



**History of
Oatley Flora & Fauna
Conservation Society Inc.**



OVERVIEW

- Early times – pre-European
- Story of a grass roots organisation
- Small band of local residents who loved bush and trees
- Concern at deterioration of their environment.
- Protection of a suburb with a special character
- Environmental action to protect not only natural systems but also a desirable urban lifestyle.
- Story in microcosm of what has happened all over Australia when growing suburbia encroached on natural landscapes

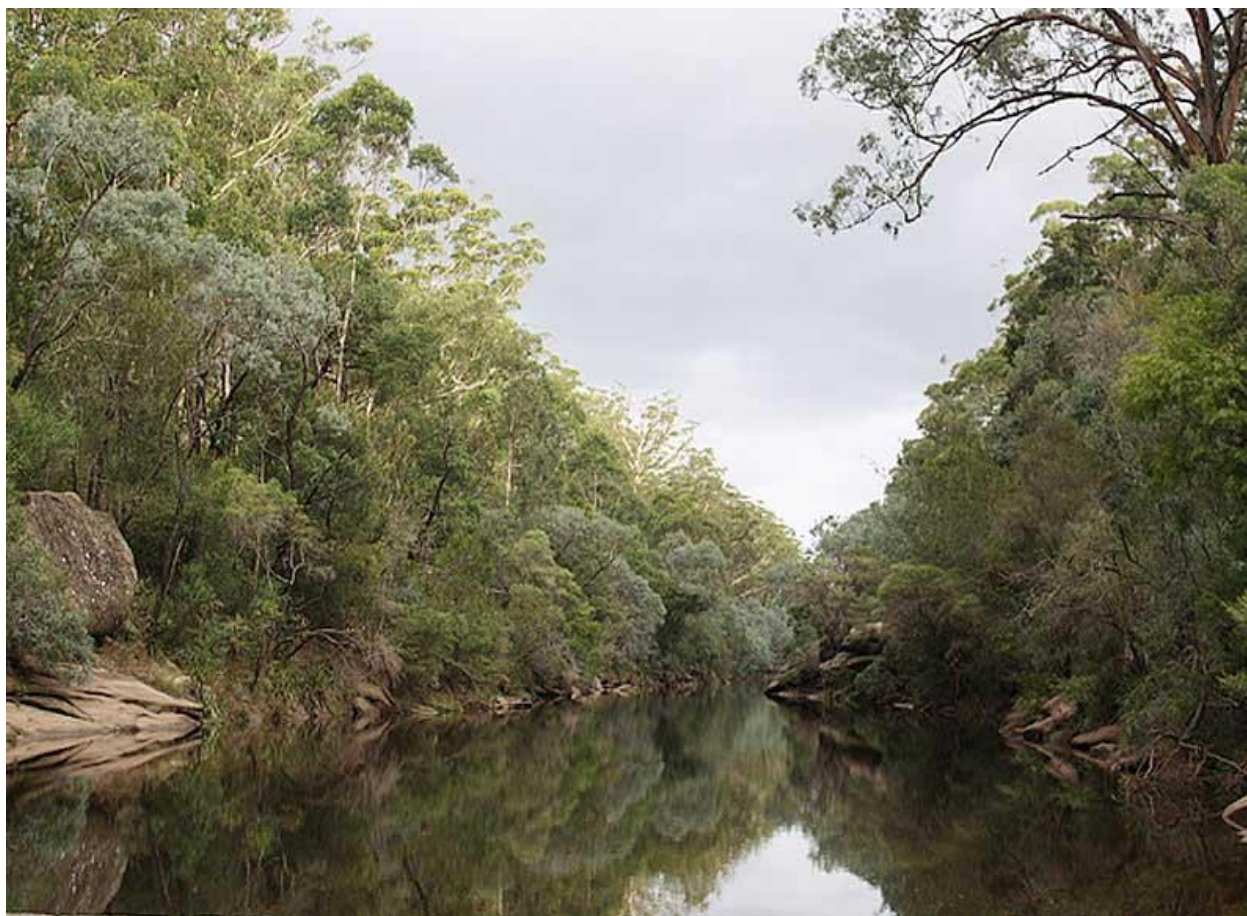


Acknowledgements

- I acknowledge and pay respect to the original inhabitants and custodians of all land and water in the Georges River region; the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation. It is upon their ancestral lands that we are meeting.
- Being Green - Oatley Flora and Fauna conservation Society, the first 50 years; Alan Fairley
- Being Green - Chapter 8 2006 - 2015 60 Years: Successes and Challenges; Alan Fairley
- A Place Called Oatley; Julian Sheen



Early History of Oatley



Aboriginal people lived along the river



Early History of Oatley



From shell midden evidence their main food was fish and oysters



Early History of Oatley



Aboriginal paintings – hand stencils in rock caves and overhangs in Oatley and Lugarno



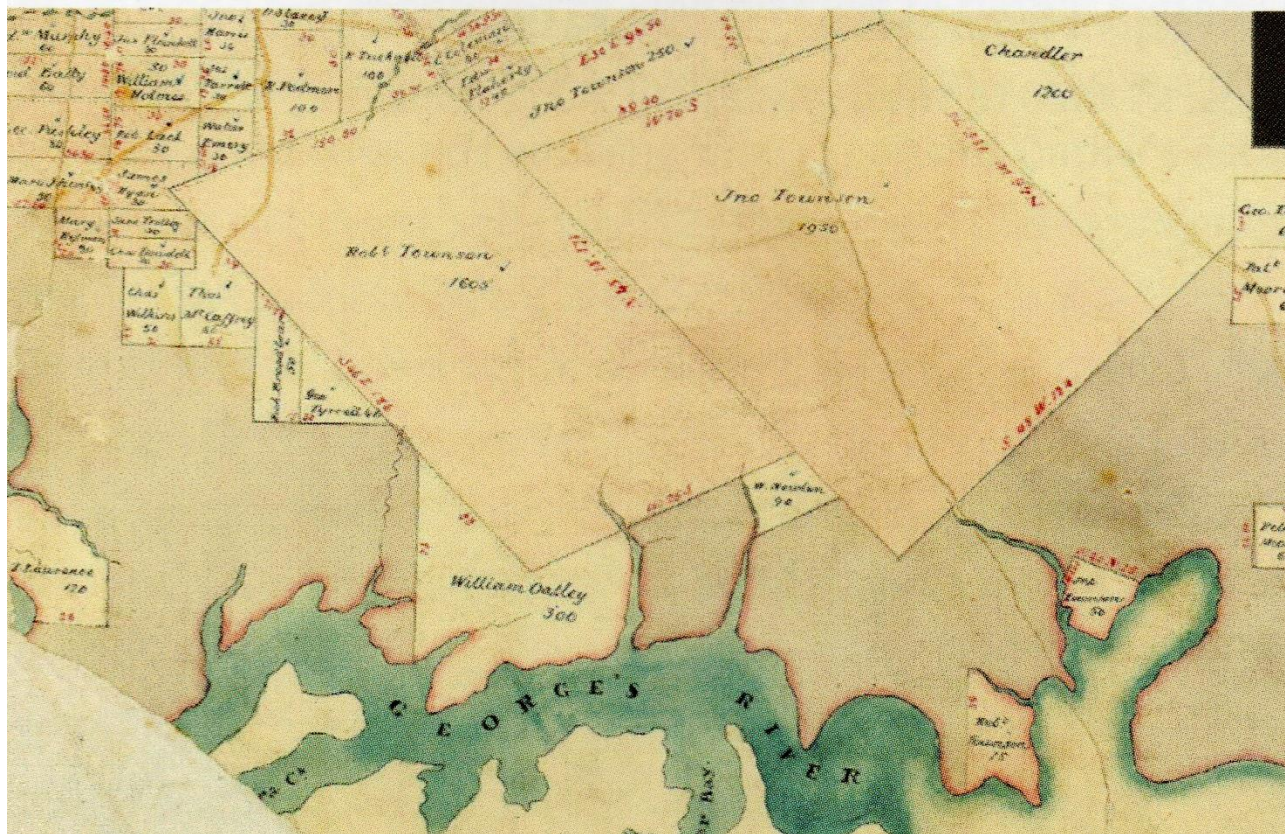
Early European History



1st land grant in 1808 to Robert Townsend



Early European History



A map from the 1840s with an incorrect William Oatley.

Note the lack of development on Townson's and Oatley's land

In 1833 James Oatley was granted 300 acres



Early European History

- Because of the heavy timber and generally poor soils – not good for farming or grazing
- Activities limited to making lime and fishing
- It seems that Mr Oatley may never have set foot in Oatley!



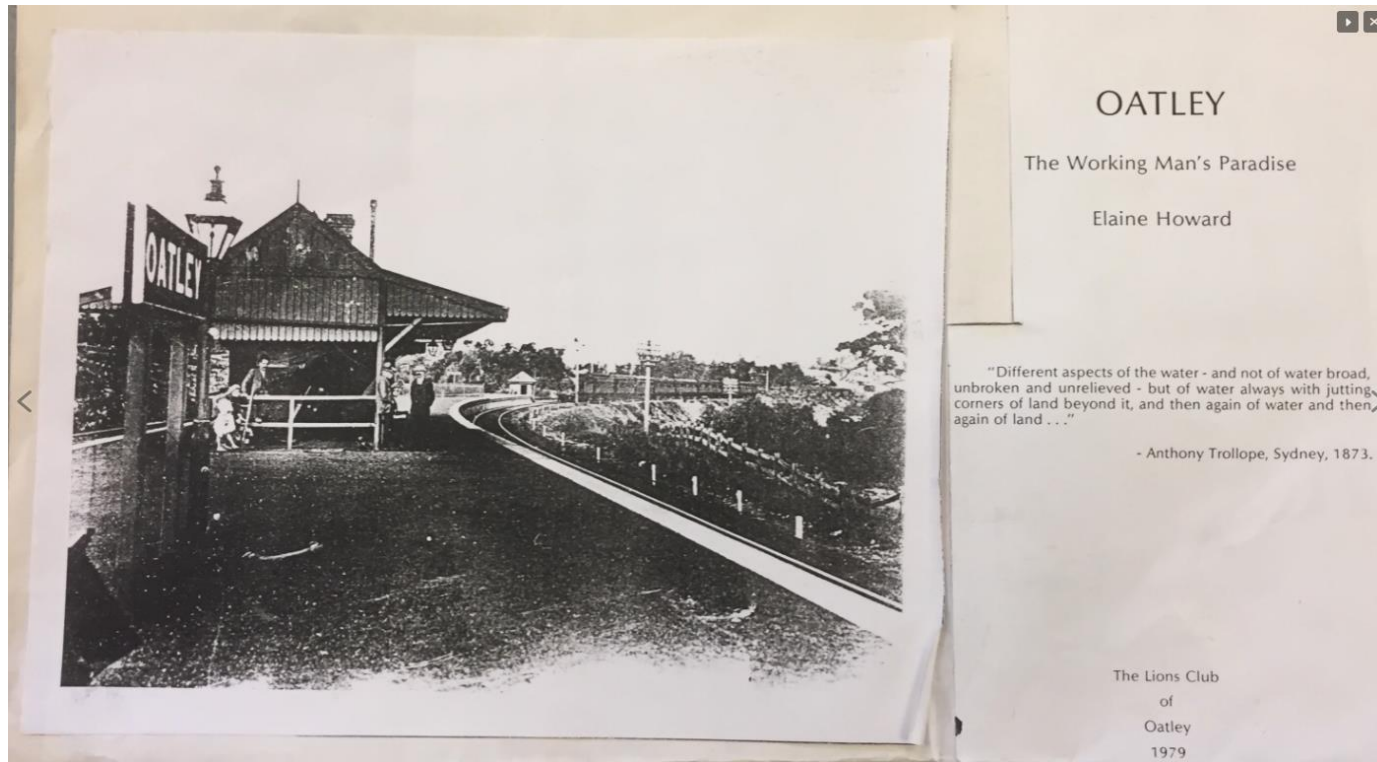
Oatley in the late 19th Century



Timber cutting, particularly on the shale soils where turpentine was growing became an important industry



Oatley in the late 19th Century

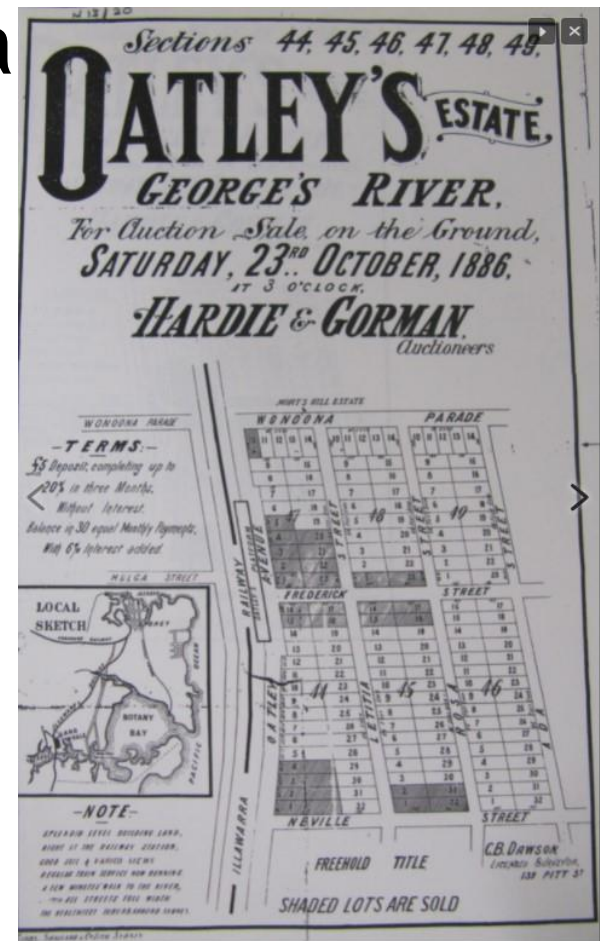


In 1885 the railway came and Oatley received its first station



Oatley in the late 19th Century

- Development initially was slow but by the turn of the century the area was developing
- Development increased
- Much of the area cleared
- Firstly from the early logging operations later for fruit orchards





From the 1900s

- Housing construction near the stations was increasing
- Charles Griffith bought the Oatley grant from Frederick Oatley in 1881
- Oatley streets were named after Griffith's relatives
- Judds Brickworks established at Mortdale



From the 1930's



Aerial photographs from 1943 show the area largely devoid of trees and natural vegetation



From the 1930's

- Emergence of progress associations to lobby councils and governments to improve the conditions for residents, eg, West Oatley Progress Association (WOPA)
- Urban development gradually increasing particularly near the railway station
- Local realisation that the bush is fragile
- What was left needed to be preserved
- Consequently, NSW Govt appointed voluntary “rangers” to guard the bush - there were several in Oatley West



Formation of OFF*

- But urban development rapidly increased resulting in much clearing of woodland on private properties
- Community concerns about the rapid development of the area
- Clearing of the last of the small bushland remnants was still occurring
- Increasing recognition of the value of natural areas

* Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc is informally known as OFF



Formation of OFF

- In 1955, in response to these concerns some residents banded together and formed the Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society
- In early 1950s, a young couple, Rafael and Moyia Kowron, came to live in Oatley West, at the corner of Waterfall Road and Acacia Street



Moyia and Rafe Kowron at Oatley Park in February 2005



Formation of OFF

- Delighted with natural bushland surrounds
- Appalled at the wanton destruction and vandalism taking place
- Determined to do something about it
- At a Progress Association mtg, invited interested people to a meeting with the Chief Guardian of Fauna in N.S.W
- Mr F.J. Griffiths talked about various ways of setting up a society which would protect flora and fauna
- About 20 people decided to establish a Flora and Fauna Society
- Interest to be stimulated by regular picture nights, discussion groups and field days.



Formation of OFF

- Committee - Rafael Kowron, Moyia Kowron, Doris Newbould, W. (Mick) Staples, Harold Barr, Don McMinn
- Agreed on name “Oatley Flora and Fauna Society”
- Membership fees were set at 2/6d
- 1st Gen Mtg (1956) at Swimming Club Hall (cnr Wonoona & Myall Sts) – films from Chief Guardian of Fauna (see quote next slide)
- Second mtg – speaker: Thistle Y. Harris, well-known author of “Wild Flowers of Australia”
- Meetings became the backbone of OFF’s environmental educational activities.
- First Annual General Meeting was held on 26 Mar 1956
- First full committee was elected (see lists below)



Formation of OFF

Doris Newbould describing first meeting

“It was a hot night, the small local hall was packed, with dozens of people standing and a crowd around each open window trying to see and hear. It had been intended to provide free cups of tea in the interval but this had to be abandoned. Mr Kowron spoke briefly about forming a Flora and Fauna Society and asked those interested to give in their names. We missed a lot of the names because of the crowd but enough were secured...though, of course, many came only to the free film night.”

(p6, Being Green)



THE EARLY YEARS 1956-59

- Focus of early activity on bushland parks of Oatley West.
- 9 honorary Rangers appointed (Fauna Protection Act ^(see list next slide) (Wild Flowers and Native Plants Protection Act, 1927).)
- Volunteers began restoring bush in local reserves
- Stopped rifle range in Peakhurst Heights bush
- Monthly talks (Mon 8pm) and slides & field day initiated
- Constitution and yearly program produced
- Junior membership and education encouraged
- Rare Blechnum fern found locally by junior member
- Variety of speakers, eg, Joan Bradley (on blue wrens)
- By end of 1959, 101 adult and 39 junior members



THE EARLY YEARS 1956-59

7 of the 9 honorary Rangers appointed

Residents from the streets surrounding Lime Kiln Bay and Oatley Heights Parkland

Rafael Kowron (OFF Committee member)

Don McMinn (“)

Harold Barr (“)

Mick Staples

Les Spires

Poss Davis

Darryl Arthur

(p7, Being Green)



THE EARLY YEARS 1956-59



Posters for meetings in 1956 drawn by Denis Lane



THE EARLY YEARS 1956-59

Quote from Don McMinn

“I belonged to the Progress Association, which was not getting much support. My neighbour, Mick Staples, agreed that the place was going to blazes and more needed to be done. He had heard of the conservation meeting at Rafe and Moyia Kowron’s place and suggested we go along. We were in everything but a bath in those days. The feeling was that we would do anything to save Oatley. There were problems in Oatley Park, especially young people cutting down big trees at weekends just for fun, and lighting fires during the school holidays.

I became one of the Honorary Rangers for the park. We carried a card but had no real power and could only ask people politely not to damage things. One job we did was to kill the termites in trees on the edge of the park as they were coming out of the trees at night and heading for houses. Council gave us a box of white arsenic. We would climb up the tree, break the termite runs and pour the poison in. They were days when things were much simpler and we didn’t know much. Another job I had was to be a judge at the Society’s bird calling competitions. At one meeting I remember, I was not very popular with members as I had to give first prize to the son of some important local official. Kids then knew how to do good bird calls because they wandered in the bush a lot.”

(p13, Being Green)



OFF in the 1960's

- In 1960 Kowrons retired for family reasons
- OFF consolidated & stabilised its position
- Preserving the natural environment was a high priority
- Started protesting against projects damaging the environment. Eg at Oatley park
 - “all-tide” (Olympic) swimming pool at Oatley Baths
 - road across Lime Kiln Bay (built on dumped rubbish)
- Education continued as an important pursuit:
 - Monthly meetings continued with distinguished and expert speakers on natural history and conservation topics
 - Field outings became an important activity



OFF in the 1960's

Education has always been an important objective of the Society, including at our regular meetings and not just restricted to local topics

INVITATION!!

NATURE FILMS

INVITATION!!

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society

would like you to come to a film night

MONDAY, 22nd OCTOBER at 7.45 p.m.

at METHODIST CHURCH HALL

Cnr. Mulga Road and Gungah Bay Road, Oatley W.

FILMS: ANIMALS OF AFRICA

EVOLUTION ON ALDABRA ISLAND

The films were taken and will be shown by CLIFF & SHEILA WHITE.

These are outstanding films and this will be a rare opportunity for you to see them. No charge. Come as our welcome guests. *This invitation is issued as part of our EARTH WEEK project.* Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society meets in the Methodist Church Hall on 4th Monday of each month. Lectures, Films, Field Days. Membership: Adults \$2, Juniors 20 cents — but visitors are always welcome.

If you are interested in further information, tear off and send the following:
To: The Secretary, P.O. Box 52, Mortdale 2223.
Please send further information.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Telephone: _____



OFF in the 1960's

- Tree labelling in Oatley Park and Pleasure Grounds
- “No fires except in fireplaces” & “No littering signs put up
- Myra Wall garden (Oatley Park) established (see quote next slide)
- Protested to:
 - Lands Department over proposals to build a second oval in Oatley park in 1966-67
 - Hurstville Council over huge marina proposal off Jewfish Point projecting 76 metres into the Georges River.
- Concern about council's frequent burning off in Oatley Park; after 30 years Fire Management Policy drawn up
- In February 1968, Beatrice Goldstein produced the first edition of OFF News. Still published each month.
- The word Conservation added to name in Jan 1967



OFF in the 1960's

Myra Wall

“Myra Wall died in 1963 and left more than two hundred pounds to the Society. In February 1964, we had a meeting and I suggested that her bequest should be recognised by naming the bed of native plants in Oatley Park after her. Hurstville Council had to approve the project. They did, and we had a working bee planting the garden. A plaque was set on 14 Aug 1965. It read “The Myra Wall Memorial Garden, 1964”.

From: Recollections (Mar.2005) by June Lane, OFF Assistant Secretary 1959-1969

(p16, Being Green)



OFF in the 1960's

OFF NEWS

- 4 -

February 1968.

Lake Peddar

The Tasmanian Government will go ahead with its proposals to construct a dam for hydro-electric purposes and Lake Peddar will be flooded, despite Australian-wide protests as well as ones from England, America and Switzerland. However there is a possibility, as a result of all these protests, that a large national park in the south west of Tasmania will be proclaimed immediately with an Administrative Board and that, after the repeal of an Act, a Directorate of National Parks will be set up. Conservationists will be represented on both these bodies.

Coolong Caves

The N.S.W. Conservation Council is investigating the possibility of opposing the applications for mining leases in the Coolong Caves area. This thrice dedicated area is not the only limestone area available. According to geologists there are other suitable areas available. The more public opinion is roused over the plundering of reserved areas, the better.

O.F.F. NEWS

Mr. R. Grundy,
4 Edna Ave.,
PENSHURST 2222

O.F.F. News

Price: 5 cents

Published by the
OATLEY FLORA
AND FAUNA
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

Hon. Sec., Mrs. B. Goldstein
61 Mi Mi St., Oatley, N.S.W.
2223 :: Telephone 57-5189

Registered at the G.P.O., Sydney, for transmission by post as a periodical.

February, 1968.

EDITORIAL

We start the year 1968 with a new venture - the publication of this Newsheet which will replace the former monthly notice and extend its scope by giving a resume of action on the conservation front as well as news of happenings in our own small world.

The subscription price for "OFF NEWS" - necessary under postal regulations to obtain concession postage rates - will as a consequence of a resolution carried at the Annual General Meeting - be automatically covered by your membership subscription which has not been increased. But you must pay your subscription promptly as we cannot continue sending the newsheet to unfinancial members. Our new Treasurer, Arnold Bryden, will be at the next meeting to receive your fees for 1968 or you can post them to him at 46 Glen Road, Oatley, 2223.

Having made this point, we would now like to ask your help in making a success of this venture. We shall be glad of any criticisms or any suggestions to make the paper meet your needs. If you have any, or any unusual experience or information of common interest, please pass it on to Mrs. Goldstein (57-5189).

First OFF News



OFF in the 1960's



Field Day 1960s (1 November 1964?). Birdwatching to Rooty Hill led by Ernie Wood (seated back row, fourth from left). Paddy McKenzie front left.



OFF in the 1960's



1965. Christmas party, with Doris Newbould



1971 Earth Day display at Roselands. Ida Carder 2nd from right, Nes Grundy right



1970's The Battle of the Bays 1

- Hurstville and Kogarah Councils were using the bays along Georges River as garbage dumps
- Councils considered these areas as mosquito ridden waste lands
- Also an issue of ever increasing rubbish to dispose of with the coming of the consumer society after WW2
- The councils' policies were that they be filled in and turned into sporting fields
- Some of these inlets which became garbage dumps later became parks such as Moore Reserve, Gannons Park and Hurstville Golf Course
- Oatley Park saved from electricity transmission lines



1970's The Battle of the Bays 1

- Northern arm of Lime Kiln Bay became Roberts Avenue Garbage Tip and filled with rubbish
- Lime Kiln Bay Preservation Committee was formed to stop eastern LKB being filled as well (See information next slide)
- Included many OFF members
- Preserve Oatley West Resident Action Group (POW) formed
- HMC intended to destroy Gungah Bay, Jew Fish Bay, eastern arm of LKB & two lengths of Salt Pan Creek foreshore
- Classic conflict between “improvement” and “preservation”
- Destruction delayed until Lucas Heights tip started
- LKB ponding system proposed (finally completed in 2001)



1970's The Battle of the Bays 1

Lime Kiln Bay Preservation Committee

OFF members were directly involved in LKBPC. The Committee's first President was John Blacker (later OFF Vice-president, 1976-77, and President, (1978-86) and its Secretary/Publicity Officer was David Koffel (an OFF committee member). Other OFF members on the committee were Tricia Koffel, Julian Sheen and Ruth Staples
(p26, Being Green)

POW had an impressive and formidable list of patrons : Hon F.J. Walker, MLA; Ald. Mrs J. Loew; Prof D. Dunphy PhD; Prof Y.T. Tchan DSc; Dr G.F. Humphrey MSc; and Mr F.C. Bailey ASAIM. President was Mr R.E. Smith and Secretary was Mrs Faye Gervasoni.

(p35, Being Green)



1970's The Battle of the Bays 1

WASTE DUMP STUDY



BULLDOZERS dump garbage in the upper reaches of Lime Kiln Bay.

A full environment impact study will be made of Lime Kiln Bay area.

The study to be made by officers of Hurstville Council, will take four weeks.

The upper reaches of the bay are used for garbage disposal which has prompted heavy criticism from the newly formed Lime Kiln Bay Preservation Committee.

Committee critical of council

Ald. D. Swanton said too | President of the Lime

Article from
The Pictorial
Newspaper, 27
February 1974



1970's The Battle of the Bays 1

Lime Kiln Bay Preservation Committee in the news in 1974

THE LEADER, 13 Feb. 1974 New bid to halt tip at Oatley bay

The Lime Kiln Bay Preservation Committee has lodged a second objection with the State Pollution Control Commission to Hurstville Council's "reclamation" project for the bay.

The objection was that natural bushland was endangered.

The committee also claimed increased support from residents for its campaign to prevent the tipping of rubbish into the bay by council.

Council intends to turn the estuarine area and natural bushland into a rubbish tip that would extend along the bay below Bay Road, up to about Short Street, Oatley.

"The collection of signatures for our petition has been slow, but hundreds of people have already signed and response to our house-to-house callers has been most gratifying," secretary, Mr. D. Koffel, said.

In addition, we have the support of other conservation groups in the area."

Mr. Koffel also released the text of a letter the committee had received from the local Federal Member, Mr. L. Reynolds.

The committee had asked Mr. Reynolds to make representations to the Federal Minister for Urban and Regional Development (Mr. Uren) for a waste of processing plant in the St. George area.

Support

Mr. Reynolds wrote in reply:

"I strongly support your committee's campaign to do all possible to preserve the environment of our area in the best possible condition."

"I should hope that it will not be necessary for council to run the risk of despoiling the bay."

"Be assured that I will be only too happy to support the representations you have made to my colleague, Mr. Uren, in an effort to obtain from the Australian Government sources the kind of financial help that might assist in providing an incinerator similar to that established in the Eastern Suburbs for the effective disposal of waste."

"I heartily sympathise, of course, with local councils who have not the resources to provide such amenities and, often against their own inclinations, have to dump rubbish in unsatisfactory areas."

"It could well be that the Australian Government proposed grants to the Local Government bodies will make it possible for a project such as this to be carried out."

"A prerequisite to this happening, though, was that various local councils would have to agree to get together to establish a regional group to get such Commonwealth funds."

Welcomed

"I will be only too happy to press the matter with the Minister seeing that so many people of my own electorate..."

ST. GEORGE PICTORIAL, 13 Feb 1974

MP JOINS FIGHT ON TIP PROPOSAL

Preservationists fighting to halt rubbish dumping in Lime Kiln Bay have gained the support of Federal Member for Barton, Mr. L. J. Reynolds.

The Lime Kiln Bay Preservation Committee has lodged a second objection with the State Pollution Control Commission against Hurstville Council's Lime Kiln Bay reclamation project.

The objection is based on claims that the natural bushland and mangrove bays are endangered.

Lime Kiln Bay Preservation Committee claimed increased support for its campaign to prevent the tipping of rubbish into the bay by the council to

rine area and natural bushland into a rubbish tip which would extend along Lime Kiln Bay, below Day Road up to about Short Street, Oatley.

"We now have the support of other conservation groups in the area," Mr Koffel said.

The committee has asked Mr Reynolds to make representations to the Australian Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Mr Uren, for a waste processing plant for the St George area.

Mr Reynolds said he strongly supported the

necessary for council to run the risk of despoiling Lime Kiln Bay," Mr Reynolds said.

"I will support the committee's representations to Mr Uren in their efforts to obtain financial aid to provide an incinerator for the effective disposal of waste."

"I sympathise with councils who have not the resources to provide proper waste disposal and often against their own inclination have to dump rubbish in unsatisfactory areas."

Mr Koffel said: "Once Lime Kiln Bay is com

er,



The Battle of the Bays 1



Passive recreation area created where there was once bushland



Battle of the Bays 2

- Poulton Park Connells Pt became another battle ground
- Kogarah Council was dredging Oatley Bay and pumping the residue into the area now known as Poulton Park
- The works involved diverting the creek line and reclaiming the wetland
- OFF and its members strongly campaigned against it
- Alderman A. H. Hardiman* suggested that “perhaps we can see if we can save a patch of the mud at Poulton Park for the ‘mangrovites’ to wallow in.”
- Eventually the work was stopped but not before much of the natural area was destroyed

* Ald Hardiman is the same person that GRC wants to name the proposed reserve at the former Oatley Bowling Club site after, carved out of Myles Dunphy Reserve



Battle of the Bays 2

POULTON PARK: WASTE OR WONDERLAND?

By PHILLIP SUTTON

Mr. Sutton was the Sydney convenor of INSPECT, an environmental education group, and was an active member of the Save Poulton Park Campaign Committee. This year he took up an appointment as director of the Environmental Studies Association of Victoria.

For many years conservationists have been fighting to save Poulton Park, a 52-acre bushland area, in South Hurstville.

Considerable controversy has developed with strong feeling expressed both for and against the project.

The people of the area have two valuable resources.

One is Oatley Bay, which is silted up and needs dredging, the other is the bushland of Poulton Park. Both resources are valuable and need preserving.

However, because Oatley Bay is silted up, citizen pressure has developed calling on Kogarah Council to dredge the bay. This in itself is perfectly reasonable.

But because of the desire to economise on an already expensive project, likely to cost anything from \$300,000 to \$1 million, the council and some of the citizens

around the bay have looked at Poulton Park as a cheap and convenient dumping site.

It must be admitted that in the short term and without considering the inherent value of Poulton Park, this means of disposal is a little cheaper.

But one cannot make a hasty, ill-considered, rational decision by ignoring half the consequences which are involved.

Lossing bushland

Bush areas are getting scarcer each year in big urban complexes such as Sydney.

They are being swallowed up by housing developments, road and freeway building, and by devel-

opment in some cases far from active recreation use.

These areas have to be judged on their merits and a balance arrived at.

But it is clear that we are continuing to lose large and precious bush areas, and this will lead to a real loss in the quality of life in Sydney.

Conservationists realise they must justify their wishes to preserve bushland.

There are many reasons why it is needed.

Bushland provides an adventure playground for young children. One has only to speak to the children playing in

Commonsense expert's plea

areas such as Poulton Park to realise the value they place on such an opportunity.

Another quality of bushland is the visual relief it gives in areas dominated by buildings and other man-made objects. Bushland provides the necessary habitat or living area for a multitude of native birds, animals and plants.

One of the most important values of bushland in general and Poulton Park in particular is that it is an exceptionally useful tool for educational purposes.

Environmental education and the associated field studies are becoming ever more important in the

row.

Destruction of the park will mean it will be only those who are able to dredge who will be able to receive the richness of education which is coming to be expected.

It is the loss well off who will be able to afford to Poulton Park is not a success wasteland.

In fact it has been estimated by a reliable landscape architect that it would cost about \$200,000 to re-create an

dumping ground, in 30 years time when the bay has silted up again, a new council and a new group of citizens will be faced with the same problem.

Early this year the S.P.U.C. wrote to Kogarah Council saying that subject to the granting of approval by other government departments it was granted permission to reclaim a section of Poulton Park.

The council was not given permission to fill the total area it had originally applied for.

It was not allowed to fill above a certain contour and it was not allowed to fill the mangroves.

It is worth noting that



LIME KILN Bay rubbish dumping is developing into a new environment

SMH, Feb. 1974

Departments concerned

But this time they will not have room to dump the silt so, nor will they have the opportunity to decide to preserve the bushland.

It is worth noting that

Early this year the S.P.U.C. wrote to Kogarah Council saying that subject to the granting of approval by other government departments it was granted permission to reclaim a section of Poulton Park.

The council was not given permission to fill the total area it had originally applied for.

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It is worth noting that



Poulton Park wilderness area (left); and an area already reclaimed for netball courts.

Controversy over Poulton Park



Battle of the Bays 2

Angry residents rout protesters

About 200 angry residents drove about 40 conservationists from Poulton Park last week and took control of a meeting the conservationists had organised.

The conservationists had called a "last-ditch-stand" meeting to oppose a plan to reclaim sections of the park.

The meeting of residents demanded that Kogarah Council begin work on dredging Oatley Bay immediately and reclaiming the park.

The residents shouted down conservation speakers.

A special speaker reported to have been sent from Melbourne by the Minister for Environment and Conservation (Dr M. Cass) never had a chance to talk.

Two of the main organisations opposing reclamation of the park, INSPECT and the Save Poulton Park Campaign Committee, organised the meeting, which

was given wide publicity.

Conservationists for years have opposed council's plans to dredge Oatley Bay and use the dredged material to fill in swampland in Poulton Park.

The proposals would make Oatley Bay navigable and Poulton Park useable for organised sport.

Kogarah aldermen attended the meeting in force. Ald. G. Woods successfully moved that council do all it can to prepare for the dredging.

Council was also asked to begin reclaiming the park above the high water mark and to move its dredge into position in Oatley Bay.

Council now is waiting for a "formal" certificate from the Minister for Local Government (Sir Charles Cutler), and a list of conditions imposed by State Government bodies before it begins dredging.

One alderman who attended the meeting told the Leader:

"The people of Oatley are sick and tired of having a

He said he had made up a new name for them — "mangrovites."

"Why should they want to conserve a dirty, stinking mass at Poulton Park, which is not an asset to the community?" he said.

Ald. A. H. Hardiman, who attended the Poulton Park meeting said, "The conservationists get a warm reception."

"The leader, who I believe came from Paddington, wasn't allowed to speak.

"I believe that Dr. Cass saw fit to send a man from Melbourne.

"If he (Dr. Cass) is concerned, why hasn't he contacted us?"

"Blackmail"

"The people of Oatley have shown that they want the bay dredged.

"Perhaps we can see if we can save a patch of the mud at Poulton Park for the 'mangrovites' to wallow in."

Ald. Woods said that council had "stood on its

Conservationists didn't always have local support

ST. GEORGE LEADER
27 Feb 1974

POULTON PARK



1980's COMMUNITY AWARENESS

- Increasing threats to environment but increasing community awareness too
- OFF members on Council helped reduce differences, incl. Julian Sheen (Hurstville) & Susan Gainsford (Kog)
- Oatley Park Advisory Committee (OPAC) formed (See information next slide)
- OPAC members resign in frustration at council attitudes
- Problems of damage from illegal trail bike riders
- Oatley Park Headland Track leaflet printed (A Fairley)
- Bush regeneration in Oatley Park using Bradley method
- Annual Dinners a feature of OFF's yearly program, with 90 to 110 people attending and quality guest speakers, eg, Bob Carr, MLA, then Min for Planning & Environment



1980's COMMUNITY AWARENESS

OPAC

A practical example of Hurstville Council's more positive attitude was the establishment of the Oatley Park Advisory Committee (OPAC), formed to oversee Oatley Park. Julian Sheen, who was Deputy Mayor of Hurstville Council at the time, promoted the idea, discussed it with OFF and steered it through both the Labor caucus and Council. It consisted of two representatives from Council, two elected ratepayers and five appointed members. A packed public meeting (chaired by Julian Sheen) held on 27 February 1980 created the committee, the good attendance reflecting the community's concern with the park's maintenance and regeneration.

Five OFF members were on the first committee. Alderman Julian Sheen was Chairman, Graham Quint was Secretary/Treasurer, John Blacker and Tricia Koffel (Deputy Chair) were elected by the public meeting, and Val Argall was one of the appointed members



Example of biodiversity OFF endeavours to preserve



1980's COMMUNITY AWARENESS

- Other events: Oatley Lions Festival participation, delegates to NCC Annual Conf, Smiggins Holes trips ...
- Cooperation with other RAGs became important activity
 - Wolli Creek Preservation Society, The Battlers for Kellys Bush, Friends of Malabar Bush, Friends of the Hacking River, etc.
- Presidents' fund set up after death of John Blacker
- OFF involved in main environmental issues of the 1980s
 - Terania Creek, Washpool Wilderness, Great Barrier Reef, Franklin River, uranium mining, etc. (p71)
- 100 years since the proclamation of Oatley Park in 1988
- Special edition of OFF News to commemorate event
- National Trust positive burning program in O Park 1988
- Moore Reserve, used as a tip was grassed by 1977 and left that way – no playing fields built by 1988



1980's COMMUNITY AWARENESS

THIS WEEK
Comm Thurs.
ROMANCING THE STONE
Mon-Fri 11am & 8 pm
Sat 2 pm, 5 pm & 8 pm.

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Council 'frustrates' Oatley group

Oatley Park Advisory Committee frustration boils over!

① Its secretary, Tricia Koffel, said the committee had been frustrated at every turn by council indifference and obstruction, and members felt further efforts were pointless.

She said communication between committee and council had broken down completely and the council either ignored, or took the opposite course of action to recommendations put to it.

Members felt the original concept of the committee — to represent views of various park use groups — had failed and more would be achieved by returning to individual lobbying of council.

"We are not really serving a purpose," she said.

"Perhaps if the council has six or seven people screaming in its ear it will take more notice."

Mrs Koffel said the committee's role had also been ridiculed and down-

② Aldermanic representation had become token since the last election, Mrs Koffel said.

She said a committee proposal for signposting and marking a section of one-way road in the park for a bike and jogging track had not even received an answer from the council.

A recommendation to levy a gate charge to cover the cost of a National Trust bush regeneration program had also not been acted on.

Mrs Koffel said lack of co-operation from the council's engineering department had been a major stumbling block for the committee.

"For the most part they think a park is green grass with goal posts at either end," she said.

Mrs Koffel said Oatley Park was the municipality's only natural bushland reserve and therefore required special upkeep.

We resign, says Park Committee

Oatley Park Advisory Committee has ~~resigned~~ ~~itself~~ out of existence rather than continue what it sees as an exercise in futility.

The 12-member committee, formed four years ago to advise Hurstville Council on park matters, ~~was~~ ~~announced~~ at its June meeting to disband.

granted in certain council circles.

"We kept hearing that we were a bunch of maniacs just trying to create trouble. I feel we have been unfairly treated," she said.

When formed in 1980, the committee had consisted of 10 members, including two aldermen.





1990's NEW APPROACHES

- Focus back on local issues
- Bush care, native tree preservation, protection of river
- Support still for other issues along with donations
- Moore Reserve still hot topic until wetland constructed and rest of area left grassed
- OFF's new legal status when Incorporated in 1990
- Attendances at meetings on issues common in 1990/91
 - problems of the Georges River, HCC's tree removals, waste depot extension at Lucas Heights, off-shore sand mining, etc.
- Bush regeneration funding had considerable benefits
- “Myles Dunphy Bushland Reserve” named at OFF's request and Water Board funded bush regeneration
- OFF received & managed \$372,710 for bush regen.

(See info next slide)



1990's NEW APPROACHES

Bush Regeneration Grants

In total, OFF received and managed \$372,710 from grants for local bushland rehabilitation during the 1990s. The control and distribution of these funds put an increased burden on the Society, but the Hon Treasurer, John Watters (1993-2002) handled the complex matter with great care and professionalism.

Examples: \$20,400 to help restore the estuary and Oatley Bay Creek at Poulton Park (Feb 1997), a Coastcare Grant of \$23,000 for the estuary at Poulton Park (Feb 1998), a further \$29,980 for Poulton Park: \$108,000 for Stage 2 of Moore Reserve and \$40,990 for Stage 2 of Poulton Park (Nov 1999).

(p79, Being Green)



1990's NEW APPROACHES

- In 1990's OFF joined fight to protect upper Georges River catchment.
- Member Sharyn Cullis told the Society of the many problems the river faced (See information next slide)
- In 1994, the Georges River Environmental Alliance was launched. Sharyn active in this until her recent death.
- River Keepers Program launched in 1996-97
- Over-development and tree preservation an OFF issue
- Council-community Tree Preservation Working Party est
- OFF worked on TPO* and brochures (Living with Trees) suggesting suitable indigenous trees and shrubs

* Tree Preservation Order



1990's NEW APPROACHES

Georges River Problems

These included discharges from factories, urban run-off, industrial developments on clay floodplains and new urban developments at Appin and along Cabramatta Creek.

(P82, Being Green)



Bush regeneration volunteers at Oatley Park with
GRC Bushcare program



1990's NEW APPROACHES

- OFF members involved in protest in over-development on Mulga Road (Coles site). Reduced the impact.
- Meeting with 800 people opposed and Council rejected proposal, only to be defeated in Land and Envir court.
- OFF called on Council to re-instate Foreshore Protection policies. 1999, Foreshore Scenic Protection Plan approved
- OFF expressed concern over the environmental impacts of the new over-head comms wiring (esp. by Optus).
- Better relationship between OFF and Councils
- OFF questioned candidates in 1999 state & local elections on environmental issues and broadcast results to members



2000's NEW MILLENIUM

- Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands opened in Sep 2001
- Moore Park Wetland also opened in Sep 2001
- OFF represented at the re-opening of Oatley Pleasure Grounds, where members worked on bush regeneration
- Initiated book prize for environmental excellence at 3 primary schools - Oatley, Oatley West and St Josephs
- Expressed concern at Genetically Modified Foods
- OFF made submissions on various environmental issues
 - water conservation, decline of sharks, container deposits, 4WDs on beaches, brumby culling, population, mountain bikes in RNP
- Requested that HCC's Tree Management Working Party be re-convened due to continuing loss of large trees



Bushwalks – Showing People Oatley Park



2000's NEW MILLENIUM

- In Aug 2001, OFF opposed KCC's Draft Tree Preservation Policy due to wide criteria for removal (See information next slide)
 - could have spelled destruction for virtually any tree
- Over-development remained an on-going problem
- Opposed new mobile phone tower in Oatley park 2003
 - large meeting opposed and included non-violent resistance
- Success after Hutchison taken to High Court!
- Bird brochures by David Waterhouse given to schools
- Website created and email began to be used
- Fund environmental scientific research at universities



2000's NEW MILLENIUM

KCC'S Draft Tree Preservation Policy

Criteria for tree removal in this policy included : “The tree has blocked or is likely to block views and removal will allow access to lost views or allow retention of views.” “The tree, in the opinion of the Councillor Tree Committee, is out of character with the area by virtue of its species, location, maintenance requirements, size and existing number of trees”. The first opened up a huge opportunity for residents to get rid of trees all along the Georges River and the second allowed almost any tree to be removed for any reason.

(p94, Being Green)



Oatley Village Lions Festival 2018



Participation in Local Events



Began organising “Clean up Australia” activities at sites in the Georges River Council area



2000's NEW MILLENIUM

- Long standing issues still a problem:
 - foxes, mgt of reserves, loss of open space and bush destruction with council developments, Mature trees disappearing in alarming numbers due to building and safety concerns
- Over-development continuing big issue
 - despite council candidates' statements to oppose!
- Strongly and successfully opposed cuts to HCC Bushcare budget
- Dual Occupancy approved in FSPA in SW Oatley! This showed up weakness in the Foreshore Scenic Protection amendment to the Hurstville LEP. (See information next slide)
- OFF input to HCC's Oatley Park Plan of Management



2000's NEW MILLENIUM

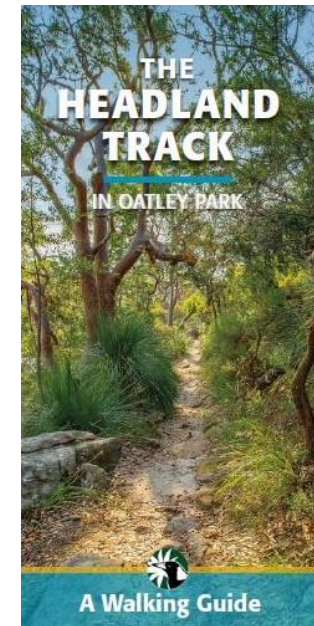
Dual Occupancy Approved in South-West Oatley

In March 2001, some of the long thin blocks of land in Llewellyn Street, West Oatley, with their grand Blackbutt trees and spreading Angophoras framing water views, were subject to dual-occupancy and sub-division applications. Despite many objections from local residents and serious concern over the legality of the proposal, Hurstville Council approved the application, thus showing up weakness in the Foreshore Scenic Protection amendment to the Hurstville LEP. The March/April and May/June 2001 issues of OFF News were reporting more problems under the heading of “Urban Consolidation” as town houses were being planned for River Road, West Oatley, with significant threats to large indigenous trees in the surrounds.

Kogarah Council also at this time developed a plan for future urban consolidation which meant more loss of green space. “Urban Consolidation” had become just a euphemism for fitting as many villas and town houses as possible onto suburban blocks and sub-dividing large blocks into smaller units.



2000's NEW MILLENIUM



Produced colour brochures on Birds, Plants and Tracks in Oatley Park and Lime Kiln Bay



2000's NEW MILLENIUM

- Oatley Bowling Club trashed due to vandalism and neglect from Hurstville City council



- Successfully helped stop site's sale and redevelopment
- Opposed removal of site from Myles Dunphy Reserve



2000's NEW MILLENIUM



Members also began and still participate in testing and reporting on water quality of various creeks draining into the Georges River in the GRC area and Dharawal NP



2000's NEW MILLENIUM



Boorea Reserve at
Oatley Station

Planted and subsequently
maintain over 5000 trees
& shrubs in denuded parks
in the GRC area





2000's NEW MILLENIUM

- Sewer overflows a major issue. Dairy Creek fix
- Lime Kiln Bay Wetland Community Awareness Project
 - Community survey, drain stenciling and wetland tours
- Opposed damaging Long Wall coal mining under water catchments
- New logo developed, along with a mission statement
- On a sadder note, a number of long-term members passed away: Norm Tonkin, Fred Bell, Harry Whaite, June & Keith Underwood, Graham Austin and Val Boyan, Sharyn Cullis, Rafe Kowron
- But Society continues on strongly due to continuing community participation and concern for the environment



November Meeting Climate Change and Weedy Seadragons

By GL November 20, 2021 No Comments



Commenced monthly Talks on YouTube



2000's NEW MILLENIUM



Microplastic Investigations at Poulton Park



2000's NEW MILLENIUM



OFF assisted land-holders in regional areas, such as this property Moorelands near Gunning



Oatley Battles that OFF successfully campaigned against

- 2nd sports oval in Oatley Park
- Clearing mangroves & rubbish dumping in Lime Kiln bay
- Proposed routing of high voltage power line through Oatley Park



The Propeller

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1970

A Great Victory At Oatley

The announcement that Oatley Park is to be spared from the intrusion of power transmission lines will be welcomed by everyone in this district.



Oatley Battles that OFF successfully campaigned against

- Proposal to create a helicopter landing site and communication tower in Oatley Park
- Construction of more roads in Oatley Park, including a proposal to link the park with Peakhurst at Jinna Reserve
- Car park in Oatley Park to cater for a proposed marina off Jewfish Point
- Siting of mobile phone tower in Oatley Park
- High-rise Development at Oatley Bowling Club (OBC) site
- Reclassification of OBC site from Community Land to Operational Land which would have allowed its sale



OFF's Achievements

- OFF has received over \$500,000 in grants to rehabilitate bushland reserves at:
 - Neverfail Bay
 - Poulton Park
 - Moore Reserve
 - Myles Dunphy Reserve
 - Oatley Pleasure Grounds
 - Gannons Park
 - Boorea Reserve



OFF's Achievements

- Considered to be the main environmental organisation along the lower reaches of the Georges River
- Saved Oatley Park from over development
- Increased the awareness of the environment on the local community
- Saved many trees and much bushland from destruction
- Act as a “watchdog” on actions of councils, government agencies and developers
- Make representations to local, state and federal governments
- Negotiated with Hurstville Council and Fire Brigade to develop a Fire Management Plan for Oatley Park.



OFF's Achievements

- Campaign against inappropriate tree removal and other environmental damage
- Campaign against inappropriate planning proposals
- Lobbied to name areas:
 - Myles Dunphy Reserve
 - Dairy Creek
 - Boorea Reserve
 - Myles Dunphy Creek
- Significant lobby group with approx. 300 members



Water dragon in Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands



OFF's Achievements

PROPOSALS AND THREATS TO OATLEY PARK, 1955-2022

Opposed by Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society
as they would damage the park's natural values

1955	General bush vandalism; the reason for the Society being formed.
1956	Application for a Rifle Range in bush between Lime Kiln Bay and Waterfall Road. Clearing began but abandoned after protests.
1961	Olympic-sized pool for Sandy Bay, with concreted bottom and walls. Rejected by Council.
1964	Mangroves of Lime Kiln Bay to be filled in for a sporting complex and an extended golf course. Did not proceed at this stage.
1964	Proposal to extend road through Oatley Park, over Lime Kiln Bay to Peakhurst. Dumping of rocks for causeway begun.
1964	Plans for an Olympic Pool between the oval and the playground. Three acres of trees to be cleared. Provision of car park and widening of existing access roads. Opposed by Lands Department.
1966	Application for fireworks in Oatley Park.
1966	Proposal by Hurstville Council for a second oval in Oatley Park.
1967	Plans for a sporting complex in the mangrove area of Lime Kiln Bay still being considered.
1968	Application for permissive occupancy for a marina off Jewfish Bay. Cars to be parked in Oatley Park.
1968	Application for a private telephone to be installed in Oatley Park so that boat hirers could park and then telephone the above marina.



OFF's Achievements

PROPOSALS AND THREATS TO OATLEY PARK, 1955-2022

Opposed by Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society
as they would damage the park's natural values

1969	Council policy of frequent burning off of park bushland.
1970	Proposals to run high tension power lines through park.
1971	Council application to tip household rubbish in Jewfish Bay.
1972	Council filling in of north arm of Lime Kiln Bay. It became Roberts Ave Garbage Tip.
1973-74	Council proposes to fill eastern arm of Lime Kiln Bay.
1975	Application for a Commonwealth grant to build a swimming pool in park.
1977	A water activities centre, with boat sheds, proposed by Scouts Association for Sandy Bay. Proposal eventually failed after 3 years.
1978	Application for a helicopter pad on Oatley Park oval. Refused by Council.
1985	Excessive hazard reduction burning by Fire Brigade. Opposition led eventually to a park fire policy.
2003	Hutchison Telecom communications tower and facilities constructed on edge of park oval. Removed after court action by Hurstville Council. OFF action part of community protest.
2003-04	Mountain bikes causing significant damage to park. Council Management Plan excludes mountain bikes at request of OFF.
2020-2021	Mountain bike damage increased during COVID and reported numerous times to Council to rectify. Damage from car parking also reported to Council. Parking increased following construction of popular new playground.



OFF Executive 1955 to 2022

President

1955	Rafael (Rafe)	Kowron	(Acting)
1956	Harold	Barr	
1957	Keith	Williams	
1958	Jack	Andresen	
1959-1962	Cec	Sainty	
1963-1965	Eric	Wheeler	
1966-1967	A.E. (Bert)	Hayes	
1968-1969	Ted	Allsopp	
1970-1972	Phil	Hall	
1973-1974	Paddy	McKenzie	
1975-1977	Alan	Fairley	
1978-1986	John	Blacker	
1987-1988	Bernie	Sargeant	
1989-1990	Val	Boyan	
1991-1994	Graham	Quint	
1995	Alan	Fairley	(Acting)
1996-2000	John	Winters	
2001-2003	Cliff	Crane	
2004-2006	Jan	Douglas	
2007-2012	Julian	Sheen	
2013-2019	Graham	Lalchere	
2020-	Kim	Wagstaff	



OFF Executive 1955 to 2022

Honorary Secretary

⊕

Hon	Secretary	
1956	<u>Moyia</u>	<u>Kowron</u>
1957-1958	<u>Rafe</u>	<u>Kowron</u>
1959-1967	Doris	<u>Newboul</u>
1968-1969	Beatrice	Goldstein
1970-1971	Alice	Lloyd
1972-1982	Ida	Carder
1983-1984	June	Underwood
1985-1987	Lesley	Cox
1988-1993	Keith	Underwood
1994-2004	Robin	Dickson
2005-2008	Faye	Coughlan
2009-2021	Liz	Cameron
2022	Erica	<u>Buzo</u>

Honorary Treasurer

1956-1958	<u>Rafe</u>	<u>Kowron</u>
1959-1967	Edwin	Dalziel
1968-1971	Arnold	<u>Bryden</u>
1972-1992	Harry	<u>Whaite</u>
1993-2002	John	Watters
2003-2005	Carolyn	Cotter
2006-2013	Lesley	Wylie
2014-	Rodger	Robertson

□



<https://www.oatleyflorafauna.org.au/> and on [Facebook](#)



Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society

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Working to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment locally and globally since 1955



Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc



Guardian of our local environment