-Chair of the IPCC's Working Group II on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. He will be discussing the IPCC's fifth Assessment Report.

Thurs 5th Dec, 6-7pm followed by cocktail reception at [New Law School Building \(F10\), Eastern Ave Syd Uni](http://www.newlaw.edu.au/) Cost: Full Fee \$15, Students/Alumni/NGO \$10

WE NEED A BULLET TRAIN!

The Road to Sustainability - was an article in the October Hut News by Ross Coster. Writing principally on transport he argued that there is a strong case for an electrified fast rail passenger network joining the capital cities, and he cannot understand why people assume that it will not be built. A fast rail network would dramatically reduce the fuel used by planes, as most of their flights are between the capital cities. If there were a fast rail link between Sydney and Melbourne, there would be no need for Sydney to have a second airport. www.bluemountains.org.au/



High speed "bullet" train of Belgium (Microsoft)

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE ATTACK

Friends, supporters and observers of [EDO NSW](http://www.edo.nsw.gov.au/) may have noticed a new round of attacks from the NSW Minerals Council and *The Australian* against the Environmental Defenders Office. *The Australian* is obviously of the view that activists and lobby groups should not have any legal assistance when fighting for environmental restrictions on the coal industry. The attacks need to be taken with a grain of salt; but the headline **PUBLIC-FUNDED EDO CIRCUS MUST END** was extremely offensive. us5.campaign-archive1.com/

GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS

The SMH notes that the hundreds of scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] are more confident than ever about greenhouse gas emissions posing a problem, even though their precise long-term impact cannot be quantified precisely. Yet, Australia is preparing to become the first country to repeal laws requiring big business to pay to release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere – [according to most economists](http://www.smh.com.au/) - the most effective way, of reducing emissions. While US and China are looking to the long term and stepping up plans to cut emissions by 15 to 25%, Australia is not committed to more than a 5% cut by 2020.

COALPAC PROJECT ASSESSMENT

On 4th October, the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure [DP&I] issued a [media release](http://www.dp&i.nsw.gov.au/) stating -"The Department of Planning and Infrastructure has recommended that the Coalpac Consolidation Project [CCP] near Lithgow not be approved in its current form.

The Department's assessment report and recommendation can be found on the [DPI website](http://www.dp&i.nsw.gov.au/) and a map on the media release is on www.bluemountains.org.au/documents. BMCS notes that "before euphoria takes over", the DP&I rejected the CCP "in its present form" and "the independent Planning Assessment Commission" (PAC 2) will now make the final decision. <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/>

PLASTIC POISON

Tens of thousands of whales, birds, seals and turtles are killed every year from plastic bag litter in the marine environment as they often mistake plastic bags for food like jellyfish. As plastic bags can take up to 1000 years to break down, once an animal dies and decays after ingesting plastic, the plastic is then freed back into the marine environment to carry on killing other wildlife.

Australians are second only to Americans as the highest producers of waste, per person, in the world. Plastic has remained the most common category of rubbish picked up on *Clean Up Australia Day* over the last 20 years. An estimated 3.76 billion bags or 20,700 tonnes of plastic are disposed of in landfill sites yearly, and around 50 million bags enter the litter stream. Unless they are collected, they remain in the environment and accumulate at a staggering rate. www.cleanup.org.au/

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2014

Our annual trip to Smiggin Holes Chalet is from Saturday 8th to Saturday 15th February. [Costs per night are \$113 double, or twin share, \$93 single, and \$43 per child 6-18]. For information and booking, phone Robin Dickson ☎ 9580 5663.

COMING EVENTS

Nov 25th (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting and Social Supper with Ann Young speaking on Upland Swamps of the Woronora Plateau - Ecology & Mining Threats.

Due to regulations applying to the church hall, the Super Raffle will now be held at the 2014 Annual Dinner. Thank you to those who have already contributed. Your gifts will be safely stored in my garage until June/July 2014. Sue Howard

Dec 1st (Sun) Field day Royal National Park early morning bird watching- We meet at 7am at Fern Tree Flat, the last picnic area on Lady Carrington Drive just north of the locked gate with a large car park, shelter shed and toilets. We will amble down towards Jersey Springs, about 3km from the locked gate, and spend about 2 to 3 hours, then wander back to the picnic area by about 10:30-11:00am. Bring a thermos and something for morning tea at Fern Tree Flat, and binoculars will be helpful. It takes about 30-40 minutes to drive from Oatley to Fern Tree Flat. **Leader: Deb Andrew ☎ 9570 2695**

Dec 2nd (Mon) Christmas Picnic, our annual Christmas get-together in Oatley Park at the Steamroller from 5.30pm. **BYO** food, drinks, picnic chairs, table etc. Barbecues are available if there is no fire alert announced. For any queries, ring Liz Cameron ☎ 9580 6621.

Feb 3rd (Mon) 7.45pm Annual General Meeting, with the election of officers, a show of members' photos and supper. Members are encouraged to bring interesting photos; [22.5 is the recommended benchmark!]

Feb 24th (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting and Social Supper.

PLACES & PLANTS IN SUTHERLAND SHIRE

Our Oct 28th speaker Christine Guthrie, an Oatley local and former manager of Bushcare at Sutherland Shire Council, shared her intimate knowledge of Sutherland Shire's more interesting bushland with a strong emphasis on threatened vegetation and vulnerable habitat. Chris brought to our attention the salt marsh for migratory waders, pockets of littoral rainforest, remnants of turpentine/ironbark forest and an extremely rare beetle (the endangered *Menippus fugitivus*).

The beetles feed on the rainforest tree *Celtis paniculata* at Grays Point Reserve.

These were only some of the gems discussed, proving yet again how important it is to ensure protection for what little remnant bushland we have.

More on plants at: sutherland.austplants.com.au/



HASSANS WALLS RESERVE FIELD DAY: 2nd NOV
Eleven members, five friends and two guides met at the Lithgow Plaza car park. Our very informative guides, Suzanne Lollback and Helen Drewe, from Lithgow Community Nursery, and co-authors of [Hassans Walls Orchids](#) gave the group an initial briefing.

We then proceeded by car to Hassans Walls Lookout and more interesting information from our guides. Panoramic views of the Hartley Valley were seen from the lookout, and the guides pointed out a wide range of flora including a diverse island remnant.

Morning tea was followed by a short drive to [Braceys Lookout](#). On the way, a number of native orchids were sighted. Lunch was taken at the lookout where we enjoyed views of Lithgow. After lunch, we took another short drive near the lookout and noted an endangered purple copper butterfly. We parked on the access road to the reserve for a comprehensive study of the plants growing along the bank.

The tour finished at 3pm with a return to the car park – a most satisfying day!

Nine members stayed overnight and dined at the Secret Creek Restaurant. On Sunday, some visited the Blackheath Rhododendron Gardens. [Report by John Watters: field day leader]



OFF COMMITTEE MEMBERS - 2014

There are several vacancies in the present Committee, with provision for 15 elected members. These lively meetings occur monthly, usually a week after the monthly meeting. They attend to correspondence, finance, policies, and activities. If the idea of becoming a committee member appeals to you, please contact Liz Cameron ☎ 9580 6621.

LEAD A FIELD DAY IN 2014

We are looking for walk leaders. If there is a favourite bushland or heritage walk of up to 10km that you are prepared to lead for an O.F.F. outing, please contact our Field Officer, Alison Gilroy, ☎ 9580 5557.

OFF MEMBERSHIP

This month all members will receive OFF News by mail enclosing the fee renewal notice. New members are most welcome. Membership fees for 2014 can be paid by way of money order, cheque or bank transfer. [See the renewal notice.]

SPEAKERS FOR 2014

Our Program Officer is looking for interesting speakers for our monthly meetings next year on subjects related to flora and fauna. Please contact Matt ☎ 9570 8271.

FOR NOTING

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Nov 26th. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (☎0425 291 879).

Mulga Road Books 89 Mulga Rd Oatley W is operated by Rotary Hurstville and has a wide range of quality second hand books. ☐ <http://rotarcap.com/mrb/>

Oatley Heritage & Historical Society: The next meeting is on Friday, 29th Nov at 10.30 at Oatley RSL with Julian Sheen and Rodger Robertson speaking about Oatley in 1913, "One Hundred Years Ago" <http://www.oatleyheritagegroup.com/>

