



North Head Sanctuary Foundation

Custodians of North Head

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Guringai Festival Walk

North Head Sanctuary Foundation hosted a talk by Dharawal knowledge-holder and botanical author Aunty Fran Bodkin on Saturday 25 June.

Some of her stories are now available on the web - have a look at Stories alphabetically by D'harawal title – <https://dharawalstories.com/stories/>

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 tswombat@optusnet.com.au

Native Plant Nursery

We had 20 visitors from North Sydney Council Bush Care group. They were very impressed with the revegetation of the old oval. If you have not seen it lately, have a walk around it.

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

northhead@fastmail.com.au.

Bird of Paradise Fly



Photo taken by Ian Evans on 4 May 2016 on Peter Macinnis gloved finger.

What looked like a piece of fluff or seed head turned out to be a male mealy bug (family *Callipappidae*), commonly known as a Bird of Paradise Fly.

Congratulations to Manly Council Community Environment Advisory Committee's operation for 25 years!

Preventing & Managing Tick Bites:

Part of bushland management on the Northern Beaches

Judy Lambert

Recently Toni and Mike Stevenson and Judy Lambert attended a forum set up to explore the future of bush regeneration on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Much of the current work is done by volunteers supported and supervised by local councils. We're keen to ensure that the benefits of that work over many years are not lost as a result of council amalgamations.

Since everyone who works in the bush on the Northern Beaches is exposed to ticks, the forum provided an ideal opportunity for an update on tick bites and the best ways to manage them to avoid allergic reactions – some of which are very severe.

Professor Sheryl van Nunen, a long-time researcher of tick-induced allergies and an active member of TIARA (the Tick-Induced Allergies Research and Awareness Fund) at Royal North Shore Hospital discussed the life cycle of the paralysis tick and all the usual precautions of dressing appropriately, using a DEET-containing repellent and wearing clothing permanently treated with permethrin.

Adult paralysis tick



She then went on to talk about the development of severe (and potentially even life-threatening) impacts of severe tick allergies.

The key pieces of advice that have changed in recent years are:

- When you've been outdoors in a tick area, don't scratch anything that itches until you've had a look at it and checked with the itch is being caused by a tick; and
- Don't try to "pick" the tick out with tweezers or other tick-removing gadgets.

The aim is to kill the tick where it is in your skin and to do this with the least possible disturbance to the tick, so that it does not inject its allergy-causing saliva into your body.

This can best be done using an ether-containing spray available from your local pharmacist as a wort remover (Wort Off or a similar product). After 3-5 squirts of the spray onto the tick it will die and likely drop off.

You can find lots more current information about ticks and how best to prevent and manage their bites by going to www.tiara.org.au

Venomous spiders - Of spiders & dunny seats part two of four

Peter Macinnis

Instead of getting close to spiders, their eyes glow in the dark when you shine a bright light on them, because the eyes are highly reflective. At night, you can spotlight spiders on open ground and examine them from a safe distance.

Failing that, historical research is fun as well, and this topic actually emerged when I went to visit Hamilton Hume's home outside Yass. He was born in Australia and grew up in the bush, but his barn has openings to let barn owls in. That is correct British practice, but Australia has now barn owls: it took us a while to become fully



Australian!
Caption: a huntsman on a toilet seat, Yass.

Anyhow, the house offered something

very Australian: a spider on the toilet seat! Early settlers feared these scuttling spiders, calling them triantelopes, a corruption of 'tarantula', but the comparison doesn't really stack up: just compare the puny huntsman with a real Amazonian tarantula.



An Amazonian tarantula (left) and a huntsman (right).

The Australian redback spider, *Latrodectus mactans hasselti*, is a close relative of the black widow spider. Its bite can be extremely painful, but it is not usually lethal. Over the years, legends have grown up about redbacks on dunny seats biting people on their nether regions, and I decided to look into it.

First up, the dunny seat is Australian vernacular for a toilet seat, the word 'dunny' probably coming from Scots dialect, or criminal argot: etymology has never been an exact science.

19th century settlers and colonists knew of poisonous spiders in other parts of the world, so they regarded

Australian spiders with suspicion, even the harmless huntsman, as Louisa Ann Meredith knew in the 1840s:

When disturbed they scramble along at a rapid rate, and are very frequent residents behind pictures or furniture against the wall, often causing terrific screams from one's housemaid, which are somewhat alarming, until, on inquiry, the dreadful words "A *Triantelope*, Ma'am!" are gasped out, and the tragedy ends in the death, or, as I usually arrange it, the careful expulsion of the intruder...

— Louisa Ann Meredith, *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales*. 1844, 147 – 8.

If you want to read ahead, this link reveals where my ferreting has taken me here:

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/result?publictag=redback+spider&q>

Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

From Town and Country – 9 June 1900

"The Bubonic Plague"

"On Wednesday, May 30, no cases were reported in Sydney, but there was one death, that of Roger Drummond, who was removed from Annandale on the previous Monday. On May 31 two cases were reported, Mrs. Monaghan, living at Darlington; and Patrick Butler, who lived and worked in the city. Butler is dead. He is said to have been in good spirits and apparently quite well at breakfast time, but a quarter of an hour after the meal he had expired. It was suspected at the time that the cause of death was heart trouble, and great was Dr. Taylor's surprise when, on making a post-mortem examination, he found that the spleen of the deceased was full of plague bacilli. Three cases came to light on Friday, June 1, Kei Ling, 44, Chinese, living and employed in the city. John Clishey, 33, a groom, living on the premises where he was employed, at Manly. Samuel Pearce, 29, whose home and place of business is in the city. The patient Charles Bennett died in the plague hospital in the morning. Saturday yielded six reports Stanley Oakes, 8, living at Balmain; attended school there. James Wilson, 7, living at Rose Bay; also attended school in the vicinity. Richard Jones, 17, living at Burwood; attended school in the city. John Fox, a temporary hand at the Quarantine Station; had been inoculated. John Peard, 68, living and employed as a groom in the city. John Wilkins, 27, removed from Mittagong, whither he had gone on May 30; he had been employed in the city. James Wilson and Richard Jones died in the Quarantine Hospital the last named patient was the son of Mr. Richard Jones, M.L.C."

Roger Drummond was 23 years old, Patrick Butler was 55 and his body was brought over from the city for burial at Third Cemetery. Charles Bennett was 17 years old, James Wilson was 7 and Richard Jones was 16. The others mentioned must have recovered as they are not buried in the Third Cemetery.