



O.F.F. NEWS



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

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FORMER OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

On 25th June the future of this important part of the Myles Dunphy Reserve was on the agenda of the Hurstville City Council. OFF members who were in the public gallery were dismayed at the tone of the discussion, and disappointed at the behaviour of many councillors. Some were ready to belittle those in the gallery and seemed to have concluded, before the consultation process is complete, that the Bowling Club site is to be alienated. One councillor was of the view that those who attended the gathering at Boongarra reserve on June 8th were too few to matter.

It is important that all options be fully considered before Council makes the decision that vitally concerns the community. The public meeting is still to come. It is scheduled for Sept 17th. The many people opposing alienation should let their councillors know urgently. A copy of a petition is at <http://www.friendsofoatley.com/>

THE BURNING QUESTION

Ross Bradstock's talk at the June 22nd meeting was on bushfire. He described it as a profound natural phenomenon arising from interactions between vegetation, terrain and the atmosphere. These, in turn, shape the structure and function of natural ecosystems. Bushfires pose risks to people, property, and other things such as air and water. Risks to biodiversity may also occur because of unfavourable frequencies, seasons, and intensities of fire. The resilience of ecosystems may be compromised if fires are too frequent and too intense. Knowledge and concepts now allow us to define and understand the capacity of natural ecosystems to cope with fire. There is much to learn, but we now know that cycles of life in our bushland are entwined with cycles of fire, and fire management is progressing on this basis.

CONSERVING WHALES

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) may be shifting towards a more conservation-oriented role after backing an ambitious Australian plan for non-lethal whale research. "It is part of a move by the IWC from being a whalers' club to being a whale conservation body," says Patrick Ramage, director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The Australian (\$1.5m) plan aims to demonstrate the value of non-lethal methods for tracking and researching whales, as against Japan's "research" program <http://www.stopwhaling.com.au>

OFF ANNUAL DINNER

Members please note in your diaries that this important event is set down for Friday 6th November – venue South Hurstville RSL

JOADJA FIELD - DAY 27th JUNE



Twenty-one took part, driving down past Mittagong, in perfect weather. After morning tea, we climbed onto the tractor train, and, with our host Mark at the wheel, went on a most interesting and informative journey. Mark talked of the history both of the

people and of the shale industry. The Scottish settlers were largely self reliant, producing everything from the bricks and the buildings to the food for the table. Concluding the tour and the history beside the cemetery Mark aptly named the event as "From the Cradle to the Grave". [Report by Heather Mackey, Walk Leader]

GOLDEN WATTLE

The over 700 wattle species were valued as a distinctive feature of the Australian flora and an inspiring focus for spring festivities well before Federation. Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) enjoyed popular recognition from the early 1800s but was proclaimed as the national floral emblem only in 1988. www.anbg.gov.au/emblems

WATTLE IN OATLEY PARK

In mid winter, the Wattles usually put on a good show. Gosford Wattle (*Acacia prominens*) has abundant yellow flower heads and is on the exit road near the oval. The Queensland Silver Wattle (*A. podalyriifolia*) is not a local native, but it often makes a brilliant show near the picnic area. The flower spikes draw our attention to the widespread Sydney Golden Wattle (*A. longifolia*) and Myrtle-leaf Wattle (*A. myrtifolia*) is a low wattle scattered throughout the Park. Wattle is well flowering in NSW by August and so Wattle Day was held on August 1st in this State for many years.

BANANA FUTURE

The proposed importation of bananas into Australia poses a major threat. Some scientists argue that, since the banana is an old and decrepit herbaceous plant, it lacks the genetic diversity to win against the pests and diseases invading many overseas banana plantations. However, *Bioversity International* sees some grounds for confidence that the threatening diseases can eventually be beaten, allowing the popular banana to survive. <http://bananas.bioversityinternational.org/>

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

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

COMING EVENTS

July 27th (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Tim Entwisle speaking on *E Algis Omnia* [From Algae Everything]. Dr Tim Entwisle is Executive director of the Botanic Gardens Trust in Sydney, a highly respected scientist and communicator with a broad interest in plants, science, and gardens.

Aug 1st (Saturday) Field Day to Spring Creek (Kiama area). Meet at Bombo Railway Station at 10.05am for a gentle walk to the Spring Creek Wetlands where there is a bird hide (bring binoculars). We then go to the old Bombo Quarry. BYO lunch and water; there are no nearby shops. Train travellers catch the Kiama train from either Hurstville at 8.00am or Sutherland at 8.11am arriving Bombo at 10.01am. Wear sturdy footwear suitable for wet/muddy walking and bring hat, sunscreen, and first aid. **Leaders: Lesley and Peter Cox** 0427947817 or 0438878774. This walk is not for rainy weather. Ring Lesley or Peter if you have any doubts.

Aug 24th (Monday) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with a representative from Sydney Water speaking on "Managing a precious resource: Future Supply and Efficient Use".

Aug 30th (Sunday) Field Day to Heathcote National Park, Waterfall to Heathcote Leader Alison Gilroy. We will be catching the 8.18 train from Oatley, and meeting at Heathcote station at 8.45am. Most of the walk follows beautiful Heathcote Creek, via Battery Causeway, Kingfisher Pool, and Bondel Pool. We will need our lunch as the walk will probably take us about 6 hours, and is about 11kms. There is a fair amount of up and down. We will be returning from Waterfall station.

CONSERVING NATIONAL PARKS

A Private Member's Bill in the NSW Parliament on 4th June sought to confirm Mountain Bikers access to tracks in National Parks. Andrew Cox, NPA Executive Officer commented, "Mountain bikes are damaging to the shallow soils found within many of the sandstone parks of the Sydney basin. - and they conflict directly with the access of walkers on narrow single tracks, and a risk of serious injury and litigation if mountain bikes continue to use them".

http://www.npansw.org.au/web/news/media_release.php?id=352&pa=%

THE CLIMATE GROUP

This international, non-profit organisation has as its primary objective to help government and business to set the world economy on the path to a low-carbon, prosperous future. Its people come from different backgrounds, and from all over the world. Its Australian members include Luke Muir, Communications Manager, who is speaking at our September meeting. www.theclimategroup.org/

GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL

NSW Parliament has rejected the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill in its entirety. The Shooters Party sought to have the Bill passed, allowing recreational hunting to take place in National Parks, including the hunting of 26 native species and the release of exotic birds for hunting purposes. For more information <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/>

WORM FARMS

These are a very environmentally friendly way to dispose of your kitchen waste. Even people in Units or Villas can put a farm on their balcony. All kitchen waste except meat, seafood and dairy products can be put in the farm to feed the worms, and the worms produce wonderful juice that is a fabulous fertilizer for your plants and garden. Hurstville Council runs regular WF workshops, and each attendee gets a worm farm. <http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/Worm-Farming.html>

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH.

The next testing days are 28th July and 25th August. Interested volunteers please ring Sharyn 9579 1262 or Heather 0425 291 879.

NEW OFF MEMBERS

New OFF members are offered free garden advice and a home visit to discuss attracting smaller birds back to their garden. They will receive a selection of native plants to encourage local fauna and to help get started on the wondrous field of native garden ecology.

<http://off.oatleypark.com/documents/200904newmembersoffer.pdf>

BRIEFLY

Biodiversity Seminar for Local Government is a free event for Local Government staff and others interested in biodiversity on Tuesday 4th Aug, 9:15 am - 2:00 pm at Gold and Silver Room, Mantra Hotel, Parramatta. RSVP shelley.dinning@environment.nsw.gov.au

Climate Law Bulletin is now available from the Environmental Defender's Office documenting the progress of climate change law and policy, providing readers with information to enable effective public participation. www.nsw.edo.org.au

Greenhouse Indicator provides information on greenhouse gases produced each week from energy use. www.theclimategroup.org/data/

In Living Memory Photographs from the records of the Aborigines Welfare Board will be at St George Regional Museum in Hurstville until 24th September.

National Tree Day is on Sunday 2nd August with Schools Tree Day to be held on Friday 31st July <http://treeday.planetark.com/>

Register of Big Trees Derek McIntosh, its Coordinator, is assembling an integrated list of Australian native and naturalised trees with the objective of locating and recording the largest specimen of every species. <http://www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au/>

