



North Head Sanctuary Foundation

Custodians of North Head

ABN 97093480659 P.O. Box 896, Balgowlah, NSW 2093
northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au email northhead@fastmail.com.au

Newsletter No 11 November 2016

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

Volunteers needed: Ocean Care Day

Sunday 4 December

NHSF will have its usual stall at Manly's annual Ocean Care Day.

Volunteers are needed to staff the stall between 10am and 4.30pm. If you can help out by doing a two hour shift, please send Judy Lambert your preferred time, email address and phone number (mobile if possible). Any questions, please contact Judy on 0427 217 580 or tswombat@optusnet.com.au prior to 13 November.

A Good Year for Wildflowers

Since early September, North Head has presented a wonderful display of wildflowers. While some species have flowered throughout the season and continue, others have been 'there today, gone tomorrow'.

A total of 63 visitors, participating in 5 different guided walks (September 4, 10 and 21 and October 3 and 12) have enjoyed the display – some in better weather than others. Several decided that they will bring friends or family back to see more of the colour of nature at North Head.

Generous donations to NHSF from several of the walkers suggest that everyone appreciated the visits and of course we are very grateful for the support for our work.

In addition to our usual open walks, the Sydney Women's International walking group booked their own walk.



Held in fine, sunny weather on Wednesday 12 October, the 17 walkers from several countries were introduced to some of our nursery group work and the plants in the area outside the old gym, then headed off on their 2 ½ hour walk.

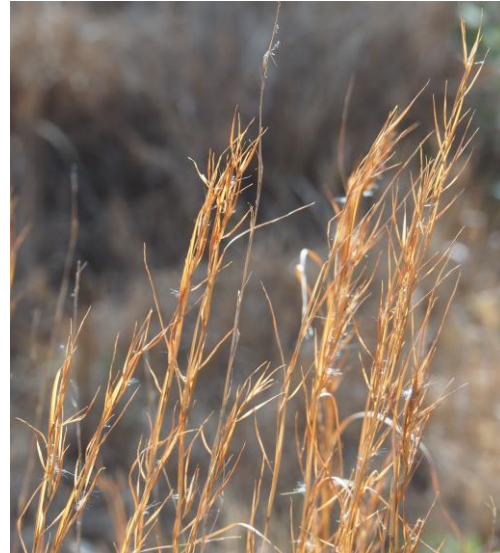
Native Plant Nursery

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.

Andropogon virginicus or Whisky Grass

Peter Macinnis



Sugar cane is a member of the grass family, Poaceae. In botanical language sugar cane is *Saccharum officinarum*, a name given to it by Linnaeus himself, Carl von Linné, the inventor of our modern classification system.

Saccharum is in the Andropogoneae tribe, along with sorghum and maize.

Like the other grasses, sugar cane has jointed stems and sheathing leaf bases, with the leaves, shoots and roots all coming from the stem joints. The name Andropogoneae basically means "like *Andropogon*", and a moment's checking reveals that there is only one member of the tribe that we seem to like: *Themeda*, or kangaroo grass. Regrettably, we also have an *Andropogon* on North Head, and it is something of a pest — and it doesn't yield sugar, either! *Andropogon virginicus* is better known by the name 'Whisky grass'. This name, according to legend, comes from the fact that it was used, during World War II as packing around bottles of American whisky.

A quick scurry around the web reveals that it is also called beard grass, broom sedge bluestem, broomstraw, whiskey grass and yellow bluestem. Under any name, it's a weed of disturbed areas and roadsides, and because it produces very light seeds, it seems to be carried along by the wind, including, no doubt, the wind of passing cars. It has a summer flowering period.

When you see it at a distance, the effect is of a bunch of straws, a bit like those in a straw broom, standing up to a metre high, and much more upright than *Themeda*.

Because it is so dry, it can make a patch of bush more flammable, and it is fire-resistant, growing back fast after a fire.

Hornsby Council advises this process: "De-seed by cutting off seedheads if immediate control is not possible. Crown individuals, chip out non-seeding plants. Spot spray if no seed present."

Toni has taught me to take and bag the flowering/seed heads first, and then cut out the rest of the plant, just below ground level to remove the crown. It's a pleasure, but a bit of a back-breaking one.



Reference:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/graminoid/andvir/all.html>

Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

Sun (Sydney, NSW 1910-1954), Tuesday 22 April 1919.

"A RUSSIAN DIGGER : SUICIDE ON TROOPSHIP.

"Fed Up With Ragging"

There were some arguments aboard the troopship about Bolshevism, and there was some "ragging" too, but of a friendly nature. The Russian aboard, before committing suicide, said that he was "fed up" with the treatment he had received. — Evidence at inquest. The death of a soldier of the A.I.F., Peter Chervin, aged 26, a native of Vladivostok, was inquired into to-day by the City Coroner (Mr. Hawkins). On April 16 Chervin's body was found suspended by a rope from a beam aboard the troopship Anchises, by which he was returning from the front. Lieutenant-Colonel Bond, S.M.O., said that the day prior to the Russian's death, he (Witness) examined him and found that he was very depressed and moody. He told witness that he was "fed up with his life, owing to the 'ragging' he had been subjected to through being a Russian." The ship's hospital was empty, so Chervin was placed in there in order that he might be kept apart from the other men.

"ONLY THE USUAL TEASING"

About 11 p.m. on April 15" said the officer, "he was reported missing, and a search was begun, but as it necessitated turning out all the troops, the adjutant did not consider it advisable to continue. About 8 o'clock the following morning he was found hanging by the neck." In

reply to the Coroner witness said he did not take the Russian's statements about the "ragging" seriously. From what he could gather, Chervin received only the usual teasing that most foreigners were subjected to, but nothing more. There was no quarrelling.

"AFRAID OF BRISBANE BOLSHEVIKS"

Private Percy James Roberts said that Chervin seemed obsessed with the idea that the Bolshevik movement was strong in Queensland, and seemed to be afraid of landing. He thought he would be looked upon as a German spy. There were arguments at one time aboard the ship about Bolshevism, and there was some "ragging" of a friendly nature, too; but Chervin appeared quite happy. During the last two or three days, though, he became very depressed, and said he was frightened about what might happen if he landed in Queensland.

"THE BOYS WILL TELL YOU"

Copies of letters written by Chervin were exhibited. One, addressed to Mrs. B. Ryan, Brisbane, read: "Thanks for all your gifts. By the time you receive this I will be out of the world. But do not think I am a coward, not for a battlefield. If you see the 49th Batt. boys ask them about me, and they will tell you." Another letter, addressed to a girl in Western Australia, said that it was all because of the writer's weak will and nervousness, and asked: "What is the good to be in the road, useless?" The Coroner recorded a verdict of suicide."

Note- The ship was in Sydney Harbour when Peter committed suicide. He was a Stretcher Bearer and received a Military Medal. His listing on the Roll of Honour shows Peter Michaelovitch Chervin. Military record shows Chervin.

NO Dogs on North Head

Geoff Lambert



Dogs are spreading on North Head faster than are Brush Turkeys. While we know that many people are blind to the "No-dog" signs —or to all signs for that matter—it would have been a help to have more prominent and scary signs to this effect. The maximum fine is \$5,500 and signs saying so exist on Collins Beach and at the Shelly Beach Hole-in-the-Wall. Now, at long last, we have such a sign at the Parkhill Arch.