



North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

Custodians of North Head

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Newsletter No 141 July 2020

Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

We are closed until further notice due to COVID-19.

Native Plant Nursery



We are back at the Nursery, and there is a lot to be done. Weeds have flourished during our absence. Above photo shows some of Friday volunteers weeding the bank outside the old gym.

Unfortunately, we cannot take any new volunteers at present, maybe in August, but if you would like to join us when restrictions are lifted, please send an email to northhead@fastmail.com.au

Calyptorhynchus funereus



Photo Ian Evans

The Yellow-tailed black cockatoos are still visiting North Head. Keep a lookout for them.

Some of the Xanthorrhoeas are flowering and you might see rainbow lorikeets enjoying the nectar.

Also see how many flowering plants you can find; I have been told there are over 45 at present.

Not a Weed? But a Taste of History

Peter Macinnis

The grass south of the nursery and on the road east of us (and in other places) is blady grass, *Imperata cylindrica*.



The *Imperata* part celebrates Ferrante Imperato, a

Neapolitan botanist, and *cylindrica* refers to the shape of the seed head.



Apparently people either loathe it as a weed or grow it in their gardens, and there are ornamental varieties. It is native to all states in

Australia, but it is also found in Asia, Africa, Micronesia and Melanesia. Old PNG hands (like me) know it as kunai. The plant has underground rhizomes. It is fire-adapted and in pastures, sustains grass fires.

The plant is used in some Indigenous cultures as bush tucker, but do some research first, because the leaves are edged with silica hairs which give it another common name, cutty grass: you can see these with a good hand



lens, or you can carefully feel them. Some parts will not be good to eat!

By the time the settlement at Sydney Cove started to expand, blady grass had a new use, described below by Peter Cunningham, who was not the famous botanist (Allan), but a humane and careful ship's surgeon who made a number of trips on convict ships, keeping his charges alive. He also knew a bit about getting a farm going (emphasis added):

"Houses on the first establishment are either formed of wattle and plaster, or of split timber and plaster,—the roof being composed of sheets of bark, or **thatched with blady grass** which proves by far the coolest roof in hot weather and the warmest in cold weather, thatch being such a bad conductor of heat. The great objection to its use arises from its susceptibility to take fire."

—Peter Cunningham, *Two Years In New South Wales*, vol. 2, 3rd ed., 1828, 161 – 2.

Leaving thatching out of it, kangaroos, emus and other wildlife eat the seeds, so my planting in our street garden helps to prepare Sydney Road for future wildlife arrivals. (Don't laugh: a fully-grown kangaroo was found by two English girls on Sydney Road near Waratah St in 1966. It was an escaped pet, wearing a collar, but all the same...) My planting will be sternly curated, to avoid too many roos in the top paddock.

Independent review of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

The report is out, for more details

<https://www.harbourtrust.gov.au/en/our-news/harbour-trust-review-announcement/>

Back in Time

Jenny Wilson

Evening News (Sydney, NSW:1869 -1931), 21 August 1911

"A NEGLECTED CEMETERY."

"Visitor" writes:— For beauty of position the cemetery of Quarantine, North Head cannot be surpassed. As one stands on this lovely spot and tries to take in the indescribable view, which presents itself to his vision, he is filled with wonder that so few people have wended their way to North Head. Entering the gate at Manly, near the Cardinal's Palace, there is a good road, and just now native flowers are abundant on every hand. On going along this road, the harbor with all its bays, comes into view, and as we approach the cemetery, which stands high we get the larger panorama, embracing ocean, harbor, Manly, Sydney, and northern suburbs.

Notwithstanding these charming surroundings, the cemetery, where the remains of many loved ones rest, show signs of neglect. The place is almost overgrown with native shrubs. The gate has been left open and animals have done some damage to the graves— some of the numbered boards having been kicked away. Surely

attention ought to be given to this place. It is now under Federal control: and a good deal of money is being spent in rebuilding. Could not some of this be used in improving the cemetery which to a good many is a sacred spot."

Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

Crookwell Gazette (NSW:1885-1954), Friday 11 May 1900

"THE PLAGUE."

"Two cases— one of them unfortunately, fatal— of bubonic plague were found on Monday. Margaret Lawrence, 64, of Camperdown was a victim, but she died before the nature of her disease was known. A post-mortem examination was made, when the cause of death was discovered. The other case came from North Sydney, the patient being a lad 15 years of age named Donald McLirie.

It was mentioned in our telegrams last issue that a person had died from a complaint, the character of which was suspicious, and that a postmortem examination of the remains was being made to ascertain the cause of death. This was done on Monday, with the result that it was found that the demise of the child was due to plague. Her name was Gladys May McAloon, and she was only 5 years of age.

Quite a goodly proportion of the patients in the Quarantine Hospital who were mentioned in the bulletins issued by the medical superintendent during the past few days as being in a serious condition are now reported to be on the mend. There are, however, one or two who are still stated to be in a critical condition. The patients who were discharged a few days ago from the hospital into the convalescent home at the station are still doing well. Monday's return from the rat-destroyer gives a total of 707 carcasses burned.

John Hardwicke, 58 died at the Quarantine Hospital on Tuesday. Five fresh cases were notified on Tuesday, Ah How, 26, and Geo. Carroll, 46, of the city; David Fatzen, 20, of the Glebe; John Nutt, 23, of Redfern; Charles Peaker, 23, of Woollahra.

Three cases were reported on Wednesday, the patients being Frederick Mountier, 13, of Dulwich Hill, Stella Patmore, 10, of Paddington; and Ah Chong, 30, of the city. Etienne Angele, 65, and Kate Henderson, 49, died at the Quarantine Hospital from plague that day."

Ah How, David Fatzen, John Nutt, Stella Patmore did not recover and were buried in the Third Cemetery as were the others that died at Quarantine.

Newsletter

Do you have a photo or story to share about North Head? If so please send to northhead@fastmail.com.au