



# O.F.F. NEWS



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## NEW REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

With this issue of O.F.F News, all members should receive the 2006 Program of Activities, and also information on the new registration procedures. Please read this information and send in your new form as soon as possible, **even if you have previously completed a risk waiver form.** The new procedures are due to insurance requirements and we regret any resulting inconvenience.

## TWO SPEAKERS AT NEXT MEETING

At the next monthly meeting on 27th March (see over) **Dr Kathy Stewart** of the University of Sydney will give a brief account of her environmental education project at Oatley in which our Society has agreed to participate. This will be followed by a slideshow entitled 'Travels in South west China, Eastern Tibet and Northern Thailand' by **Peter Vaughan**. It will feature fascinating items such as the Stone Forest, Songzanglin Monastery, Jade Dragon Mountain, ethnic hill tribes and a Dongba ancient music concert. Peter is President of the Southern Sydney branch of the National Parks Association and is also a part-time professional tour leader. Any members interested in joining his tours (e.g. to Tibet, China etc.) should be able to discuss these with him after the meeting.

## 'BEING GREEN' AT NEXT MEETING

A limited number of copies of the **Society's 50 years of history** will be available at the next meeting. Titled 'Being Green' and written by Alan Fairley it may be bought at the back desk for the **cost price of \$10.**

## BIG TURNOUT FOR SPOTLIGHTING

A total of **41 people, including 9 children**, took part in an enjoyable spotlighting trip in the Royal National Park on 4th March. Trip leader Debbie Andrew (who is also a wildlife officer with NPWS) reported: "We had a nice night, although possums were a bit scarce. The owl we heard was either a **Masked Owl** (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) or **Sooty Owl** (*T. tenebricosa*) and I am intending to go out again to see if we can draw it in. The possum near the end of Bola Creek was a **Mountain Brushtail** (*Trichosurus caninus*) with a young on its back." Other animals were spotted in the waters of Bola Creek, including a juvenile **Water Dragon** (*Physignathus lesueurii*), and a large **Sydney Freshwater Crayfish**, (*Eustacus spinifer*).

## BIG CLEAN UP AT RUBBISH CENTRAL

**Clean Up Australia Day 2006** was marked with a flourish at lower Poulton Park on 5<sup>th</sup> March. Oatley Flora and Fauna with friends made a huge difference to the bushland and mangroves of the area at the top of Oatley Bay. A total of 31 volunteers came to the clean-up; this included 6 children. Over a morning full of effort, sweat and mud they pulled out **about 40 bags of rubbish!** Well done to all those who took part. Your morning's work really made an improvement to the local environment. (Julian Sheen, Co-ordinator).

## OATLEY PARK BUSHFIRE

A bushfire occurred in the NE corner of Oatley Park on Sunday 12th February. It spread over both sides of the gully running down to Lime Kiln Bay, burning out about **7 hectares of native shrubs** such as Bacon and Eggs (*Pultenaea* spp) and Hop Bush (*Dodonaea* spp). (from *The Bundaluk*, Hurstville Bushcare newsletter)

## WOLLI CREEK: NEW THREATS

The NSW Government announced six years ago that the very significant bushland remnant in the Wollli Creek Valley would be **protected in a regional park** managed by NPWS. At a public meeting two years ago residents were assured that the transfer of the park area to NPWS was proceeding without problems. Recently, however, the residents were advised of **changes to the boundaries** that will leave large areas of bushland outside the park. This is evidently to allow amplification of the M5 expressway and tunnel system to cope with the huge increases in freight movements expected from the expansion of Port Botany.

The Wollli Creek Preservation Society is holding an important meeting about these issues at **7pm on Tuesday, 4th April** at the Canterbury-Earlwood Caring Association Hall, 15 Clark Street, Earlwood. As the Wollli Creek bushland is one of our field areas, O.F.F. members are urged to attend this meeting if possible. (More information: [www.wollicreek.org.au](http://www.wollicreek.org.au) or phone Peter Stevens on 9554 3176).

## **FINAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER**

Is your 2006 subscription overdue? Please note that, according to the Constitution, **members hip ceases if payment is not made by 31st March.**

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**  
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

## Coming Events

**March 27 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**, 7.45 pm. Short presentation on 'The Oatley Project' by Dr Kathy Stewart, Sydney University, followed by a slideshow entitled 'Travels in South West China, Eastern Tibet and Northern Thailand' by Peter Vaughan (see p. 1).

**April 1 (Saturday) FIELD DAY. Illawarra Escarpment and Mt. Kembla Ring.** Meet at the Kembla Lookout at 10.30 am. Access from Southern Freeway. Exit west along Five Islands Road (Unanderra), north on Princes Highway for one block then west for about 9 km along Cordeaux Road through Mt Kembla village to Kembla Lookout (dominated by an electricity pylon). The walk is about 5 km commencing with a steep descent through beautiful rainforest then easy level walking on a fire trail to historic Windy Gully Cemetery. After that we will proceed along Cordeaux Road back to Kembla Lookout. Fine views from fire trail and Cordeaux Road over the Wollongong plain and Lake Illawarra. Bring morning tea and lunch. Hat, sturdy shoes and long socks are advisable as there are leeches in the rainforest. Leader: Graham Austin 9579 2375.

**April 24 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**, 7.45 pm. Speaker: Tony Saunders on 'Bird habitat fragmentation' (details in next issue of O.F.F. News).

### THISTLE MEMORIAL LECTURE

As anticipated (see Feb/Mar O.F.F. News) the Thistle Y. Harris memorial lecture on February 27th was a notable event. The highlight was an inspiring account by **Professor Paul Adam** of conservation progress and problems in NSW since Dr Harris' motivating presentation to the Society exactly 50 years before. We were delighted, also, to be addressed by **Fiona Murray**, a great niece of Dr Harris and an Oatley resident. She told us of her childhood recollections and how her father was influenced by his remarkable aunt.

In introducing Professor Adam, **Alan Fairley** outlined other interesting aspects of Dr Harris' life, such as:

- She wrote many books, the best known being the classic reference *Wildflowers of Australia*. It was first published in 1938 and reprinted 13 times.
- Following the death of her husband, David Stead (who was also a well-known scientist and conservationist), she established **Wirrimbirra Sanctuary** near Bargo as a memorial to him.
- In 1985, the University of Wollongong conferred on her an **Honorary Doctorate of Science**.

### SUSTAINABILITY FORUM

Professor Deo Prasad will be the main speaker at a public forum, *Implementing Sustainability requires Cultural Change*, at 3.30pm Saturday, 8th April. It has been arranged by Sustainable Population Australia at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney. Further details from Gordon on 9528 6091 or at [www.population.org.au](http://www.population.org.au).

### INCREASED AIRCRAFT NOISE

A recent issue of Lugarno Progress Association's newsletter has reported large increases in the number of aircraft flights and noise over this part of Sydney since July 2005. The increases have been attributed to **lobby groups urging greater use of the east-west runway**, and data to support the claims are apparently on [www.airservicesaustralia.com.au](http://www.airservicesaustralia.com.au). To counteract this lobbying, complaints of noise may be made, with details of dates and times, by phoning 1300 302 204.

### WORLD'S LARGEST CRAYFISH IN PERIL

By far the largest crayfish in the world is the **Giant Freshwater Crayfish** (*Astacopsis gouldi*) found only in a few small streams near Wynyard in Tasmania. Specimens weighing 4.5 kg and 1 metre in length have been officially recorded, and there are unofficial records of specimens exceeding 6 kg. It was listed as endangered some years ago and is now in peril due to **illegal fishing, habitat and catchment disturbance**. Draft recovery and habitat management plans have been prepared but their implementation has been delayed by objections from the timber industry.

### NOTABLE QUOTES

"Man is part of the natural environment. He lives in it; it sustains him both materially and spiritually. He needs the peace and serenity bushland provides. He cannot fulfill his potential without knowing it intimately...he is of it." (part of Thistle Y. Harris' speech on receiving her Honorary Doctorate)