



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO JOIN OFF COMMITTEE

Best wishes for 2018 are extended by the 2017 Committee to all our members and friends.

The first meeting for the year will be the Annual General Meeting on Monday, 5 February when the 2018 office bearers and Committee will be elected. We would like to hear from anyone interested in joining the Committee. Meetings start at 7.30pm at the Oatley RSL.

ANNUAL VIST TO KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK JANUARY 2018

Nineteen OFF members and friends stayed at Charlotte Pass for 3 - 7 days. It was our third year in Pygmy Possum Lodge, which has stunning views and is convenient for walks on the Main Range. Also resident were three couples from Berowra who were very convivial and even bought an OFF calendar.

Wildflowers were colourful and abundant (thanks to a late snowfall in October from which many snow drifts remained) and much photographed. The usual walks were completed, even a trek to Blue Lake in rain, hail and mist. The less energetic enjoyed watching Flame Robins visit their nest on the lodge verandah, and reading, chatting and doing embroidery, word games and a jigsaw. Tim repaired a cassette radio that became welcome entertainment for Melina's mother who was nursing a fractured arm.

Weather was changeable and there was a light dusting of snow on the peaks on the final Sunday morning. Photos of the triup are on the OFF website off.oatleypark.com/?p=6977

OFF NEWS NEEDS YOUR DESKTOP PUBLISHING SKILLS

The editorial committee of OFF News is looking for someone who is able to compile the newsletter using Word or desktop publishing software. Most of the actual articles will be written by the editorial committee (or others) and forwarded to you for compiling into a newsletter template. There would be minimal editorial work (unless you want to have more involvement) and your focus would be on the format and design of the monthly newsletter.

If you are interested contact Graham Lalchere glalch@gmail.com

OATLEY PARK SURVIVES ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT FRAGMENTATION OF PUBLIC LAND

A proposal motion, put by Hurstville Councillor Vince Badalati, to look at the feasibility of opening a cafe/restaurant in Oatley Park was withdrawn at the last minute at Georges River Council's December 18 meeting after many residents contacted Georges River Councillors expressing their dismay at the fragmentation of public land for commercial use.

Several residents had registered to speak in opposition to the proposal but withdrew once it became clear the motion was not going ahead.

However, Melina Amerasinghe spoke on behalf of the community first thanking Councillor Badalati for withdrawing his motion. She went on to remind councillors that a cafe/ restaurant would contravene the park's plan of management and hoped that there would be no plans for commercial activities in the park proposed in the future.

Over the years there have been several attempts to introduce commercial ventures in the Park (see Alan Fairley's Being Green available on the Off website). Thankfully they have all failed, but this most recent attempt serves to remind us that there are still some members of the community who do not fully appreciate the value of bushland as a public amenity in its own right without the need for additional infrastructure.

TREE REMOVAL IN GUNGAH BAY ROAD

On 10/11/2017 Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society received a copy of the letter sent to the residents of Gungah Bay Road advising them of the removal of Eucalyptus microcorys (Tallowood) under power lines on Gungah Bay Road between Roberts Avenue and Acacia Street. Many will recall how over the years these trees had been pruned into bizarre vase-shapes to avoid the power lines. The letter advised *"The Tallowoods are an inappropriate species and are too large to be located under the power lines. Unfortunately, the trees have not responded well to the regular pruning around the electricity network, resulting in poor structure and loss of visual amenity."*

A few weeks before Christmas the Tallowoods were removed and replaced by Water Gums. Of course it is a shame to lose mature trees like these, however we understand why council wanted to do this as many of the trees were in a poor state and replacing them meant that there would be consistency in the planting giving an aesthetically pleasing street view. OFF appreciates being consulted prior to the work being carried out and takes this as a sign that our new council is perhaps more sensitive to the environmental concerns of the local community.

Water Gums seem to be the council's 'default option' for street planting and OFF would like to see consideration being given to alternatives such as Wallum Banksia (*Banksia aemula*), Dwarf Apple (*Angophora hispida*) or even Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*).

EXPRESS INTEREST NOW IN A TRIP TO THE WILD TASMANIAN WILDERNESS OF THE TARKINE

A group of OFF members and friends are planning to visit the Tarkine in early March 2019. It is one of the last, most remote and pristine wild areas in the world. Some of the highlights we are looking forward to are Montezuma waterfall, the tallest in Tasmania, Huon Pine forests, cruises along the wild Pieman river to its mouth and walking on unspoilt beaches where few people are privileged to go. Flexible walking options include short strolls to challenging full day adventures. We intend to book an accommodation base within the Tarkine for a maximum of 5 days with all of these activities and more within easy walking or driving distance, and are looking for extra travelling companions. Numbers will be limited due to accommodation options.

People may wish to book holiday extensions to this before and after. Ask us for suggestions, and let us know, what else might be on offer. It is expected that you find your own way there and back.

If you would like further information contact us soon, and we require tentative bookings prior to 31/3/18. We will then advise you of further details including accommodation, catering and costs and when deposits would be required. For further information and to register your interest contact either;

REPORT ON NOVEMBER MEETING

Alan Fairley presented a fascinating talk on yet another little-visited country where he and Chiew had recently travelled – Iran. He described and illustrated the long history and magnificent ancient ruins and by contrast, the modern cities with their formal gardens featuring fountains and pools, and imaginative designs for cooling buildings.

Following Alan's talk, Reannan Honey, PhD student at the University of Technology Sydney and recipient of a research grant from OFF in 2017, outlined her research project – Habitat restoration for hollow-dependant fauna. She is investigating whether artificial hollows can provide an alternative option to nest boxes for animals like sugar gliders, when natural hollows are in short supply. The meeting concluded with a very sociable supper enjoyed by the large audience.

Coming OFF Events in February/March

Monday 5 February 2018 Meeting at 7:30pm - Society's Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be followed by a light supper so bring a plate of food and any interesting OFF- related photos to screen.

Monday 26 February 2018 - James Baxter-Gilbert - The Eastern Water Dragon - an urban survival story

First regular monthly meeting for the year. James Baxter-Gilbert (conservation biologist) from Macquarie Uni's Lizard lab talking about research into the remarkable ability of Eastern Water Dragons to adapt and thrive in the urban environment.

Thursday 1 March 2018 - Visit to Victoria Barracks, Paddington - Walk Leader - Julian Sheen

Further details will be provided at the AGM and in the next newsletter.

Sunday, 4 March 2018 - Clean Up Australia Day. Jinna Reserve 8.30am -12.00pm

OFF members will be cleaning around the edges of Lime Kiln Bay. Everyone is invited. Stay for an hour or the whole morning. Meet at Jinna Reserve at the bottom of Pamela Ave, South Peakhurst after 8.30am. Bags provided but bring boots and rubber gloves. Sign in with Alan Fairley at the OFF marquee.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL and Community Club, 23 Letitia Street, Oatley from 7:30 - 9:30pm usually on the fourth Monday.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2017 - RODGER ROBERTSON TRIP REPORT - RIVER CAT TO PARRAMATTA

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017		
Income and Expenditure Statement 2017		
	2017	2016
INCOME		
Subscriptions	\$1,871.00	\$1,408.00
Donations	\$2,276.70	\$1,665.70
Sales stalls etc	\$170.50	\$178.85
GRC Grants various	\$74,686.00	\$0.00
Interest(chq acct)	\$0.00	\$3.20
Annual dinner	\$1,846.00	\$1,756.00
Calendar sales 2017 2018	\$3,934.00	\$1,282.00
Lions Loan for calendar	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
Capertee trip	\$0.00	\$584.25
Bird cards	\$356.50	\$509.25
Miscel Income	\$383.70	\$90.00
Total Income	\$90,524.40	\$9,477.25
EXPENSES		
OFF Newsletter printing postage	(\$1,474.70)	(\$1,374.34)
Insurance	(\$360.00)	(\$315.00)
PO box rental	(\$124.00)	(\$121.00)
Brochure printing various	(\$499.31)	\$0.00
Dept Fair Trading	(\$44.00)	(\$54.00)
Planning day	\$0.00	(\$307.75)
Bushcare day	\$0.00	(\$69.96)
Donations and Membership	(\$400.00)	(\$985.00)
Annual dinner	(\$1,672.00)	(\$1,553.07)
2018 Calendar expenses	(\$3,494.70)	(\$1,000.00)
Grants expenditure	(\$37,902.20)	(\$1,389.03)
Card printing	\$0.00	(\$470.49)
Capertee expenses	\$0.00	(\$584.25)
New Computer	(\$650.00)	\$0.00
Research grants	(\$5,000.00)	\$0.00
Lions stall	(\$210.00)	\$0.00
River road project	(\$1,054.00)	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	(\$640.10)	\$0.00
Total Expenses	(\$53,525.01)	(\$8,223.89)
Surplus	\$36,999.39	\$1,253.36
BANK RECONCILIATION		
	2017	2016
Balance as at 1 January	\$ 12,971.06	\$ 11,717.70
Surplus on year	\$36,999.39	\$ 1,253.36
Cheque account balance 31 December	\$ 14,970.45	\$ 12,971.06
Various term deposits	\$43,490.07	\$ 8,331.77
Total balance at bank 31 December	\$58,460.52	\$ 21,302.83

The accounts in 2017 are influenced by the several grants OFF and Bushcare (on their behalf) obtained in the year. Further information will be provided by the Treasurer at the AGM on 5 February.

Our last walk for 2017 was Sunday 26 November when 12 OFF members took the train to Circular Quay for a beautiful, relaxing morning ferry trip to Parramatta (1 1/2 hrs). You certainly see a different side of Sydney from the river.

From the Parramatta Ferry Terminal we walked alongside the Parramatta River in Queen's Park stopping to read many markers providing information (including pictures) on the history of the area - wharves, mills, granary etc. We also chanced upon a ceremony at the HMAS Parramatta Memorial being held to commemorate the anniversary of the sinking of The Parramatta II on 26 November 1941.

From there we proceeded to the historical precinct of Hambledon Cottage, Experiment Farm and Elizabeth Farm Cottage. We decided we must make a return visit in 2018 to do justice to these venues and see them properly.

We headed into the town centre via the Lancers' Barracks which is still in operation and also contains a museum which is open on Sundays - well worth a visit.

Lunch was near the St Johns Cathedral which is on the site of the first church in Australia. After our rest we headed to Parramatta Park to see Government House, a Boer War Memorial and a dairy house museum. It was then a stroll back along the river and into the CBD to take the train back to Redfern Station.

We were all impressed by how much history there is to see in Parramatta and our day was really only a 'taster'. So a return visit is definitely needed.

Photos of the walk are on the OFF website off.oatleypark.com/?p=6962

V Bolling

OFF MISSION STATEMENT - OPEN FOR COMMENT

OFF was asked for a mission statement when applying for a free software licence for the significant tree database. While our Rules of Incorporation include the objects of the society they do not include a mission statement which succinctly defines our core interests.

The Society's objects are:

- a) to stimulate interest in Australian flora and fauna;
- b) to act to protect and foster an interest in the natural environment, particularly at the local level;
- c) to foster an understanding of the need to conserve the natural environment and resources; and
- d) to cooperate with other groups to achieve these objectives at local, state, national and international level.

The committee has drafted the following Mission Statement:

Working to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment locally and globally.

If you would like to comment on the draft before it is finally approved by your committee, an email can be forwarded to off@oatleypark.com