



North Head Sanctuary Foundation

Custodians of North Head

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Next meeting Wednesday, 11 May 2016 at 7pm

at Bandicoot Heaven (Building 20).

Our speaker for this meeting will be Peter Macinnis. His articles appear in this newsletter. Please come and enjoy his talk, Environmental Education in the information age.

Nephila edulis (Golden Orb spider)



Photo by Ian Evans, taken over the Easter long weekend.

Another successful CleanUp at North Head.

Our numbers may have been few, but the five committed volunteers who turned up on CleanUp Australia day cleared five bags of rubbish and five bags of recyclables from around the tracks and internal roadways on North Head. Lots more could be done in the area below the car park almost opposite Bella Vista café, but that is a hard-work location.

Thanks go to Ian McCawley, Terry Bluett, Ken Higgs and Geoff Lambert for their great efforts.

Our report has gone off to CleanUp Australia and hopefully each of our workers will get to enjoy the free drink offered by Q Station.

Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

Our community education room is open 10am to 4pm Saturdays and Sundays in Building 20. We'd welcome some new volunteers to help staff Bandicoot Heaven. If interested, please contact Judy Lambert at twsombat@optusnet.com.au.

Native Plant Nursery

If you would like to join us any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and 12noon, planting, removing weeds and maintenance, just turn up or email: northhead@fastmail.com.au.

Congratulations

Caroline Greentree, Cheryl Hollingsworth and Jenny Wilson received Manly Environment Centre Eco Award nominations this year for their work for the environment.

Ongoing protection of North Head's native fauna

Dr Jennifer Anson

Australia has undergone an extraordinary rate of mammal fauna decline in the last 200 years, with over 10% of our endemic terrestrial species lost forever and a further 21% of fauna currently threatened. This is a stark comparison to the world's modern day extinction rate of 1.5%. Of the 28 Australian mammal species that have gone extinct since 1788, the highest rates of extinction occur in the potoroos, bandicoots and bilbies, and rodents. Introduced predators, mainly the feral cat and red fox, are one of the primary drivers of this devastating loss and the declines are ongoing.

North Head is home to endangered populations of both Long-nosed Bandicoots and Little Penguins. It is not just luck that has kept these species persisting on the headland, but rather ongoing management of invasive predators and careful monitoring of the native populations. Huge efforts are put into trying to keep North Head fox free as this species has a devastating effect on native fauna. However, these animals are capable of dispersing from other areas and efforts to prevent foxes becoming established at North Head are continuous.

The bandicoot mortality sign near the archway is for bandicoot deaths associated with a particular section of the road. It does not reflect road kills for the whole headland or any deaths attributed to predation. However, it is a good reminder to take care when driving, especially around dawn and dusk and at night.

Feral dogs and feral cats are very rare around North Head, although dogs off leash and domestic cats free to roam at night are an ongoing issue. Pets are not allowed within North Head Sanctuary for the protection of the native fauna.



Juvenile Long-nosed Bandicoot trapped during the ongoing population monitoring.

Photo: J Anson.

The thistle saga in four parts - Part 3

Peter Macinnis

By 1846, somebody in Geelong, probably James Harrison, the Scots-born newspaper owner, was worried that there were thistles running amok, just across the Bass Strait:

There is scarce a doubt, if the thistle is allowed to spread as it has done, that in the space of a few years it will completely destroy the pasturage, and then farewell to our wool growing prosperity. In the interior on the rich soils, the thistle grows much more vigorously than on the strong hills in the vicinity of the metropolis...

— *Geelong Advertiser and Squatters' Advocate*, 25 April 1846, 4.

Nothing happened, and in 1848, the first plants were reported in Geelong. There was no action and in 1849, the paper returned to the attack:

The thistle was probably imported in the shipments of hay once so frequent from Van Diemen's Land, and made its appearance first in the neighbourhood of the flag-staff hill, Melbourne, from whence it soon spread to Keilor, but may now be found so far up as the Wardy Yallock ...

— *Geelong Advertiser*, 12 July 1849, 2.

The Argus had a different view of how the thistle arrived in Victoria, and published this a few days later:

This is certainly not the true origin of the introduction of the thistle, for we well recollect it first grew on the green knoll, a little to the south of Lizardet's Inn, on the Beach, about where the residence of the Custom's Officer is now built, and it has gradually radiated from that centre with the course of the prevailing winds.

— *The Argus*, 16 July 1849, 2.

The Argus painted a picture of an enthusiastic Scotshman, who took his seat on the top of the stage coach from Hobart Town to Launceston, and scattered the seeds along the road.

The *Geelong Advertiser* reported on thistles at Devils River, north-west of Melbourne, and now the Scots were blamed:

The Introduction of the Scotch Thistle into the Devils' River district was by a Scotch gentleman, who, before the dissolution of the Company, superintended the stations of the Messrs Watson and Hunter, and who it would appear, enamoured of every or anything from the 'land o' cakes,' no matter how pungent or repellent, in the full bloom of his patriotism transplanted the emblem of Caledonia into the very heart of Australia Felix?

— *Geelong Advertiser*, 9 August 1849, 1.



Left — A thistle on our patch, about to be dispatched.
Right — Thistles go very deep to find water.

Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

The Preussen – Smallpox – part three



On 12 January 1887, four deaths from smallpox were recorded;

Marinus Christiansen, aged 6 years old
David Williams, aged 35 years old, married man
Isabella (Bella) Reid, aged 18 years old
Catherine (Katie) Reid, aged 7.

On 13 January 1887, one death;
Rosina Walter, aged one year, and German.

On 14 January 1887, one death;
Emilia Christiansen 18 months old and sister to Marinus.

On 23 January 1887, Herman Peters who was the assistant engineer (German) on board the Preussen died from exhaustion and pneumonia on 24th day of his illness with smallpox. He was 27 years old and his grave is pictured above.

Mrs David Williams, was ill from smallpox but recovered. She had two children, two and nine years old.