



North Head Sanctuary Foundation

Custodians of North Head

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General Meeting 10 June 2017

Our next meeting is on Saturday 10 June, 2pm at Building 20 (Bandicoot Heaven) Our guest speaker will be Helen Vickers who lives in St Barbaras Ave, North Head. She will talk about her early days on North Head. Everyone welcome.

“Saint Barbara is best known as the patron saint of armourers, artillerymen, military engineers, miners and others who work with explosives because of her old legend's association with lightning, and of mathematicians.” From Wikipedia

Native Plant Nursery



Volunteers on the old Oval. There has been a lot of growth in the last few months. It is well worth a visit next time you are on North Head. The Bandicoots are enjoying our planted areas too,

We have a lot of planting, weeding and maintenance to do looking after all our areas. We would love some help. If you would like to join us on any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and 12noon, just turn up or email: northhead@fastmail.com.au.

'Walk & Talk Little Manly - North Head Sanctuary

Saturday 18th June. 8.45am – 1.00 pm - FREE
Learn about your local Aboriginal heritage on a guided bush walk with Karen Smith, Aboriginal Heritage Officer.

Walk starts at Little Manly Beach, through the bush & up to North Head Sanctuary Foundation Nursery. Following morning tea at Bandicoot Heaven, join the conversation with Aunty Frances Bodkin, Dharawal knowledge-holder and botanical author.

Bookings essential. Numbers limited. Robynne Millward Manly Environment Centre 9976 1428

Eastern Pygmy Possums back at North Head

Dr Jennifer Anson



Australian Wildlife Conservancy has reintroduced 17 Eastern Pygmy Possums to North Head, with more still to come. This is the first known translocation of this species and an exciting step forward in the restoration of the headlands fauna. These tiny marsupials are threatened in NSW and disappeared from North Head a long time ago. They have suffered from extensive habitat loss, altered fire regimes and feral predators. Eastern Pygmy Possums are about 15g, slightly more than the weight of an AAA battery. They feed primarily on nectar and pollen with a strong preference for banksia inflorescences. As pollinators they can play an important role in the health of the Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

The animals are being released into specially designed nest boxes and three of the recently released pygmy possums are carrying tiny radio transmitters, allowing us to collect nesting and movement data. Early results show that animals are moving nesting locations every few days, nesting in a range of habitat features including a ringtail possum drey, hollows in dead stags and forks of trees and the stump of a Xanthorrhoea (grass tree). So far, they are settling in well to their new home.

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

Strangled!

Geoff Lambert

In 2014, when creating the third Sue Halmagyi regeneration trial plot, NHSF planted seed as one of the treatments. This was in Plot 3 and it is worthwhile looking at this plot to see if you can guess which quadrats were seeded.

Among the seed were those of the protected species *Eucalyptus camfieldii*. A single plant duly appeared several months later and had been struggling along for nearly three years. This is the first such seedling I have ever seen "in the wild" – if we can use that term here. It was always very sickly – and now it is dead.

In the NHSF Nursery pots, feeding on a diet of mulch and Osmocote, these trees grow like rockets compared with their companions in the wild. In plot 3, our baby *camfieldii* reached about 2 inches in height in 30 months. I had been babying it along for about 15 months, after it had been nearly killed by a 45 degree day in late 2015.

When I inspected it in early April after neglecting it for 3 weeks during the By-election, it was stone-cold motherless dead. It took a while to figure out what had gone wrong. I felt sure it was not lack of water because there had been no lack during March/April. I thought it might have been root rot. Closer inspection revealed that it had had the life sucked out of it by Devils Twine – *Cassytha glabella*.

The 4 pictures tell the story:



Growing slowly



Devils Twine sneaks in



Dead, dead - and never called me "Mother"



The "ulcers" through which the life was sucked out of the plant.

An interesting thing was that most other plants in the plot also have *Cassytha* "infections" – but they are still thriving. I guess it was because my baby was so small and sickly. *Cassytha*-induced mortality is known for some species of eucalypt, most notably *E. crenulata*, the Buxton Gum. Now we have another to add to the list. I wonder if this susceptibility could account for the low success rate of the species in the wild.

It was a bad week for *camfieldii* on North Head, we also lost a maturing plant due to transplant shock, when it was moved from North Fort Rd to the football oval, to allow installation of the new fire hydrant line and other works.

We live and we learn

Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

Sun, Sunday 31 August 1913
Death in Quarantine Area.

Six fresh cases were reported yesterday, four of the patients being females ranging in ages from four weeks to 19 years. Two children, aged four years and six years respectively, were taken from one house in Erskineville. The other cases came from Balmain, Leichardt, Clyde, and a camp at Long Bay. These cases bring the total to 629. There are at present in the quarantine area 56 patients and 217 convalescents, a total of 273. On Friday Mrs. Mary Martin, aged 29, of Redfern, died in quarantine. She was admitted three days before suffering from smallpox. She died, however, during child-birth. Questioned last night as to whether the disease had anything to do with death, Dr. Paton said: "The death would have occurred in any circumstances. Smallpox had nothing at all to do with it." The funeral took place in the quarantine area yesterday afternoon, the only persons outside the area present being the priest who read the burial service and the husband of the dead woman, (Note Her son James E Martin did not die at childbirth but died later the same year.)