



North Head Sanctuary Foundation

Custodians of North Head

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General Meeting

Our next General meeting is on Saturday 23 February 2019 at 2pm in Bandicoot Heaven (Building 20).

Unfortunately, Dr Vyanna Leo, Australian Wildlife Conservancy's Wildlife Ecologist at North Head has postponed her talk until a later date.

Matthew Taylor will talk about the birds of North Head.

Everyone welcome.



Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

We welcome recent new volunteers now helping staff our community education room in Building 20, but others will still be welcomed.

Staffed on a roster basis, our community education room opens from 10am to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays. If you are interested in helping out, or want more information, please contact Judy Lambert at

twsombat@optusnet.com.au.

Native Plant Nursery

Help us maintain and plant out plants grown in our Native Plant Nursery. The best way to see what we do is to join us on a Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and 12 noon. Morning tea is usually at 10.30am.

For more details email northhead@fastmail.com.au

Or just turn up and ask for Jenny.

Congratulations Dr Paul Lancaster

A long-time NHSF member, Paul was awarded an AM in the Australia Day honours.

Quarantine Unmasked: Surviving the 1918-19 influenza pandemic at North Head (5 March)

A talk by Dr Peter Hobbins on 5 March 2019, 10:30am to 11:30am at Harbour Trust head office. For more details and to book see

<http://www.harbourtrust.gov.au/learn/trust-talks>

The Society for Insect Studies Inc. will be visiting us on Saturday 9 March. More details next month.

Update on Reintroductions

Dr Vyanna Leo, Australian Wildlife Conservancy's Wildlife Ecologist at North Head

In December 2018 the third round of post-reintroduction monitoring at North Head was conducted. All nest boxes were checked twice and 20 camera traps were deployed around the headland for seven nights. Elliott and cage trapping was conducted at 20 transects around the headland. Each transect has 10 traps and was deployed for three nights .

Nest box checks revealed the presence of ten Eastern Pygmy Possums, five adults, one with a single pouch young and another with 4 pouch young. Of the adults three were unchipped, indicating that a proportion of the F1 population has survived and reproduced, with the F2 adults now breeding and the pouch young representing the F3 generation. This is a very positive result and indicates that the Eastern Pygmy Possums are becoming established at North Head.

One adult female Brown Antechinus was trapped and showed signs of reproduction. This was the first Brown Antechinus to be trapped since the translocation was finalised in September 2017. This new individual was unchipped and represents a F2 adult, indicating that at least a proportion of the F1 generation survived into adult hood and was able to breed.

Over 136 Bush Rats were trapped at all sites across the headland. These results together with previous years indicate that the bush rats' reintroduction has been very successful. At all sites across the headland Bush Rats now significantly outnumber Black Rats, indicating that Bush Rats are able to successfully defend territories from Black Rats and out-compete the invasive species. In addition, their presence at all trap sites over the headland shows that the population has successfully expanded from



the original 15ha to be present in over 200ha, across the majority of North Head.

Photo by Alison Cowie

Avoiding Ticks

Peter Macinnis

If you go to tiara.org.au and choose the 'Tick removal' option, you will be advised to avoid ticks where possible. The Australian paralysis tick, *Ixodes holocyclus*, is the main worry. They lay eggs in summer. Larvae hatch in the autumn, the nymphs are around in winter, and the adults are mainly found in spring. Ticks don't use calendars, so these are approximations, but be more careful in spring/summer.

The simplest fix is to avoid ticky areas then, but you can improve the odds by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks. A wide-brimmed hat isn't just for sun: it keeps the ticks away as well!



Like leeches, ticks need to get at the skin to strike a blow, so seal off the access points.

All animals are good at seeing movement—if some ancestors didn't see movement, they were either eaten, or

they starved (becoming non-ancestors) while we inherited the good vision of the survivors. This simple evolutionary fact underlies TIARA's advice to wear light-coloured clothing, so you can see the ticks, courtesy of the enhanced contrast.

While working, use DEET-based insect repellents like Tropical RID®, Tropical Aerogard® or Bushmans®, or use OFF!® which contains Picaridin. These are considered safe on the skin, while permethrin products are useful for treating clothing.

You can also use permethrin cream (from pharmacies) to deal with small (larvae and nymphs) ticks, but there is some SLIGHT doubt about the safety of permethrin in pregnancy and while breast-feeding, so TIARA's pamphlet advises avoiding tick exposure during pregnancy.

You may, however, carry ticks into your home for others to collect. I say this because my wife HAD one in December when she had been nowhere near any tick areas. I had been up at North Head that day, so we now put the gardening clothes into the drier, set to hot, for 20 minutes.

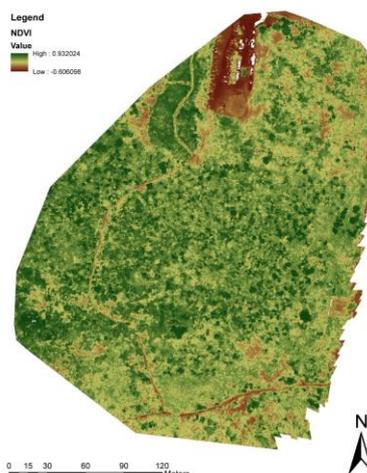
And remember: freeze, don't squeeze!

Normalized Difference Vegetation Index

Geoff Lambert

Our colleagues at the University of Sydney have spent a good number of computer hours processing the results of our drone surveys on North Head in November 2017. One of the more striking outputs is a normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI). This is a simple graphical indicator that can be used to analyze remote sensing

measurements, typically from a space platform but, in our case, from a drone, and assess whether the target being observed contains live green vegetation or not. The



picture shows the pre-fire vegetation density for what we refer to as the A3/A4 burn area, also known as the "Crossfit Burn". The next such picture will probably emerge in February, 7 months after the burn.

Third Quarantine Cemetery

Sister ELIZABETH MCGREGOR

By John Norton as supplied to Jenny Wilson

Elizabeth (Bess) the fourth daughter and fourth child was born 26th May 1885. She did not marry. With the exception of one item, I have been unable to find anything about her growing up years- she taught Sunday school at the Condobolin Presbyterian Church (as mentioned in her Memorial service- see later). This activity would have been prior to her taking up a nursing career at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown, Sydney.

The Hospital Archives advised that "Elizabeth commenced her training on 6th December 1907 (she was aged 22) and completed the course on 5th June 1912, having had time off with Typhoid fever and Scarlet fever. Her work was very good; she passed her examinations with credit and was awarded her General Nursing Certificate and a



Certificate in Dispensing. She left the hospital on receipt of her certificates and went to England to work."

At the outbreak of WW1 in 1914, Elizabeth was still in England. In August of that year, Lady Rachel, Countess of Dudley was instrumental in forming the Australian Voluntary Hospital (also known as The Lady Dudley Field Hospital) under the auspices of the British Red Cross. A publication, *The Returned Soldier* (dated 30th April 1931) and an article *The History of the Australian Voluntary*

Hospital by Lt.Col.W.L.Eames, (both publications held by The Australian War Memorial in Canberra,) records many details of the activities of that hospital. The first contingent of medical doctors and nurses supplies etc. left England on 28th August 1914 to set up the hospital in France. Elizabeth was with the first contingent.

Further to the comments expressed in the Memorial Service re Elizabeth's service in WW1, information has now come to hand from the British Red Cross. Bearing in mind Lady Dudley's Hospital went to France under the auspices of the British Red Cross and from their record it now transpires that Elizabeth joined the Red Cross in October 1914 and served in Serbia (possibly Servia, a town in Thessaloniki a Greek State in the north of the county whose capital is of the same name but was known as Salonica) until 3rd April 1916. She then served in Corfu (now known as Kerkira, a Greek island in the Ionian Sea) from 8th May 1916 until 19th June 1917. On this information it seems she spent very little time in France, about two months.

The following are extracts from a book written by Lady Jean Foley titled "In Quarantine", a history of the Quarantine station on North Head, Sydney:- "Throughout 1918 a pandemic of a particularly virulent strain of influenza spread through Europe, America, Africa and Asia reaching New Zealand in October 1918, when it was immediately declared a quarantinable disease in Australia".

"The 'Medic', which was carrying 833 troops and 156 crew members, was transporting members of the AIF and Italian Reservists to the battlefields of WW1, had been recalled when peace was declared. On 7th November 1918 the troopship docked in Wellington, New Zealand for refuelling before returning to Sydney and during this time the disease was carried onto the ship. On arrival in Port Jackson on 21st November 1918, there were 203 cases on board, quickly rising to 335 cases on landing. Twenty two of those infected were nurses who attended to the 'Medic's' patients. The epidemic continued amongst the 'Medic's' troops, crew and nurses for 40 days, killing 22 men and two nurses".

One of those nurses was Elizabeth McGregor.

"Elizabeth became infected on the 29th November 1918 and died 7.15am on the 5th December 1918. She was buried with full military honours on the same day in what was then known as the 3rd Burial Ground. Many of the

Station staff and quarantined troops attended the burial some bringing wreaths made from wild flowers growing in the bush at North Head to place on the grave". Photos of the actual burial and the grave covered with flowers, and the granite slab which was subsequently placed on the



Elizabeth (Bess) McGregor's grave No.3 cemetery, Nth. Head, Sydney, NSW.

grave inscribed with her name, are held by me.

On Sunday the 15th December 1918, a Memorial Service for Elizabeth was held in the Condobolin Presbyterian Church. The service was reported in full in the local paper The Lachlander dated 25th December, 1918 and the following extract gives an insight into Elizabeth's life and times from 1914 to 1918:-

"Born towards the close of the last century on Mickabil station, she grew into beautiful womanhood in this district. The time was when she taught the children in our Sunday school and there are those here tonight who can still turn the page of the prize which reveals her name as the teacher. At a later date she joined the nursing staff of R.P.A. Hospital, where she completed the training requisites for the practise of her profession. A couple of years afterwards she went to England where she was found at the outbreak of the war. On that same eventful day she enlisted for services abroad, and was one of the 15 chosen from 50 to 60 volunteers for service in France with Lady Dudley's Hospital. On the completion of more than 18 months service there, she returned to England soon to go out to Servia to nurse the stricken amongst those gallant allies. For the 13 months yeoman service there she was awarded the Servian Cross for Mercy. It was disease alone which terminated her career in Salonika. After successfully undergoing an operation for a complaint quite new to her surgeon, she returned again to England. On desiring to join our own military nursing staff, the irony of officialism compelled her to return to Australia that she may do so. Moreover, in spite of her now fourth year of service, she was compelled to pay her passage back. For some months she rested. Then she volunteered for service again and was accepted, taking up duty at the Randwick Military Hospital. The call from the Quarantine Station for volunteers to nurse the stricken soldiers on the 'Medic' found a response from her" (see paragraph 5) A photo of Elizabeth together with several articles about her work in Europe during World War One are included in a book written by Dr. Ruth Rae titled 'Veiled Lives - Threading Australian Nursing History into the fabric of the First World War.' The photo and most of the information in those articles came from me. (part 2 next month).



The burial of Elizabeth (Bess) McGregor, No.3 cemetery, North Head, Sydney, 5th Dec. 1918.