



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

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THE CLIMATE AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

The [Guardian Australia](#) reports that a nationwide poll in early March found nearly half of those surveyed considered that policies on climate change, renewable energy and the [Great Barrier Reef](#) will influence the way they vote at the next federal election.

In the last few months the government has ignored climate change, undermining the jobs of [climate scientists at the CSIRO](#) and throwing its support behind polluting projects like the [Adani coalmine](#).

"Any politician who wants to be taken seriously on climate change and Great Barrier Reef protection cannot support Adani's proposal to dig the biggest coalmine in Australia's history," said Kelly O'Shanassy, of the [Australian Conservation Foundation](#). See also <http://www.smh.com.au/lack-leadership-on-GBR>

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT

The [Bight](#) is a place of unparalleled wilderness and natural beauty on the coastline of South and Western Australia. Its iconic curve has the longest line of sea cliffs in the world, stretching hundreds of kilometres and reaching up to 60 metres high. Yet it is what lives in the deep waters below that is truly astounding. The Bight is home to an amazing array of marine life, including many threatened and endangered species: great white sharks, humpback, blue and southern right whales, southern bluefin tuna, Australian sea lions, white-bellied sea eagle and albatross. These waters are an important marine nursery for the Australian sea lion colonies to raise pups and southern right whales to nurture their calves.

This unique and pristine marine environment is under threat, with [BP's](#) plans to turn it into an oil field – and the potential for a catastrophic oil spill. BP has a shocking environmental track record; its oil blowout in the Gulf of Mexico was [arguably] worst in history. [<https://www.wilderness.org.au/great-australian-bight>] & [Petition against the proposal](#)]

TRAIN VERSUS 2ND AIRPORT

In 1998 the [World Heritage Bureau](#) thought the Blue Mountains listing should be deferred because of the proposed Badgerys Creek airport. The Heritage listing occurred only after the first airport proposal was rejected. Now the Blue Mountains community is opposing the second and current proposal as it threatens the area in so many ways, including its World Heritage status.

[BMCS](#) notes that [High Speed Rail](#) can transport passengers between Sydney and Melbourne or Sydney and Brisbane faster than by plane. It takes much more than the "one-hour flight" to Melbourne after reaching the airport. The total time includes arriving an hour or more before your flight, boarding the plane, taking off, the hour in the air, landing, reaching the terminal, collecting luggage, and then the considerable time into the City.

On the train it would be central city to central city, from Sydney to Melbourne in 2 hours 45 minutes, to Canberra in 64 minutes, and to Newcastle in 50 minutes

[Residents Against Western Sydney Airport \(RAWSA\)](#) is promoting the idea of building the Sydney to Newcastle section first, as a kick-start for the whole project, and with access to Williamtown Airport. [See more at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/>]



ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS WITH MINING

Russell Vale Colliery is an existing [but currently inactive] coal mine under the Woronora Plateau in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment Area. The facilities are on the slopes of the Illawarra Escarpment west of the Princes Highway, and close to Russell Vale and Corrimal.

In operation since the 1880s using various underground methods to mine different coal seams, subsidence and cracking have been observed, but the precise extent of these and other environmental consequences is largely unknown. The implication of these uncertainties for water quality and quantity is therefore a major issue.

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] in its Review of a proposed expansion concluded that the claimed social and economic benefits are likely outweighed by the magnitude of impacts on the environment.

OFF submitted to the Review that the projected figures for production and income from the proposed expansion have been highly inflated, cannot be relied upon to demonstrate benefits, and PAC cannot afford to approve a project with such a questionable viability putting at risk a significant source of drinking water for the people of NSW. [Read more at:

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/>]

OIL AND HUMANS

An ABC Science documentary focussed on the impact Oil has on human civilization; and the consequences of dwindling oil supplies. Oil is a miracle fluid that flows from the ground under its own pressure, and is turned into fuel, fertiliser, and feedstock for just about every industrial process imaginable. Nearly seven billion people have come to depend on it, and even a slight reduction in supply has consequences around the globe.

It argued that our profligate use of this 'cheap' energy source is changing the Earth's climate in ways that are likely to end in tragedy. <http://www.abc.net.au/science/crude/>]

THE CORDEAUX DAM

The Dam was built in 1926 and is one of the four drinking water dams of the Upper Nepean system sitting atop the Woronora Plateau south of Sydney. While the Warragamba is the primary source of water for Sydney, the four are in a much wetter zone closer to the coast, and help to drought proof the city. The [SCA](#) expects that by 2030 up to 90% of the 4 could have longwall coal mines beneath them, with consequential subsidence and water losses.

If you wish, **join us on May 1st** for a symbolic photograph to protest against the mining, which we will send onto local MP's and the Premier. <http://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/visit/cordeaux-dam>

CELEBRATING OFF DINNER 7PM THURS 19TH MAY

The dinner will be at the Macquarie Function Centre Mortdale RSL Cost \$33 pp. Final payment by MONDAY 9th MAY. A two course meal, bread rolls, celebration cake, tea/coffee. Buy your drinks at the bar. Ample parking in club car park. Check menu choices on the OFF website. Choices needed at [April meeting](#), including any special dietary requirements - vegetarian, vegan, and gluten free or contact me at my phone before MONDAY 2nd MAY when the menu has to be finalised.

Lucky table prizes and raffle. Donations for the raffle will be greatly appreciated. [Contact Sue Howard ☎9579 1718]

Meetings of the Society held at the [Oatley RSL & Community Club](#), 23 Letitia Oatley from 7.30 to 9.30pm, usually on the fourth Monday. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

UPCOMING EVENTS[See OFF's whole year's program at: off.oatleypark.com/program-Final.pdf]

Aril 18th (Mon) regular meeting at 7.30pm with Tony Wales speaking on Georges River Keeper Working with Aboriginal Bush Carers and the Green Army.

May 1st (Sun) Field Day Picnic at Cordeaux Dam. Meet at the dam at 11:30 for a picnic and subtle mining protest. The picnic area is off the Picton-Wilton Rd, accessible from the F6 exit near Wollongong or the M5 exit to Picton. 75 mins travelling time. Bring your food. There is no public transport but a lift is possible. Those without transport can contact Graham Fry or Elizabeth Cameron at April meeting or ☎9580 6621. **Leader Sharyn Cullis** [and note the Cordeaux Dam box above #]

May 7th (Sat) OFF Planning Workshop 2-4pm at Oatley RSL and Community Club. [See our President's note below]

May 19th (Thurs) Celebrating OFF Dinner at Mortdale RSL. For details see the box above. **

May 23rd (Mon) regular meeting at 7.30pm with Deb Andrew speaking on Regent Honeyeaters and other woodland birds.

May 29th (Sun) Field day Curra Moors - walk across heathlands to the coast, whale sightings a possibility. Leader: Graham Fry

THERE IS MORE TO THE FLEA THAN ITS BITE

On March 21st our speaker was Andrea Lawrence, a PhD student at Sydney University, studying medical and veterinary entomology. Andrea is an expert on fleas and other parasitic insects, and is interested in the transmission of diseases from animals to humans (zoonosis) with the tiny flea as vector [carrier]. Her research involves delving into museum specimens to study their morphology, genetic testing and the detection and analysis of pathogens found in fleas.

The most common flea encountered in Australia is the cat flea, (*Ctenocephalides felis*) a truly cosmopolitan flea with a world-wide distribution. Although very common, these fleas are but a tiny fraction of the total flea diversity in Australia where we host a huge variety of native fleas found nowhere else on earth. Despite their common name, cat fleas are found on both cats and dogs. Notwithstanding the economic impact of flea control treatments on domestic animals, the cat flea also carries zoonotic pathogens such as Bartonella and Rickettsia. There may be many cases of underdiagnosed febrile illnesses caused by flea-borne pathogens that fly under the radar due to the presentation of generic fever and flu-like symptoms that rarely warrant further pathological investigation. Of course, the most famous and historically significant pathogen spread by fleas is the plague bacteria, *Yersinia pestis*. Plague is certainly not a thing of the past with recent outbreaks in Madagascar and up to 17 cases reported from North America each year. Although cat fleas aren't considered a primary vector, recent studies in Uganda have suggested that these fleas may play a role in local transmission risk.

Andrea's youthful exuberance and dedication to her scientific endeavours made for a very interesting evening and was a salient reminder that the quiet work of the scientist is paramount for the possibility of a healthier future across the globe. [Report by Matt Allison]

A WALK AROUND OATLEY: 3RD APRIL

We (about 6 but grew to 9) commenced our walk in the *Povel's Café and Deli* with its large photos on the wall. We discussed James Oatley's Sydney history before reading the words on the plaque opposite the Clock. Walking through the Memorial Park we remembered the splendid Kogarah Council in the 1920's that made it a Park, before walking down through the old railway cutting between the Community Hall and Guide Hall. Janet Austin told us about the plaque commemorating the old Como rail bridge being maintained for the pedestrian and cycle way it is today.

The Como Bridge and Neverfail Bay followed and then the long walk to the Charles Street lookout, to the Oatley Pleasure gardens where David Koffel stated he was seeing things he had never known in his 43 years in Oatley!

Then back to St Pauls Church, the new plaque at the old War Memorial site and along Letitia St. to the Radio Theatre and School of Arts.

It took nearly 3 hours and the walk revealed many new discoveries or details of our suburb. Apart from places mentioned we looked at several other features along the way. Many thanks to the enthusiastic group and their additional knowledge that added to our enjoyment of the morning walk.

[Report by Leader: Rodger Robertson] [Click here for details and photos](#)

PLANNING WORKSHOP 7TH MAY 2-4 PM

The workshop will be held at Oatley RSL, followed by afternoon tea. Its objective is to examine how OFF is performing and to plan for its future. Your committee would like a substantial number of members to contribute to this event and to help direct OFF in its future endeavours. Although OFF has been operating successfully for 60 years, we should guard against complacency, evaluate where we are, and where we want to be. Any and all ideas will be looked at, as there is no such thing as a bad idea!!

Do come along and contribute to the success of your Society.

[Graham Lalchere] More details at off.oatleypark.com/

**** LIME KILN BAY WETLAND AWARENESS PROJECT**

OFF is conducting this project to raise community awareness of the importance of the wetlands, to promote increased involvement and behavioural change, and to reduce detrimental environmental impacts. It includes drain stencilling, guided walks, surveys and information on the OFF web site. [Click here for the FLYER](#)

Society Lending Library

OFF has a small library of environmental books available for borrowing on meeting nights. At next meeting we will have: *The Biggest Estate on Earth - How Aborigines Made Australia* by Bill Gammage, *A History of the Blue Labyrinth*. by Bruce Cameron, *Sustainable Food, Sustainable House*. by Michael Mobbs, *A Natural for World Heritage - The First National Park*. by Dr Geoff Mosley. [See Alan Fairley at the back desk]

EARTH HOUR 2016

On the evening of 19th March lights went off throughout the world, a sign that one of the world's most perilous, impending problems might yet be solved. Millions of people in a record 178 countries switched off at 8.30pm, to mark this year's Earth Hour, participating in the world's biggest ever demonstration to stop climate change escalating.

Some 366 landmarks around the world, including the Sydney Opera House, Big Ben, the Colosseum, the Empire State Building and Buckingham Palace, went dark for the hour.

FOR NOTING

A gapanthus. We are advised to remove the seed heads before they open to release their seeds. <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/>

M yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues 19th April [Details: Sharyn ☎9579 1262, Heather ☎0425 291 879].

O atley Flora & Fauna on facebook highlighting *Oatley & Surrounds* with latest news alerts <https://www.facebook.com/>

P owerful Owl Project Update. Chris Lloyd keeps us up to date. For the details see <http://birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/powerful-owl> & http://birdlife.org.au/documents/Powerful_Owl_Project_Update_DEC_2015_FINAL.pdf:

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