



## OFF 2018 RESEARCH GRANTS

OFF has again offered research students funds to assist with their projects. The research funds are provided by our members through donations. The Treasurer advised that there was \$4000 available. OFF contacted a number of the major NSW universities advising of the availability of student grants.

This year OFF received four applications. They were all excellent, making it difficult for the OFF research committee to prioritise them. Eventually, the committee agreed to fund two of the grant applications and with the agreement of the Treasurer, the funding was increased so that the two applications could be fully funded.

The successful applicants were Claudia Santori from Sydney University, whose PhD project involves the monitoring of juvenile Murray River turtles that were raised in captivity and then released into the Murray River. Turtle eggs are frequently predated, but there is very little knowledge on the survival of turtles once they enter the river. Radio tracking devices will be attached to 15 juvenile turtles and then tracked for a month. By tracking the released turtles it is hoped to significantly increase our understanding of their habitat requirements and survival rates, which will lead to better management of freshwater turtles in Australia. Claudia requested \$2,450.

The second successful applicant was Justin Collette from the University of NSW who is studying the germination of Australian flora, and in particular the influence of fire and smoke on seed dormancy. Justin's particular interest is the Rutaceae family (Boronia and allies). He will collect seed from eight species of Rutaceae including some that are threatened in the wild and propagate them in the laboratory simulating different growing conditions. Justin's research is aimed at understanding why this group of plants are so difficult to propagate. By experimenting with varying growing conditions it is hoped that new strategies will be developed in order to improve the ability to grow these and similar Australian species. Justin requested \$1,936.

In total, the OFF Research Fund will be expended \$4,386 this year. The OFF Committee wishes to thank members for their generous donations and hopes they support the selection of projects to be funded. As part of the conditions of the OFF research grant, candidates must present their research projects to OFF next year, something to look forward to in 2019.

## PLANTING NEAR OATLEY RAILWAY STATION

On Sunday 5 August, 2018 (the week following National Tree Day) 30 OFF members, family and community friends met back at River Road Reserve to continue our re-vegetation project, started last year.

State member for Oatley, Mark Coure, provided a \$1,000 grant covering the cost of 500 tube stock. The species planted replicates the original Endangered Ecological Community – Sydney Turpentine and Ironbark Forest (STIF) of which there remains only 0.5% of the original cover. Mr. Coure stayed on and helped plant some of the tubes with the group.

The success of the original planting conducted last year has been beyond expectations. Despite prevailing dry conditions over the past 12 months, the plants have positively thrived in the loamy transitional soil generally favored by STIF species. It is hoped that the newly planted species will grow just as well. As a thriving local environmental group OFF intends to continue its greening ventures. Another such project is 'in the wings' pending the award of a government grant to assist in the purchase of suitable plants - watch this space! Thank you to all involved in the planting.

## NATTAI NATIONAL PARK – BONNUM PIC WALK

A party of 18 club members assembled at Mittagong on Sunday morning, 29 July, 2018 to walk the Bonnum Pic track in the Nattai National Park. The Pic gained its striking name from the French engineer and explorer Francis Barrallier in 1802. For the most intrepid, the goal would have been Bonnum Pic itself, a narrow promontory of broken rock, bound on three sides by sheer 150 metre cliffs with breathtaking views north as far as the Blue Mountains and the Burragarang Valley.



The group opted for a more relaxing itinerary than the full 16km out-and-back walk to the Pic, and after a 25km car pool drive along the Wombeyan Caves road and the Wanganderry farm access road, a pleasant 1.5 hour walk was had through grazing land, bush and heathland out to the wonderful Wanganderry Walls. It took a further hour navigating along the cliff line across friendly, undulating rock domes in brilliant sunshine, mild temperatures and blustery winds, to the designated lunch spot, before retracing the path back to the cars.



Our expert fauna guide Deb Andrew was able to spot and record some fauna sightings for the Atlas of NSW Wildlife, including a Lesueur's Velvet Gecko (*Oedura lesueurii*) and an endangered Scarlet Robin. Also calls were heard from an endangered Gang Gang Cockatoo and a Red-browed Treecreeper, as well as feeding incisions on a grey gum made by the endangered Yellow-bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*). There were no previous records for those species in those locations in the Atlas. To view more photos from this field trip visit: <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7317>

Adrian Buzo

### **27 August 2018 'Monday Meeting' – Movie Screening 'Secrets at Sunrise'**

Filmed entirely in Western Australia, this documentary tells the fascinating story of a team of conservation experts and dedicated volunteers working together to save one of the world's rarest birds, the Western Ground Parrot. The film captures the challenges of working in remote environments, trying to save a cryptic bird which wasn't photographed in the wild until 2004 and whose numbers are likely to be less than 150 individuals. The bird is an enigmatic parrot that chooses to live on the ground, generally only making its presence known when it calls at dawn and dusk. A \$5 admission on the night will be forwarded to the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot to assist with their fundraising campaign.

### **2 September 2018 – Field Trip to Sydney Olympic Park – Heritage Railway Tour**

The trip will start with a tour of the Heritage Railway in Newington Armoury followed by visit to the Birdlife Australia Discovery Centre and walk around the wetlands. It is anticipated that the group will finish at 1.00 pm. There will be the option of exploring further, lunching at the Armory Wharf Café or catching a Rivercat back to Circular Quay (from Olympic Park Wharf).

The Rail tour starts at 9.30 am, with a duration of 1 hour 15 minutes. Car-pooling is recommended; all-day parking is available in Blaxland Riverside Park off Jamieson Street, just past Silverwater Correctional Centre. Meet at 9.00 am, at the main entrance to Armory, end of Jamieson Street, beside Parramatta River.

Rail tour costs \$15 (seniors \$12); bookings essential, please contact Leader Liz Cameron on 9580 6621 or 0419 280 473 by Monday, 23 August, 2018. For more information visit <https://www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au/Things-to-Do/Heritage-Railway-Discovery-Tour>

**Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and field days.**

### **BRIEFLY SPEAKING .....**

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet at the entrance on Douglas Haig Street.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings.

NATIONAL TREE DAY was on Sunday, 29 July 2018. Over 100 people planted 1000 trees, shrubs and ground cover plants at Evatt Park, Lugarno. Five OFF members also helped Council staff label plants and provide gardening advice to residents whilst they collected their free plants at Olds Park.

GEORGES RIVER CLEAN UP REMINDER Beauty Point Reserve, Padstow Heights Sunday, **19 August, 2018 from 9.00 am**. As detailed in last month's newsletter.

### **2019 OFF CALENDAR**

As done in previous years, OFF is producing a 2019 calendar for sale at the Oatley Lions Village Festival in October. Oatley Lions are also assisting with the initial funding. The theme of this year's calendar is "Nature in the Suburbs" and will feature images of Oatley's natural environment. This is a chance for local photographers to see their images in print. If you have a nice photo, we would like to see it. The 12 best images will be chosen for inclusion. Images can be sent to [off@oatleypark.com](mailto:off@oatleypark.com). The closing date for the submission of photos is 1 September, 2018. For more information, including photo entry rules visit: <http://off.oatleypark.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-OFF-PHOTO-COMPETITION-Rules.pdf>

### **OATLEY FLOWERS IN SPRING**

September is the ideal month to wander along the tracks of Oatley Park to observe the flowers in bloom. Why not make a list of what you see? Here are some of the more conspicuous plants flowering in Spring:

**Bitter Pea** (*Daviesia corymbosa*)- a shrub to 2 metres tall, with yellow and red pea flowers borne in clusters and with narrow lance-shaped leaves.

**Large-Leaf Bush-Pea** (*Pultenaea daphnoides*) – a shrub to 2 metres tall, with yellow pea flowers in terminal heads. Leaves are wedge-shaped to 25mm long.

**Small Plank Plant** (*Bossiaea ensata*) – a low shrub, apparently leafless, with flattened stems and yellow flowers.

**Rusty Pomaderris** (*Pomaderris ferruginea*) – a shrub to 3 metres tall. Flowers yellow in loose terminal heads; leaves elliptical, to 10cm long, hairless above and rusty below.

**Wedding Bush** (*Ricinocarpos pinifolius*) – shrub to 1.5 metres tall with narrow leaves and conspicuous white flowers (mostly 5-petalled) with yellow stamens.

**Trigger Plant** (*Stylidium graminifolium*) – basal clumps of grass-like leaves and an erect stem to 40cm tall bearing small pink flowers. Each flower has a sensitive trigger which is set off by visiting insects.

**Waxlip Orchid** (*Glossodia major*) – a mauve-blue ground orchid with a solitary hairy leaf. Found in open woodland near the oval.

Find more information and photos of current seasonal blooms at: <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=1524>