



# O.F.F. NEWS



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OFF Website: <http://off.oatleypark.com>

June/July 2010

## PLANTING A TREE FOR FRED BELL

A group of OFF members, friends, and members of Fred's family gathered on 28<sup>th</sup> May at the start of the walkway from Oatley across the Como Bridge to witness the planting of a tree for Dr Fred Bell, a wonderful OFF member who died last year.

It was a beautiful morning after rain, and the gathering felt uplifted in remembering and honouring a man who did so much for our society and the cause of conservation. An insightful academic and a profoundly decent man Fred is sorely missed. The tree planted in his name is now a symbol of our regard for him. Joan Bell planted the lilly pilli (*Acmena smithii*) with the assistance of Matt Allison who had prepared the ground. Fred and Joan's daughters, Fiona and Heather, shared some of their memories of their father and read thoughts prepared by Joan. John Davoren spoke on behalf of OFF, noting that the tree is on the pathway linking many fields and aspects of life that were of special significance to Fred.

There was then a period of silent reflection on Fred's life and the life of the tree. The fresh breeze blew and the birds chattered all about as the gathering quietly celebrated Fred's life and the healthy sapling, now known as *Fred's Tree*.

## BIRDS IN BACKYARDS

Holly Parsons, Sydney Project Manager of the organisation Birds in Backyards, spoke at the May 24th meeting on making our gardens more bird friendly. Birds in Backyards is a research, education, and conservation program focusing on birds and the urban environment. The program was in response to the reduction of bird species living in built up areas, the rapid expansion of these areas and the consequent loss of habitat. There is much background material in website: <http://birdsinboxyards>

## LOWER GEORGES RIVER SUSTAINABILITY

The Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative (LGRSI) has launched its *Getting Greener Program* aimed at improving sustainability across the Lower Georges River catchment area, covering parts of Hurstville City, Kogarah City, Rockdale City, and Sutherland Shire. Community groups and business are invited to get involved and OFF is looking at ways of assisting in the process. More information on the program is available from Col Freeman 9562 1703 or 0434 154 865 and at [www.georgesriver.org.au/](http://www.georgesriver.org.au/)

## TREE PLANTING FOR URBAN AREAS

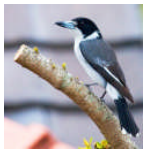
State Line [5<sup>th</sup> May] reported on the \$30 million program for tree planting in urban areas. Competitive tender will purchase 15,000 semi-matured trees from state nurseries. However, Chinese elms and Plane trees are to be preferred, and one quote for \$1000 for one of the trees selected was puzzling. [www.abc.net.au/](http://www.abc.net.au/)

## AUSTRALIA'S YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY

*Bush Blitz* is a three year multimillion dollar program to document the plants and animals in hundreds of properties across Australia's National Reserve System. Teams of Australia's top scientists will survey hundreds of Australian reserves to document the native plants and animals they protect. The surveys are expected to uncover hundreds of new species and provide baseline scientific data that will help protect Australia's biodiversity for a generation to come. This is the world's first continental scale survey - [www.bushblitz.org.au](http://www.bushblitz.org.au)

## LOCAL FAUNA

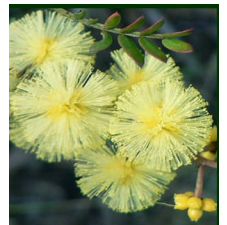
In July last year a Grey Butcherbird built a nest in a dead tree in Myles Dunphy Reserve. The nest bowl was shallow and untidy, consisting of an interwoven platform of thin crooked sticks. Each time the bird returned with a new stick, it sat on the nest and turned or swivelled its body as if shaping the platform into a bowl. A surprising number of birds will commence nest building in mid winter – including Magpies, Ravens and Rainbow Lorikeets as well as Butcherbirds. [Nature Note from David Waterhouse]



## OATLEY PARK IN JUNE

Alan Fairley has listed the following plants as flowering:

- ❖ Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*); shrub to 2m, pinnate leaves, bright yellow flowers, >>>>
- ❖ Sweet-scented Wattle (*Acacia suaveolens*), slender shrub to 2m, pale yellow or cream flowers,
- ❖ Heath Banksia (*Banksia ericifolia*); small crowded leaves, orange-red flower spikes,
- ❖ Variable Bossiaea (*Bossiaea heterophylla*); shrub to 1m tall, yellow, and red pea-type flowers,
- ❖ White Fingers (*Caladenia catenata*); white ground orchid with a single flower, and a 20 cm stem,
- ❖ Rough Wax-flower (*Philothea scabra*); white with five petals, small shrub on sheltered slopes.



## OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

Hurstville Council has spent some \$110,000 on a feasibility study and community consultation with no resulting action. Council does not refer to the site in its planning documents, has still made no decision on its future, refuses community access, and is not maintaining it. Councillor Anne Wagstaff has lodged a notice of motion for the Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June asking for a public briefing for councillors and community on progress on options for future use of this important facility. You are encouraged to attend this meeting in support. The 23<sup>rd</sup> June council meeting will commence at 8pm.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall, Fredrick St Oatley [near the corner of Letitia St] starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.

Visitors, including accompanied children, are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

**COMING EVENTS**

**June 28<sup>th</sup> (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Ray and Elma Kearney** speaking on Fantastic Fungi - Facts and Findings. Dr Ray Kearney is Associate Professor in the Department of Infectious Diseases, University of Sydney. Elma Kearney is an Executive member of the Sydney Fungal Studies Group.

**July 4<sup>th</sup> (Sunday)** Field day: Royal National Park- Curra Moors Circuit. Distance of about 9-10 Km, an easy 5 hours or so. Meet at 9.30 am at the Curra Moors car park on Sir Bertram Stevens Dr, approx 1 Km north of the turn off to Garie Beach (car park sign faces south). The first part of the walk is on Curra Moors Track, then down a track with some damp and eroded sections, to an easy walk along a service track onto the heath. We return along the Coast Track, though the heath, then back to re-join the Curra Moors Track. Curracurrong Falls can be observed while we have lunch. Note that there are no safety fences near some cliff edges. Bring hat, lunch and water, and strong walking shoes/boots, as the track may be wet in places. **Leader: Graham Lalchere**, T 9580 3107 or 0430 968 260.

**July 26<sup>th</sup> (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Alison Hanlon** speaking on Catchment management, partnerships and the management of the Georges River

**July 31<sup>st</sup> (Saturday)** Field day: Sydney Harbour - Watsons Bay to Bondi. **Leader: Alan Fairley**

**Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> (Monday)** 7.45pm: Regular monthly meeting with **Jeff Smith** speaking on Legal Aspects of Climate Change and Biodiversity Conservation.

**Aug 28<sup>th</sup> (Saturday)** Field day: Gerrinaona to Kiama - Costal Walk. **Leaders Lesley and Peter Cox**

**THE MOSMAN FIELD DAY Sun 30<sup>th</sup> May**

12 participants braved the weather forecast of cyclonic wind and rain, to have an extremely pleasant walk from Balmoral to Mosman. We proceeded up over the hill by the naval reserve, to Clifton Gardens and a delicious morning coffee break. This precinct has become part of the Sydney Harbour National Park, with all types of interesting historical naval buildings. We proceeded around the harbour foreshore to Taylors Bay and to Bradleys Head and had lunch at Sirius Cove Park. We then climbed up over Mosman hill to Reid Park and arrived back at the cars at Cremorne about 3pm. [Report by Alison Gilroy: Walk Leader]

**MYLES DUNPHY CREEK - SAFETY UPGRADE**

Last year the OFF Committee decided to investigate improving the safety of the sewer viaduct over the creek in Myles Dunphy Reserve below the Bowling Club by installing safety rails. Sydney Water was contacted, inspected the site, and volunteered to install the safety rails. The work is complete and with the installation of covers over the trip hazards on the viaduct, as shown here.



**NEVERFAIL BAY RESERVE**



There is a little known narrow strip of conservation public land at Neverfail Bay, with some significant environmental features. Neverfail Bay was named after a water

spring which supplied a reliable source of fresh water. The bay was once home to extensive oyster farms and a landing point for oyster barges. In 1993, the last oyster farm was removed due to deteriorating water quality. [www.kogarah.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.kogarah.nsw.gov.au/)

**FAYE COUGHLAN**

Faye recently resigned from the OFF Committee after ten years of service, including seven years as Welfare Officer, and five years as Secretary. Faye is an enthusiastic and effective worker and, among her many contributions, arranged the OFF Annual Dinner. Faye will be very much missed by and from the Committee.

**‘KIMBERS CREEK’**

The volunteers of Lime Kiln Bay Bushland Sanctuary were successful in securing a government water grant in 2005 that helped to stop erosion along the embankment of the creek. Weed trees were removed including Weeping Willows (Salix sp.) and small and large leaf Privet (Ligustrum sp). Two organised planting days were part of the grant to revegetate along the creek line, and 1,200 trees, shrubs and grasses have been successfully planted.

Seeking a name for the creek upstream from the area now known as L.K.B. Bushland Sanctuary, the Bushcare Group suggests ‘Kimbers Creek’. This was the name used by locals in the early twentieth century, obviously linked to the Kimber’s dairy farm beside the creek. One of the Bushcare Group, Ruth Staples remembers, as a child, running around the L.K.B. area with its salt marsh and the large body of water, later to be clogged with sediment. [Report by Jason Cockayne]

**BRIEFLY**

**OFF Committee** The committee is looking for a new member, and your nomination at the next meeting would be warmly welcomed.

**Lime Kiln Bay constructed wetland** The rubbish trap has been severely damaged, is no longer protecting the water, and requires urgent repair.

**National Parks:** The NSW Government’s National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Visitors and Tourists) Bill 2010 was passed on 9<sup>th</sup> June. Permitted now in national parks will be new hotels, resorts, cabins, lodges, private facilities, and shops for tourists, sport, and recreation.

