



# O.F.F. NEWS



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## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BATS

Well known conservationist, **Nancy Pallin**, probably **accompanied by a live bat**, will give a presentation with the above title at our next monthly meeting on **24th September** (see over). Nancy is the recipient of a number of awards for her conservation work, especially with bats. She is an Education Officer at the Australian Museum and Chairperson of the **Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society**. She is also a Director of Paddy Pallin Pty Ltd, daughter of Jean and Tom Moppett, and daughter-in-law of Paddy Pallin, all revered **pioneers of conservation and bushwalking**. This monthly meeting will undoubtedly be a highlight of our 2007 program.

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE TREES GONE ?

For more than 50 years O.F.F. has been protesting about the **destruction of trees** by councils, developers, householders and others. Our feelings about such actions are well expressed in an article entitled **'Where have all the trees gone ?'** by Melina Amerasinghe, O.F.F. Committee member. This may be viewed on our website at [www.off.oatleypark.com](http://www.off.oatleypark.com). Our feelings were also stimulated by Bob Beale's talk at the last monthly meeting about his forthcoming book on great Australian tree stories (see 'Very Briefly' overleaf). O.F.F. has therefore decided to create a **register or database of local trees**, significant for their size, history, rarity, or whatever. Please send your **suggestions to our Secretary** for trees to include in this database. You are also invited to tell us any stories you may know about local trees, perhaps guided by Bob Beale's stories.

## BEDFORD COTTAGE BATTLE

Bedford Cottage (also known as 'Gardener's Cottage and Garage') is a derelict brick building near the tramway crossing on Princes Highway, Loftus. It is just inside Royal National Park and **NPWS wants to demolish it**. This has been strongly opposed, however, by Sutherland Historical Society and other groups because of its heritage values which include:

- Site of depot and garage for the earliest **horse-drawn buses** in Sutherland Shire during the 1800s
- The **first motor bus depot** in Sutherland Shire, and one of the first in the Sydney area.

The demolition has been delayed by the Department of Planning but is scheduled to occur in the near future if a **'cost-effective adaptive re-use'** is not found.

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY APS !

2007 is the 50th Anniversary year for the **Australian Plants Society (APS)** which, until a few years ago, was called the Society for Growing Australian Plants (SGAP). Its objectives, as originally stated, are:

- To promote the work of **propagating and growing Australian native plants** in home gardens and public places.
- To improve native plants as **garden subjects**.
- To observe and strengthen the **laws for the preservation** of Australian native plants.

The Society was initially formed on 12th March 1957 in Melbourne, and a NSW Division held its first meeting in Sydney on 25th July of the same year. Also formed in 1957 at **East Hills** was the **first District Group**. Its 50th Anniversary is on 21st October (some of the currently active members of the East Hills Group are also members of O.F.F.). APS now has **more than 6000 members** throughout Australia in about 90 district or regional groups.

## KURRAJONG SPRING MEANDER

The weather was great for the ten people participating in our 3-stage walk around Kurrajong Heights on 1st September. The first stage down to **Little Wheeny Creek** was in pristine rainforest (apart from a few water pumps), with Coachwood the dominant species. In the second stage, west of Kurrajong Heights, we followed the route of an **early road carved through the sandstone**, apparently with extraordinary effort by convicts. The highlight and final stage was a walk along **Burralow Swamp** through patches of rainforest again, and open forests of incredibly-sized scribbly gums. The track ended in a narrow, **awe-inspiring gorge** with beautiful ferny thickets, and a picturesque waterfall. Someone described it as a 'magic place'. All of us there would have agreed. (from a report by Bill Holland, walk leader - see website for photographs)

**Editor's note:** A very enjoyable morning tea provided by Bill and Ruby at their delightful Kurrajong Heights home, was much appreciated.

### **DON'T FORGET**

**O.F.F. ANNUAL DINNER THIS FRIDAY  
21st September**

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

**September 24 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45pm.** Nancy Pallin (Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society) will speak on '**The wonderful world of bats**'.

**September 29 (Saturday) FIELD DAY- Loftus to Engadine via Audley.** About 10 km, spring flowers - boronias, grevilleas etc. The walk starts at Loftus Station and follows the tramway (past Bedford Cottage - see item on p.1) to the Field Study Centre, and descends the Honeymoon Track to Audley. We then ascend Robertson's Knoll, and down to **Kangaroo Creek for lunch**. After lunch we climb a fairly steep rocky track at a leisurely pace and cut across a number of small creeks and ridges to Engadine Station. Catch the **8.22am train from Oatley**. Wear sturdy shoes, and bring lunch, water and a hat. Leader: **Janet Austin 9579 2375** or (on day of walk only) 0448 833 811.

**October 22 (Monday) REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7.45 pm.** Amelia Martyn (Royal Botanic Gardens) will speak on '**Seedbanking: investing for the future**'.

### SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER ?

During 2006 the House of Representatives **Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage** conducted an Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter for Australia. Its 101- page final report has just been released and copies may now be obtained by calling (02) 6277 4580 or by downloading from [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee). The main recommendation is that a statutory **National Sustainability Commission** should be established with an 'ongoing role to create an **aspirational** Sustainability Charter'. Although the report identifies issues that the Charter should address, it **ignores the natural world** and fails to recognise that life-sustaining options of the future will depend ultimately on **biodiversity**.

### NEW COASTAL GOURMET INDUSTRY

Aquaculture, like nuclear energy, is an issue that **sharply divides conservationists**. Some see it as the most realistic alternative to present unsustainable practices while others are quite convinced its adverse aspects are irredeemable. The controversy is likely to be intensified by new large projects in **Australian coastal areas** to produce '**soft-shell**' crabs, long regarded as a rare delicacy in Japan, Sicily and a few other places. Crabs usually shed their old shells at infrequent intervals in the **muddiest water they can find**. This hides them from predators and also makes them unpalatable. If the shedding takes place in clean water, however, their new shells are soft and the flesh has a **particularly delicious flavour** for a very short period. The developing industry aims to harvest the crabs in this period and dispatch them immediately to connoisseurs prepared to pay ridiculously high prices for such a luxury (see [www.growfish.com.au/content](http://www.growfish.com.au/content)).

### VERY BRIEFLY ....

**Tasmania's World Heritage Wilderness:** September 26, Wednesday, 8pm. Free NPA slideshow. All welcome. Multi purpose Centre, 123 Flora St., Sutherland. Details: 9299 0000

**United Nations World Habitat Day:** October 1, Details: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org) or [whd@unhabitat.org](mailto:whd@unhabitat.org)

**Walk to Work Day:** October 5, Pedestrian Council of Australia. Details: [www.walk.com.au](http://www.walk.com.au)

**Oatley Lions Festival:** October 20, Saturday. Details: 9580 8805, 9570 5676 or [www.oatleylions.org.au](http://www.oatleylions.org.au)

**50th Anniversary of East Hills APS:** October 21 (see item on p1 overleaf).

**Nature Conservation Council 2007 Walk Against Warming:** On Sunday, two weeks before the Federal Election. Further details from Marnie Kikken, NCC, 9279 2466 or [ncc@nccnsw.org.au](mailto:ncc@nccnsw.org.au)

**Recommended New Book:** 'If Trees Could Speak' by Bob Beale. Due for release October 2007. Publisher: Allen and Unwin, 256 pages, RRP \$39.95.

### OFF NOTE

Motivated by (a) climate change and persistent drought in Australia, (b) recognition that hard-hoofed grazing animals have damaged Australian soils, and (c) the urgent need for new rural industries, **CSIRO genetic engineers** are now attempting to interbreed Eastern Grey Kangaroos with Merino sheep. And their specific objective ? Environmentally friendly, economically viable, woolly jumpers. (from a very authoritative Kimberley bus tour driver)