



North Head Sanctuary Foundation

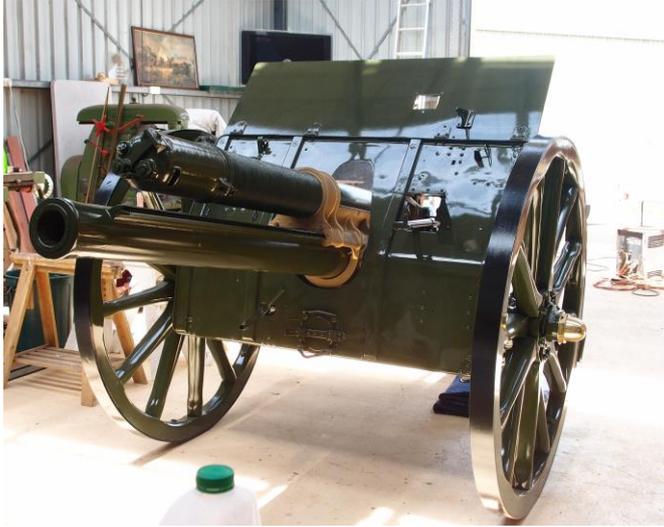
Custodians of North Head

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Next meeting 28 February at 2pm



Jim Frecklington will be giving us a talk about his latest project – Restoration of a World War One gun. This talk will take place at North Fort. More details will be sent out closer to the date as Jim might have to postpone the talk for a week or too.

Education Room – Bandicoot Heaven

Our community education room is open 10am to 4pm Saturdays and Sundays in Building 20. Call in to have a look at our displays and our botanical cards or just to have a chat. New cards arriving soon.

If you'd like to help others get to know more about North Head, please contact Judy Lambert on 9949 3521(ah) or email tswombat@optusnet.com.au

Native Plant Nursery

Yes, we are working every Tuesday and Friday morning, although in this hot weather we try and work in the shade. There is always plenty to do, whether it is maintaining our planted areas, planting or growing-on the plants.

If you would like to join us just turn up any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and 12 noon or join us for morning tea about 10.30am. More details from Jenny at northhead@fastmail.com.au.



Volunteers at morning tea

Update report on revegetation after fire

By Geoff Lambert



“What a difference a rabbit makes”

A fenced quadrat showing the effects that rabbits can have on revegetation. The growth behind the fence (background) is much more luxuriant and diverse than the vegetation outside it (foreground).

It is now nearly 30 months since three “controlled burns” took place on North Head. NHSF received grant funds to follow the progress of revegetation of North Head’s “Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub” (ESBS) following these fires. North Head has about half of the ESBS remaining on the planet. ESBS is said to need regular fire to maintain its vigour.

Vegetation recovery after the fires has been monitored in 32, 5x5 metre “quadrats”, 11 of which were fenced to exclude rabbits. In addition, we studied vegetation growth in 5 fenced quadrats which had not been burned, but had been “thinned” of tea-tree and other “dominant” vegetation.

As reported previously, surveys conducted at 6-months and 12-months post-fire showed that the quadrats that had been burned had more species and more plants than those that had been thinned. In addition, quadrats that had been fenced to exclude rabbits had higher numbers of both species and plants. These results are about to be published in the journal "Cunninghamia". In addition, we have been invited to write a paper for the journal "Ecological Management and Restoration", summarising these results and comparing them with other methods of restoring ESBS which are being trialled on North Head – including plantings by the NHSF Nursery. This paper is nearly ready for submission.

It is becoming apparent that the ESBS on North Head is of two different types – which have sometimes been termed vigorous (one-third of it) and senescent (two thirds of it). It was previously thought that vigorous turned into senescent if fires were excluded for more than about 15 years. It was further believed that the process could be reversed by fire. I am beginning to doubt these notions. The transformation of vigorous to senescent seems more likely to be due to long-term soil disturbance (over 80 years of it on North Head) than to the absence of fire. North Head is the only ESBS site in Sydney which is so dominated by ti-tree. It is also the only ESBS site that has been thoroughly churned up by soil disturbance (by the Army). I believe that full regeneration of vigorous ESBS after the fires will take at least 5 years. Our surveys have also suggested that we might be able to restore "senescent" ESBS, but it might take a lot longer time and require assistance from planting. This project will continue if funds are available.

This summer has seen a phenomenal regrowth in vegetation in the burned areas. It has also seen the gradual collapse of the old burnt trees across our fences, so a program is underway to remove this "dead and down" and to repair the fences so that monitoring can continue. In addition, we continue to monitor the numbers of rabbits, of which North Head has probably more than any other equivalent area in Sydney – about 1,500 at last count. There will be another "controlled burn" on North Head some time during 2015. Vegetation has been and will be surveyed by the Harbour Trust and Australian Wildlife Conservancy before the fire and through 2015 and for several years afterwards. NHSF has assisted AWC and SHFT with the pre-fire surveys, using the same techniques and botanist (Belinda Pellow) as we used in the earlier project. Belinda is the author of the most authoritative botanical work on NSW native plants, so the study is in good hands. The lessons learned from our previous study will be applied to this new project, so about half the burnt area will be fenced to exclude rabbits. The rest will be left fenced, to allow foraging by bandicoots.

Xyris gracilis



Or Slender Yellow-eye is an erect herb that likes damp areas and one only notices it when in flower in Summer.

Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

"BUBONIC PLAGUE. A FATAL CASE".

"Another case of plague has occurred in Sydney. It seems that James Ernest Derrington, 36 years, residing at Waverley, and employed at a warehouse in Sydney, fell ill on Sunday, December 8. The case was reported to the Board of Health at 10 p m on Tuesday, and on examination by the officers of the Health Department proved to be plague. The patient was too ill to be moved, and consequently a nurse was sent from the Coast Hospital to take charge of him. The house was placed under guard pending disinfection. The patient became worse during the night, and died early yesterday morning. The body was removed to the Quarantine Station for burial.

The Board of Health met at noon yesterday, and in accordance with its directions all necessary measures of disinfection and cleansing were being taken. The deceased arrived in Sydney three months ago from Rockhampton, and he had a wife and four children, who have no relatives in this State.

For some weeks past the proprietors of the store where deceased worked have been busy killing the rats about their place, and the bodies of the rats have been burnt in the Government furnace at Bathurst Street. The inquiries in progress with respect to the source of infection have already shown that the patient did overtime work elsewhere than at his regular place of employment"

**The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954)
Thursday 12 December 1901.**