



# North Head Sanctuary Foundation

## Custodians of North Head

ABN 97093480659 P.O. Box 896, Balgowlah, NSW 2093  
northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au email [northhead@fastmail.fm](mailto:northhead@fastmail.fm)

Newsletter No 2 March 2014

### General meeting

Thank you Nick Skelton for a very interesting talk and discussion. We need to protect the Endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub or it will be lost for future generations.

### Education Centre – Bandicoot Heaven

Our Education room is open every weekend, from 10am to 4pm in Building 20. Call in and see our displays, have a chat and check out our range of botanical greeting cards.

### Walk for Children

Katie Meyer will be doing two short walks with children on Sunday 6 April and Sunday 4 May 2014. The walk will start from Bandicoot Heaven (building 20) at 11am and last about an hour.

For more information or to book, please email Katie at [katiem73@hotmail.com](mailto:katiem73@hotmail.com)

### Native Plant Nursery

Volunteering at the Nursery is never boring. Here are some of the volunteers replacing the dead plants in the landscaped area outside the Sergeant's Mess. Our volunteers on 11 February planted 100 native plants, see photo.



If you would like to help us please email Jenny at [northhead@fastmail.fm](mailto:northhead@fastmail.fm) or turn up any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and 12 noon.

### North Head Sanctuary Foundation

If you would like to support us by becoming a member, please download a form at [www.northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au/join/membership.htm](http://www.northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au/join/membership.htm)

If you would like to receive a copy of our newsletter, email [northhead@fastmail.fm](mailto:northhead@fastmail.fm)

### 'My North Head'

Katherine Meyer

Before moving to Australia, I read Bill Bryson's book, 'In a Sunburned Country.' Bad idea. I was convinced I wouldn't survive longer than a few months, due to Bryson's elaboration on his statement, 'This is a country where even the fluffiest of caterpillars can lay you out with a toxic nip.' Yet I am still here more than 8 years later after spending a significant amount of time in the bush. Not only have I survived, but I have been fortunate to learn about many strange and wonderful creatures and plants that live here, most specifically those that call North Head home.

When I first moved to Manly, I would go up on weekly runs to explore the area. I have since had the fortune of being involved with the North Head Sanctuary Foundation and have worked in different areas of North Head since 2009. Over the past few years, I have learnt much about the area and have grown to love this incredibly special and unique area.

One thing I enjoy is the constant array of changing colours and blooming flowers. Where I come from, things basically shut down in the winter. Poet Michael Barren states, 'Timeless thoughts of a winter's stare; eyes gazing over a landscape bare.' In winter, most plants die and if we are lucky, everything is blanketed in white - otherwise it is a quilt of varying shades of brown. I was pleasantly surprised then, when no matter what time of the year I was exploring North Head, there was always something in bloom and a beautiful mosaic of colours and shapes.

I don't have as much time these days to go running up at North Head, but I now have the extreme joy and pleasure of sharing it with my 2 year-old daughter. I have always been passionate about getting kids out in nature, and I feel privileged to share such an exceptional place with my daughter. This interest has compelled me to start a small venture, called EcoXplore. ([www.ecoexplore.com.au](http://www.ecoexplore.com.au)) The primary aim is to give children the opportunity to experience the joy of nature through exploring the wonders that abound at the North Head Sanctuary!

The beauty of this area is that the more I learn about it, the more I realise there is a lot to learn! It's truly a remarkable place that not only hosts endangered populations of plants and animals but also has a rich and dynamic history. I feel very lucky that I've had the opportunity to spend so much time in this magical place and I hope others have the chance as well to discover the marvels of the North Head Sanctuary.

## Beneath North Head

Geoff Lambert

The following is a brief list of what lies beneath North Head in the way of tunnels, etc. A few more are rumoured, but the following are the Real McCoys.

1. Underground munitions-storage room at the anti-aircraft gun pits on the walk up from Shelly Beach.
2. Room accessed from under the security desk in the Gatehouse Visitor Centre. Purpose is unknown, but may have been an alternative to the prison cells in case of air-raids.
3. Escape-route tunnel from the bomb shelter associated with the Battery Observation Post (this suggests similar for the bomb shelter for the Close Observation Post).
4. Gun emplacement tunnels. These are the best-known underground features. Tours every Sunday!
5. Plotting Room. The place where all "fire-control" for the northern Sydney area was housed. Buried 15 metres deep in the sand. Being restored for tours (but restoration temporarily suspended).
6. Search-light tunnels. At Fairfax, a vertical shaft descends 30 metres and gives access to a tunnel which exits on a sandstone shelf halfway down the cliff face, where there were two searchlight emplacements.
7. In addition there a number of deep concrete-lined well-like structures scattered along the ridge line at North Head. These were probably underground water storage tanks.

## *Goodenia stelligera*



Is a small tufted herb with a yellow flower found in wet and sunny heath.

This photo was taken on the track from Bluefish Road into the North Head Sanctuary, This area was burned by a Hazard Reduction burn on 6 September 2012. In the bottom left hand corner, you can see the leaves have been eaten maybe by a rabbit.

## Back in Time

Steve Johnson

In 1956 a team of USA mainland and Hawaiian surfers led by the famous Duke Kahanamoku, travelled to Australia for a series of surf lifesaving carnivals, the major one of which was to be held at Torquay in Victoria in conjunction with the Melbourne Olympic's . They brought with them their Balsa and Fiberglass "Malibu", surfboards and stopped enroute in Sydney and were housed at the North Head Army Barracks.

During this period they competed in several carnivals most notably at Avalon where upon noticing a break up the beach in the afternoon took off with their Malibus and started surfing at a speed and manoeuvrability that would change the face of Australian surfing forever.

The Australian board makers led by Gordon Woods, but lacking the raw materials, started making copies of the Malibu design using the old hollow timber and ply technology, calling them "Okinuee's".

Funnily enough the first recorded surfing of a Balsa and Fiberglass Malibu although finless was by Peter Lawford the Hollywood actor at Bondi in 1950. Lawford, a keen surfer, bought his board with him whilst here to film the movie "Kangaroo" and left it at Bondi surf club for safe keeping whilst on location, where it was borrowed by the locals on more than a few occasions.



The author with his 1956 Gordon Woods coachwood ply and maple Okinuee. Found under Rex "Guru" Andrews house in Condamine St over 50 years ago by Jens Ward his neighbour then 7 years old and subsequently purchased by me recently! Ironically I now live only a few doors from where it was found!