



# North Head Sanctuary Foundation

## Custodians of North Head

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Newsletter No 6 July 2015

### Our Next Meeting – 29 July at 7pm - Odour

We will be discussing odour and will have James Feary and Louisa Vorreiter, both from North Head Wastewater Treatment plant as guests.

Sydney Water is currently working on a computer app to make reporting easier. This will encourage on the spot time/date reporting.

Hope to see you on 29 July at Bandicoot Heaven (Building 20) at 7.00pm. Visitors welcome.

### 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 range with many new designs. Cards are \$5 each or five for \$20.

### Native Plant Nursery

We are now planning our plantings for the next year. There is always plenty to do every Tuesday and Friday. If you would like to join us just turn up any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and 12 noon. More details from Jenny at [northhead@fastmail.com.au](mailto:northhead@fastmail.com.au).

### Take the Case of John Barry (a detective story)

Geoff Lambert  
Kaye Lee

*John Barry* was not a person, but a 510 ton ship. She was built in 1814 by her namesake and had undergone a number of repairs, and was used for many years as a convict ship. By the 1830s she was considered to be unfit even for convicts. She sailed for Australia from Dundee on 25 March 1837 with 67 crew and 312 emigrants, including 95 children. Among the emigrants were a number of masons, carpenters and “engineers”. The *John Barry* arrived at the Quarantine Ground at North Head on 13 July. Three adults and 22 children had died from typhus, scarlet fever and “bowel complaints” during the voyage. On arrival, six adults and 17 children were still seriously ill. The ship’s passengers were immediately put into quarantine, where they remained until 10 October. During this time typhus spread through the Station and killed 13 people.

The arrival of the *John Barry* neatly coincided with the decision to expand the Quarantine Ground to a permanent station and to erect new buildings and a hospital. On 18 July, the NSW Governor Sir Richard Bourke (the man notorious for applying the term terra nullius to Australia) had obtained parliamentary approval for the “expenditure of £350 for the construction of two obelisks on the harbour”. Two days after that, the Sydney Gazette reported, “A very judicious order has been given by His

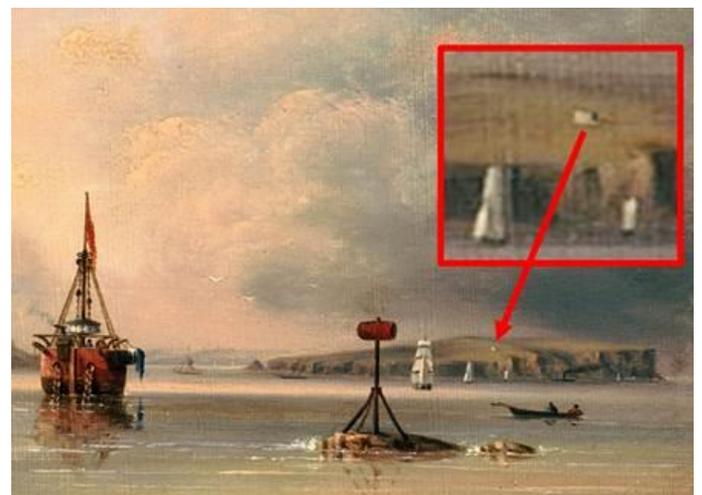
*Excellency, to the effect that the mechanics, who are masons on board the John Barry, will be employed in the erection of the beacon for some time contemplated at Spring Cove, which is intended as a guide to vessels entering this port.”*

Dr D Thompson, the surgeon on the *John Barry*, in a long letter to the Sydney Gazette, said on 31 August, “The masons will leave a favourable specimen of their handywork in the obelisk erecting here. The carpenters have not had the opportunity of shewing what they can do. One of the masons, when asked by a fellow immigrant of his opinion of the area said “Och man, but it’s a gran’ kintra for stone.”

William Clark, one of the masons, died during his stay, as did a carpenter James Watt. The two men were buried together in the “First Cemetery” and their single headstone, made by one of their fellow masons, is now on display at QS. For her part, the *John Barry* had some more adventures, including delivering a tiger from Sumatra to Sydney in January 1841. She was completely dismantled in a typhoon in the South China Sea shortly thereafter and was scrapped.

One might say then that it is “an ill wind that nobody blows good” because Port Jackson got its much-needed navigation beacon – the “Obelisk”—out of it. This just about solves the old mystery which Geoff wrote about in our June issue. Kaye is the detective who uncovered the truth of the matter. The final piece of this jigsaw will be slotted in, if and when we can find the letters or papers written by “His Excellency”.

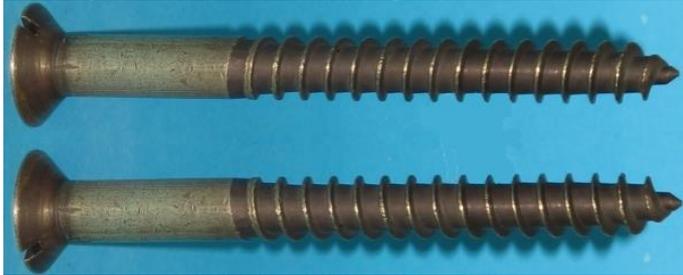
Although not built in 1809 as legend had it, the Obelisk may still turn out to be the earliest surviving European structure on North Head.



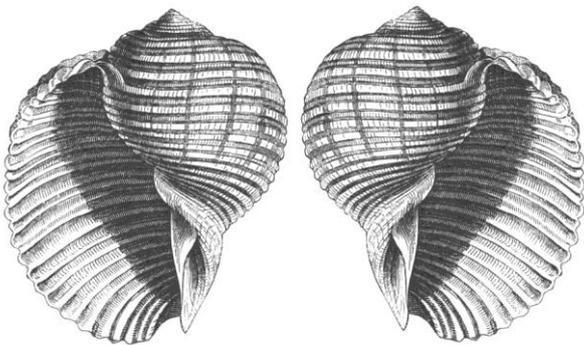
## Round the Twist, (part 1 of several)

Peter Macinnis

One of these things, not like the other... Take a look at these two screws: they look identical at first, but look carefully: one of them looks wrong.



Did you spot it? Yes, these are two images of the same very large wood screw, but the upper one is reversed, so it now has a left-hand thread. You would have to turn the screw driver the other way to drive that one into the wood. Now look at these two snails, where I have pulled the same trick with a stock art snail shell:



Most 'snails' have a spiral shell, but not all of them. Slugs have no visible shell, and the shell of a mature limpet is a flattened cone, like an upside-down wok. Actually, most 'spiral' shells are helical, not spiral, but let's stay with the common name.

Spiral shells come in two kinds, left-handed (left, above) and right-handed (right, above), just like creeping plants, which I will come to, some other time. Some snails come in left-handed spirals only, some come in right-handed spirals only, and a few come in both forms.

The easy way to identify the 'handedness' of a shell is to hold the shell, top up, so that you are looking into the entrance hole. If the entrance hole is on the right, the shell is right-handed, if it is on the left, the shell is left-handed. Sir Theodore Cook, in his *Curves of Life*, mentions a beach at Felixstowe in Britain, where a snail called *Fusus antiquus* may be found living on the beach, and fossilised in the cliffs behind the beach. Cook said 99% of the living specimens were right-handed, while all the fossil specimens were left-handed.

Some years back, I examined several thousand Pacific shells, and several hundred Indonesian shells. They were all right-handed, and so were all the shells on display at the Australian Museum, and the Australia and New Zealand shells in several reference books. Even the Australian Museum's fossil shells were all right-handed! I gave up.

Then one day I was cleaning out an aquarium tank. The snails that I kept in the tank to clean the glass all had left-handed shells! I suspect that species is an import from overseas, but there's a thesis in there! And there's more to this story...

## Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

Globe (Sydney, NSW: 1885 - 1886) 4 June 1886

### "ARRIVAL OF THE ENERGIA. MEASLES ON BOARD. ORDERED TO QUARANTINE"

"The S.S. Energia, chartered by the Orient Steamship Company, and having on board 624 immigrants, entered the Heads at 7.45 a.m. to-day, and was immediately boarded by Dr. Pearce, the acting inspecting officer, to whom it was reported that 58 cases of measles had occurred on the voyage out, two of which cases showed themselves this morning. There are at the present time on the ship nine cases of measles - three women and six children. The president of the Board of Health, accompanied by the secretary, boarded the vessel shortly after her arrival, and orders were given that the steamer should hoist the yellow flag and go over at once, to Quarantine Station, and arrangements were made to remove the cases of measles to the Coast Hospital at Little Bay at 1 o'clock to-day where everything is in readiness for their reception. Instructions have been given that all persons who, in the opinion of the Surgeon Superintendent, Dr. Hutstable, are liable to contract the disease, and also all the members of the families of those who will be removed to Little Bay shall be landed at the Quarantine Station to-morrow, and there attend until further orders. The disinfection of the ship, and of the effects of those who remain on board will be proceeded with at once, and it is hoped that the ship will be released, with such who may be on board, on Monday evening or Tuesday morning at latest. The epidemic of measles appeared about the end of the first week of the voyage, and it is surmised, must have been contracted at the depot in Plymouth, where a family which had developed the measles was immediately isolated; but apparently too late, although they were stopped from being shipped. It is considered evident by the authorities that this family were the cause of spreading the disease. On the journey out two deaths occurred, one that of George Bullard, aged 2 years, who died on 15th May; the other that of John A. Moffatt, aged 2 years, which occurred yesterday. Both deaths occurred from sequelae, a disease that follows measles. The disease was confined throughout the voyage to the married couples and single women's quarters."

Three children died at Quarantine Station and were buried in the Third Cemetery - Isabella CAIRNS 18 months, Francis YEOMAN 16 months and Bessie MONTGOMERY 3 years old.