



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 6/14

June/July

VAL BOYAN

Sadly we note Valerie Joyce Boyan died on 11th June. Val was a very loyal and active member of OFF for 45 years, served on the committee for a record 33, was Field Officer for 12 and president in 1989-90. Val is remembered by many for her craft skills, and her untiring work raising money for the President's Fund. The funeral will be at 2.30pm Wednesday 18th June at West Chapel, Woronora Crematorium Sutherland. OFF members are welcome to attend.

GOVERNMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Colong Foundation is concerned with environmental policies of the Federal Government. It noted decisions to:

a) abolish the Climate Commission, b) appoint a climate change sceptic to head the renewable energy review, c) revoke the World Heritage listing for 74,000ha of Tasmanian forests, d) overturn a ban on cattle grazing in Victoria's Alpine National Park, e) scrap the COAG Standing Council on Environment and Water, and f) approve the world's largest coal port in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. www.colongwilderness.org.au/bulletin_254



SIGNIFICANCE FOR WORLD HERITAGE

[BMCS Hut News](#) notes that revoking the World Heritage listing of parts of the Tasmanian Forests is a crucial moment for World Heritage Areas globally. If the Australian Government is successful in removing the listing to allow for industrial exploitation, it sets a chilling international precedent.

Tasmania has the tallest flowering trees on Earth. In 2013, after decades of community campaigning, large tracts of forest were added to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Now, less than a year later, they are in danger of being destroyed by logging and firebombing. www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/ & www.abc.net.au/news

Peter Hitchcock, a consultant who advised on last year's world heritage extension, described the government's application as "overly brief, inaccurate and quite misleading". He said the fundamental claim in the government's application that the areas to be removed had been significantly degraded by logging "seriously misrepresents the proposed de-listings because these elements are only a minor part [of the area proposed]".

GOLD MINES

With the current fierce debate about coal mining and its polluting problems, it is noteworthy that there are similar problems with gold mines. As an example, the famous Mount Morgan gold-copper mine beginning in 1882 generated extraordinary wealth, but has left Queensland and Australia with a hideous polluting legacy.

Wealth continued to flow from the mine over the years, and its pollution problems were consistently ignored. In 1927, after a major fire, the company went into liquidation, but in 1933, it became an open cut mine remaining so until 1982.

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In 1990, the Queensland Government took over ownership and responsibility for the site – by then notorious for its massive environmental pollution.

Recently some works have been undertaken to try to reduce the pollution, including seepage interception from leaking waste rock dumps, and a water treatment plant for the ten billion litres of highly acidic water accumulating in the open cut. The works have helped to reduce the pollution partially, but the burden remains intense, and there is a long way to go to restore the area to normal health, costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

mines.industry.qld.gov.au/safety-and-health/ & <http://www.abc.net.au/>

MIGRATORY SHOREBIRDS

NSW Environment and Heritage has an online video on the migratory shorebirds in Botany Bay. These birds were the focus of the OFF outing in March led by Debbie Andrew and reported in our April edition. See the video at

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp.

Shorebird Migration will be a theme of the [Australasian Bird Fair](#) on 25-26th Oct. at Newington Armory, Jamison St Sydney Olympic Park.

RAIN FORESTS

Covering less than 2% of the Earth's total surface area, the world's rainforests are home to 50% of all plants and animals. Rainforests can be found on every continent, except Antarctica. They are threatened by unsustainable agricultural and logging practices, the constant demand for timber, and clear agriculture land.

Sustainable logging and harvesting, rather than clear-



cutting are among the strategies key to halting rain forest loss. If managed properly, the rainforest can provide the world's need for these natural resources on a perpetual basis. Originally, there was

15.5 million km² of tropical rainforest worldwide, but only 6 million remain. If current deforestation rates continue, these critical habitats could disappear from the planet within the next hundred years. <http://www.nature.org/>

MAULES CREEK MINING

The Maules Creek Community Council [MCCC] notes that the Leard State Forest and surrounding farmlands, near Narrabri, are threatened by proposals for three new or expanded open-cut coalmines. Together they will form a mega mine-complex that will clear at least 5,000ha of land and produce 23 million tonnes of coal each year. It is estimated that the mines will collectively result in 18,000 tonnes of dust landing on adjoining farmland. The mines represent an enormous threat to the critically endangered forest, the health of the local community, and the future of our climate. The forest is home to the Koala and the Masked Owl and the farmland of Maules Ck to the north is productive grazing country on the rich, deep soils of the northern Liverpool Plains. Conservation and farming have reached a kind of equilibrium here that will be destroyed by open-cut coal mining. Our quiet rural community will be transformed into a gigantic industrial zone.

<http://www.maulescreek.org/>

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 23rd (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with **Nell Schofield** speaking on *Our Land Our Water Our Future*, and introducing two movies on the effects of coal mining and coal seam gas extraction. [See note below*]

June 28th (Sat) Field day, Hoddle Track to Foxground viewpoint. Meet 10 am at Saddleback Mountain Lookout, Hoddles Rd Kiama. Take 1st exit left into Kiama after Bombo station, Gipps St, go through Kiama, over railway, and right at High School onto Saddleback Mountain Road. Turn left onto Hoddles Rd and go to the end. Approx 1½ hrs driving from Oatley and 4 hrs walking. After views from the lookouts, we follow the steep and at times slippery fire trail to a rainforest track along the lower edge of the Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, and finish rising through heath on a bush track to a splendid view of Foxground. Bring solid shoes, walking poles (opt), morning tea, lunch, and water. **Leader: Graham Lalchere** - ☎9580 3107 📞 0430 968 260

July 28th (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with **Rodger Robertson** speaking on *Travelling the Silk Road*

Aug 2nd (Sat) Field day to Blue Track (near ANSTO, Lucas Heights). **Leader J Cockayne** ☎ 9570 8559

Aug 25th (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting - with **Leroy Gonsalves** speaking on Microbats taking on mosquitoes

Aug 30th (Sat) Field day to Sphinx & Bobbin Head wildflower stroll, **Leader: Alan Fairley** ☎ - 9570 8332

Sept 22nd (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting with **Chris Lloyd** speaking on *The Changing Ecology of the Georges River & Powerful Owls* and **Oct 9-11th Weekend at Capertee National Park.** **Leader: Debbie Andrew** ☎ 9570

RED ROCKS BLOOMING

At our May 26th meeting, Gary Schoer delivered yet another tantalising presentation entitled *Red Rocks Blooming - Wildflowers in the Pilbara and Beyond*. Our sense of the colours was enhanced when, half way through the slide show, our technical officer corrected a projector cable malfunction, and we were presented with beautiful shades of red (instead of the vibrant blue until then).

Gary took us on a virtual tour from the dinosaur region of [Riversleigh](#) in northwest Queensland, and via the Kimberleys to the majestic [Pilbara region](#) of WA and beyond. His three month tour followed the rains that stimulated a flush of wildflowers best seen travelling from north to south.

Gary is an accomplished photographer with an eye for detail. He captured the unique beauty of the desert landscape resplendent with blue-sky, red mountains, and straw-coloured spinifex grass interspersed with Sturts desert pea, Ptilotus, Solanums, and many more WA wonders.

Wildlife encountered on the trip were dugongs in Shark Bay, humpback whales off Coral Bay, crocodiles and [perentie](#), and a myriad of birds ranging from flocks of budgerigars to bustards and finches.

Gary met up with his "skin brother" (a distant Aboriginal relative) along the trail and met a female aboriginal artist who had decorated roofs on Paris museums.

I think many in the audience of 40 people left the meeting with a desire to place the Pilbara and Beyond on their "to do list." [Notes by Program Officer Matt Alison]

OUR JUNE 23rd MEETING*

The program change has Nell Schofield, from [Lock the Gate Alliance](#) and [OLOWOF](#) as our speaker.

Coalitions of community groups across Australia are uniting to protect our common heritage - land, water, and future - from reckless coal and gas expansions.

CELEBRATORY DINNER

A happy evening was had by those who attended the dinner at [Gardens on Forest](#) on Friday 13th June. The participants declared the evening a great success. The meal was most enjoyable, the setting charming and relaxed, with the staff most attentive. The surprise musical interlude with vocals from Trevor Revis was enjoyed by all.

Thanks to all who donated prizes. The raffle raised \$189 for the President's Fund. [Note by Sue Howard, the event organiser]

OUR HYPERLINKS

OFF News in its printed form has just two pages, but the web version has many more. All the underlined sections (and most of the pictures) are hyperlinked. These link directly to the Internet and expand on the precise matter being discussed. When you open the website version on your computer, try clicking the mouse on [an underlined spot](#) or on a [picture](#) to see what happens. We hope that this may encourage print recipients to turn to the web version, and coincidentally [help save postage and paper!](#)

KURNELL WALK - 31st MAY

Fourteen (including three new members) turned up to see migrating humpback whales and enjoy the coastal heathland. The observation platform at Cape Solander was still under renovation although the official whale-watching season commenced that weekend.

By the start of our walk, the forecast showers had come and gone, leaving in their wake sparkling shrubs and spiders' webs. We saw some whales but as it was the start of the season, it is not surprising there were fewer than on some



previous OFF whale-watching walks. Fortunately, much of the lovely coastal heath was in flower (the warm weather convincing plants that spring has sprung!) with particularly good displays of banksias (3 species), darwinias, peas, and wattles. Such an abundance of flowers

naturally attracted birds, particularly New Holland Honeyeaters that were everywhere. Some less common species seen were a Peregrine Falcon and a Swamp Harrier, and a flock of about 20 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos feasting on banksia fruits.

The group enjoyed the day and marvelled how lucky we are to have such delightful parks so close to the city; we certainly are the lucky country. [Report by Graham Fry, walk leader]

FOR NOTING

Australasian Bird Fair will be the first large-scale bird and wildlife event of its kind. Oct 25-6 at Sydney Olympic Park. www.birdfair.com.au/australasian-bird-fair-venue/

International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN] is holding the World Parks Congress at Sydney Olympic Park in Nov. worldparkscongress.org/news/

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, 9am on Tues June 24th Sharyn ☎95791262, Heather 📞 0425291 879. [See Dairy Creek Rubbish audit](#)

National Parks Association [SSB] newsletter has very interesting information <http://tinyurl.com/m3x7bsb>

Rockdale Opera Company is operating again after 3 years. >[Pirates of Penzance](#) late June ☎1300306776

