



AUSTRALIAN FOSSILS

A fossil is the impression of a living organism that has been preserved. Fossils are preserved in substances such as sediments, coal, tar, oil, amber, or frozen in ice. There are three main types of fossils: body, trace, and chemical. As well as body fossils, which are actual skeletal remains, there are impressions of soft animals, plants, and footprints that have been left as mud hardened. Chemical fossils are the organic compounds and microscopic organisms that have left their mark in the rocks. Large numbers of fossils indicate that an enormous number of plants and animals have lived on Earth since life evolved more than 3,500 million years ago. Because of its relative isolation over millennia, Australia has a [unique fossil record](#), dating back some 3.2 billion years, close to when the Earth was stabilising its formation. Since separation of the former continent [Gondwana](#), an almost continuous record of the distant past is present in Australia today. This includes Pleistocene era Aboriginal body fossils, many of which were removed and sent overseas. The repatriation of many of these human remains is now being negotiated.

www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Renewable energy comes from natural processes that are constantly replenished. It comes from the sun, from heat generated deep within the earth; from heat from solar, wind, ocean, hydropower, [biomass](#), geothermal resources, as well as [biofuels](#) and hydrogen from renewable resources. Resources with significant opportunities for energy efficiency are widespread, while non-renewable sources are concentrated in a limited number of countries. Rapid deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency, and better use of energy sources, would increase in energy security and economic benefits, reduce environmental pollution and improve public health. Renewable energy sources can supply humanity with energy for another billion years. <http://www.geni.org/globalenergy/>

SWIFTIES FACING EXTINCTION

The Wilderness Soc. notes government documents recently released reveal the [Swift Parrot](#) (*Lathamus discolor*) is bound for extinction. "Swifties" visit backyards from Melbourne to Brisbane, but return to Tassie to nest in the old trees of the forests in the South and East Coast. They are [threatened](#) largely by deforestation, and sugar gliders.



<https://www.wilderness.org.au/> & <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/Aug.05>

LOCAL RAIL PLANS?

A long-term *Strategic Plan for Rail* was prepared in June 2001 by Ron Christie, then NSW Co-ordinator-General of Rail. The report included recommendations for doubling the Illawarra line between Mortdale and Hurstville, and an extension of an extra track to Oatley so that additional fast trains from the South Coast and Cronulla could overtake "all stops" services from Sutherland. With all peak trains boosted to eight carriages, the rail infrastructure would then have been sufficient to meet the estimated ten-year increase in demand on the South Coast line.

14 years later, the situation seems largely unchanged, with express travel times not much shorter, with the "all stops" trains often slowing them down! <http://103.4.17.5/christie/>

FIRST DAY OF SPRING

A combined Hurstville Council and OFF event was held in Oatley Park on 1st Sept to celebrate the first day of Spring, Wattle Day and OFF's 60th year. The weather was warm and sunny, and 24 participants appreciated the park and its wildflowers. Alan Fairley led the walk around the Headland Track. <http://off.oatleypark.com>

NO TO KOALAS?

[Echonetdaily](#) [28/08/15] notes the state government is unmoved by the plight of the north coast's last intact koala colony, and still intends to plough through it to build the new Pacific Highway south of Ballina.

ECONOMY versus ENVIRONMENT

This debate is heating up with environmentalists described as saboteurs and vigilantes, and the government pledging never to put the environment ahead of the economy. It has announced that it will attempt to weaken national environment laws to make it easier for big business to have development proposals approved, and to make it [impossible](#) for the community to react to failure to enforce the law.

As Ross Gittins [\[SMH 19/08\]](#) pointed out, the current trend is to treat the economy and the environment as if they were in separate boxes, ignoring their major vital interactions.

With so much economic activity abusing the natural environment, damaging our soil, rivers, and aquifers, and destroying much habitat and many species, the environment is suffering badly.

As Ross put it, "the loss of growth and jobs [from environmental protection] might be greater than we are being told, but the longer we leave it, the higher those losses will be." <http://www.smh.com.au/>

THE FUTURE FOR COAL

The Australia Institute [\[TAI\]](#) argues that there is [no room for more coalmines](#) in a world economy "tackling" climate change. The mining industries are constantly seeking more areas to mine, arguing that new projects will boost the economy. However, [studies](#) indicate that mining contributes much less to the economy than is claimed, and received state government subsidies of \$17.6 billion over a six-year period. Thousands of jobs have been lost from mines due to the low coal price, and the world moving away from coal towards renewables. <http://www.tai.org.au/content/coal>

OATLEY LIONS FESTIVAL - 17th OCTOBER

On the 3rd Saturday in October, the streets and parks of Oatley are transformed into a sea of stalls, entertainment, rides, and music. For over 30 years, this Village Festival has been one of the most popular community attractions in the St George area. Last year over 16,000 attended, and \$39,000 was raised in support of local projects. You are encouraged to walk, cycle, use public transport, or hop on the free Festival Courtesy Bus. On the day, the FCB bus driver may be contacted on 0407 296 802 to arrange pick-ups. For more information, see <http://www.oatleylions.org.au/> & www.oatleylions.org.au/getting-there &



<http://www.oatleylions.org.au/donations>

OFF runs a stall each year, and is looking for volunteers for the day, or part thereof. Please contact Liz ☎95806621 closer to the time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept 28th (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with Jennifer Whaite speaking on "Travels through Ethiopia"

Oct 26th (Mon) Meeting 7.45pm with [Dr Ian Wright](#) speaking on "Coal mining & water pollution in the Sydney Basin"

Oct 31st (Sat) Field day Rose Bay to Watsons Bay - explore the southern side of Sydney Harbour. Leader Julian Sheen

Nov 20th (Fri)* Field day Brooklyn [The Riverboat Postman cruise](#) up the Hawkesbury River was originally scheduled for Sat 28th Nov*, but, the cruises are no longer on weekends, hence the *change of date. The cruise includes morning tea and lunch and the cost is \$50 pp (adult) or \$44 pp (senior). Booking and payment will be at the next meeting. Leader: Graham Fry

Nov 23rd (Mon) Meeting & Social Supper 7.45pm with [Dr Arthur White](#) speaking on "Ghost Bats & Cane Toads"

Dec 7th (Mon) Christmas Picnic / BBQ

AUG 24TH TALK ON MICROBATS AND MOSQUITOES

The meeting was shaping up to be an interesting presentation by [Dr Leroy Gonsalves](#) on microbat/mosquito relationships. Sadly, Leroy was not well, and unable to attend, but he did furnish us with the entire pre-recorded presentation (photos and commentary).

Unfortunately, the computer sound system did not respond well. The evening chair, Graham Fry, held the microphone to the laptop in the hope of amplifying the sound. He was doing fairly well, but halfway through a thunderstorm struck and drowned out the sound completely.

Because of the continuing technological shortcomings, Graham and others may be more inclined to favour OFF moving to the "state-of-the-art" Oatley RSL next year!

The audience of 43 had braved the elements to attend and we apologise for the shortcomings. However, Leroy has given us permission to upload his material onto our website, and we can now view it at <http://off.oatleypark.com/?cat=7>.

The principal point of the presentation was that scientific [research](#) points to saltmarsh mosquitoes as a valuable food source for the microbats feeding in open saltmarsh locations; and that human control of mosses will have a negative effect on microbats. There are now recommendations on the management of mosquito species to protect local wildlife feeding on them. These stipulations must be put in place to maintain healthy populations of microbats. [Report by Matt Allison Program & Publicity Officer]

FIELD DAY: CAMDEN PARK HOUSE AND GARDEN

On Sept 19th, eight OFF members travelled in two cars to Camden Park,

generously opened to the public once a year by descendants of the original Macarthurs who still live there. An army of volunteers welcomed visitors and brought the property to life with entertaining facts about the



rambling building, garden, and the Macarthur dynasty. Showers threatened but the weather remained fine so visitors could stroll through the extensive and well-labelled gardens. A camellia and a bougainvillea in flower are amongst the oldest individuals in Australia and the wisteria looked just like this photo. Towering trees included ironbarks, bottle trees, kurrajongs, araucarias and kauris, and deciduous elms and oaks. The trees, dense shrubberies, and thickets of bamboo and olive were alive with birds; over 80 species have been recorded in the grounds.

Visitors were well sustained with delicious Devonshire teas, other food stalls, and there was a large garden stall, reflecting the active propagation program at Camden Park.

Camden Park was originally a large sheep station established by John Macarthur, near present day Camden. The house was designed by [John Verge](#) and built between 1832 and 1835. Today, part of the original estate contains the [Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute](#).

The remnants of Camden Park Estate are of social, historic, scientific and aesthetic significance to New South Wales and Australia and are listed on the [Register of the National Estate](#) and on State and local heritage registers

FOR NOTING

Doryanthes – Details about this Southern Sydney Journal of Art, Heritage and Natural History at: doryanthes.info/

Membership renewal for 2016 can be by direct bank transfer – [more info when the renewal notice is sent out]. New members are welcome. Click here for [details](#).

Mulga Road Books 89 Mulga Rd Oatley W is operated by Rotary Hurstville and has a wide range of quality second hand books. ■ <http://www.weekendnotes.mulga-road-bookshop/>

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Sept 29th [Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎0425 291 879].

Oatley Heritage & Historical Soc. [OHHS] Next meeting 30th Oct 10.15 at Oatley library, coffee and chat. <http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/>

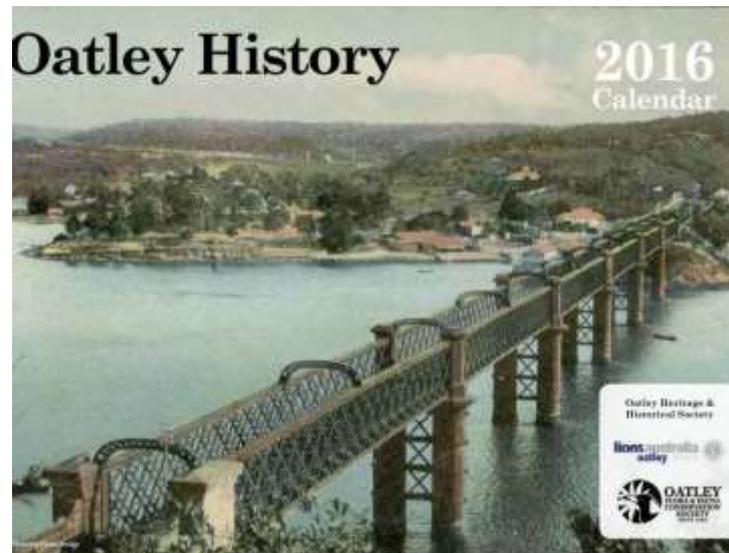
Speakers: Our Program Officer is looking for interesting speakers on subjects related to flora and fauna for our meetings next year. Please contact Matt ☎9570 8271.

Walks: Our Field Officer is looking for people to lead interesting walks next year. Contact Graham ☎9580 6621

SYDNEY WATER SYSTEM

Sydney Water is proposing new regulations to improve management of the [wastewater system](#) in [wet weather](#). It is seeking input from customers, councils, community, environmental groups, and scientists. [See more on the [video series](#)].

You can sign up to [Sydney Water Talk](#) to join the online discussion. Some OFF members have attended workshops, and made comments for submission to the Environment Protection Authority in December. [See much more on our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>]



CALENDAR AVAILABLE AT LIONS FESTIVAL OFF OR OHHS STALLS FOR \$10.