



NEWSLETTER NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

Winter edition 2021 135
SOUTHERN SYDNEY BRANCH

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ISSUE: 135

Connectivity and corridors

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BUSINESS MEETINGS All are welcome to attend, have your say and hear what's happening in the NPA. Contact Brian on 95209341 or Gary on 95701813 for details. These meetings are now held on either the 1st or 2nd Monday of the month.

Member meetings are currently via Zoom

Next Branch Member Night

Topic: A walk among the Dead: Plants and history of Woronora cemetery.

The meeting is by zoom on 26 May 2021, Log in at 7:15pm for 7:30pm start

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82806712201>

Speaker: Ralph Cartwright, Australian Plants Society, Sutherland Branch

Discover the native plants of Woronora Cemetery at Sutherland from remnant trees to planted shrubs with Australian Plants member Ralph Cartwright. His talk is a mixture of historical information and photos of and information about some of the plants, both native and non-native, found in this very accessible location.



While the Billy Boils

Planning to Lead a Walk

Our Activities Coordinator, Matt McClelland, has put together an excellent kit to help any prospective walks leader prepare for the task of leading walks. The practical bits about leadership are all there and if ever anyone was worried about the idea of taking a group out on behalf of the NPA this set of guidelines ought to reduce the angst. Just go to <http://www.bushwalking101.org/>

Mind you, I never did think that finding a route, reading a map or timing a walk was the hardest part of any leader's role. And, a confession: the easiest walks to do are often the hardest to lead. You see, you get all types who come along on "Easy Day Walks". Some get on the phone and claim they have walked for years. They have; but often it is to the shop and back, and the last time they went off track was to go to Aunt Mabel's outdoor dunny when visiting her in some faraway corner of NSW.

Yes, those guidelines are clear and necessary, but they do miss one main point. Leaders lead people.

Yes, that's the tricky bit. People are variable and that variety can drive one to distraction.

So, if you are ready to lead walks, remember you are actually leading people! And that begins right from the moment you place a walk on the program. If you have a spouse, kids, or anyone else who shares your home, and you are expecting phone calls, for example, remember that they must all have all the details about the activity at hand. There is an unwritten rule in leading walks: all phone calls from people who wish to come along are always made when the leader is actually not at home. Invariably, if you are like me, you leave some vital bit out. The additional phone calls can be frustrating, to the leader and to the person booking on. Get the details right the first time and do make sure a copy is clear and understandable, is by the phone and that any person who might answer that phone does know what's in it.

There is another unwritten rule: phone calls arrive at the most inopportune times. I used to try to limit the times when calls could be made; such as between 7.30pm and 9.00pm. I discovered that many people, even NPA members, could not read. Thankfully, there are fewer phone calls now, because many use email contact, but that would only work if you are leading activities where the past experience of the participant does not truly matter.

You know, as I write this, I am aware that the real training required for leading walks is to ensure that people can lead people. Get a few leaders together and get them talking about leading. It's revealing. They talk about participants! Listen. You'll learn lots.

But for now, that will do. I don't truly want to go into more details just yet. You'll find out too many secrets. Just ask when next you join a walk. And enjoy the insights into human nature.

Behind the Environmental Movement – Part 1

Behind any set of beliefs are our deeply held values. We can write about what plants are within a park, what mammals we see and what insects are busy at different times of the year. We can angrily denounce activities that disturb what we now call an “ecosystem” but behind all that writing, all those words and all those thoughts there are a set of values that we hold dear. This new column will be a regular one that explores some of the sources that helps us understand where those values arise and I ask readers to consider responding to what’s within or setting out your own inspirations behind your love of nature and your connections to our national parks.

In this initial offering I link two podcasts from ABC Radio National’s Soul Search. Each program can be downloaded and heard over and over again. Each links to other writings you might wish to follow.

The first is a program on Thoreau and Walden, his most famous “transcendental” writing. You can hear it at <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/soul-search/henry-david-thoreaus-search-for-justice/13237912>

What is our life for? Henry David Thoreau’s search for justice

Early in the Spring of 1845, a young man borrowed an axe and went down to the woods, just outside Concord, Massachusetts, and began cutting down tall young pines in just the spot where he intended to build a house.



Walden Pond in November 2001 (picture Brian Everingham)

It was the beginning of a two-year experiment in forest life, which eventually inspired one of the great classics of American literature: *Walden, or Life in the Woods*, by Henry David Thoreau.

Today, we're heading into the woods for a fresh look at Thoreau.

The nineteenth century philosopher-poet, whose own search for a life lived deep, inspired countless others: from nature writer Rachel Carson to novelist Lev Tolstoy, and political activists including Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

So what was Thoreau's vision of the good life, and of the just society?

The second is an interview with Stephanie Kaza on Green Buddhism.

Go to <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/soul-search/green-buddhism-with-professor-stephanie-kaza/13311776>

How can we live in proper relationships with other species? We often consider environmental questions in terms of science, or perhaps economics or even politics. But what can religious perspectives – like Buddhism – add to the conversation? As the world marks Earth Day on April 22, on Soul Search they revisited a conversation with Professor Stephanie Kaza. She talks of the Muir Woods and of talking with trees and listening to them.



Muir Woods (picture Brian Everingham)

The new Draft Plan of Management for Royal National Park

The draft plan of management for Royal/Heathcote/Garawarra is now out for public comment and we urge all members to read the documents and respond. Do so as individuals as the Branch is making its own comprehensive submission.

There are three to download from <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/royal-parks-draft-plan-of-management>. They are:

- The draft plan of management. This outlines what NPWS believes should happen within the park and its various precincts and outlines a set of priorities. Check all and see if you agree with what is said or disagree and take notes as you go. Should any other activities be designated as “high priority”?
- A draft planning considerations document. This sets out the values of the park, from its geology through to its heritage values and all the influences on the park. They may have missed out information that is vital so it is important to tell them if that’s the case. None of us are experts at everything! All of us can leave out key pieces of information without realizing it.
- A draft mountain bike strategy. Many of you might wonder why one particular activity is getting its own strategy over all other uses within the park. In some ways it is an attempt to control the proliferation of illegal activities that have been damaging the park in the past decade. Review the plan and see if it is workable. If you doubt that park management can deliver, say so. NPA is certainly concerned that what appears in plans does not always get done on the ground!

Once you have had a look at those documents click on the Have Your Say tab within the hyperlink provided. There are interactive maps for you to peruse so you can get a better feel for what is being planned and where.

Some of the issues you might consider:

- Does the plan give adequate direction for the better protection of the natural environment and all its components?
- Does the plan give adequate directions for the better protection of its cultural heritage, including Aboriginal and shared heritage? Does it address various aspects of heritage in a way that recognizes all?
- Does this plan provide for visitor experiences in a way that protects the natural and cultural heritage?
- Does this plan provide for visitor experiences that recognise that certain activities can conflict with the enjoyment of others?
- Do you feel that this plan will lead to a better park than was here before?

And do share your thoughts with us. Send your responses to Gary Schoer at ssbnpansw@bigpond.com

Gary Schoer for the Branch Plan of Management Team

History Corner

Pugilism on the Hacking Greg Jackson December 2019

Introduction:

One of the favourite sports in colonial Sydney was the noble art of bare-knuckle boxing. The lower classes in Sydney town favoured this brutal sport but it was vigorously opposed by the religious and upper-class elements of society backed by the authorities. In 1863 pugilism came to Port Hacking with a fight (mill) between experienced campaigners John Sullivan and George Dodd.

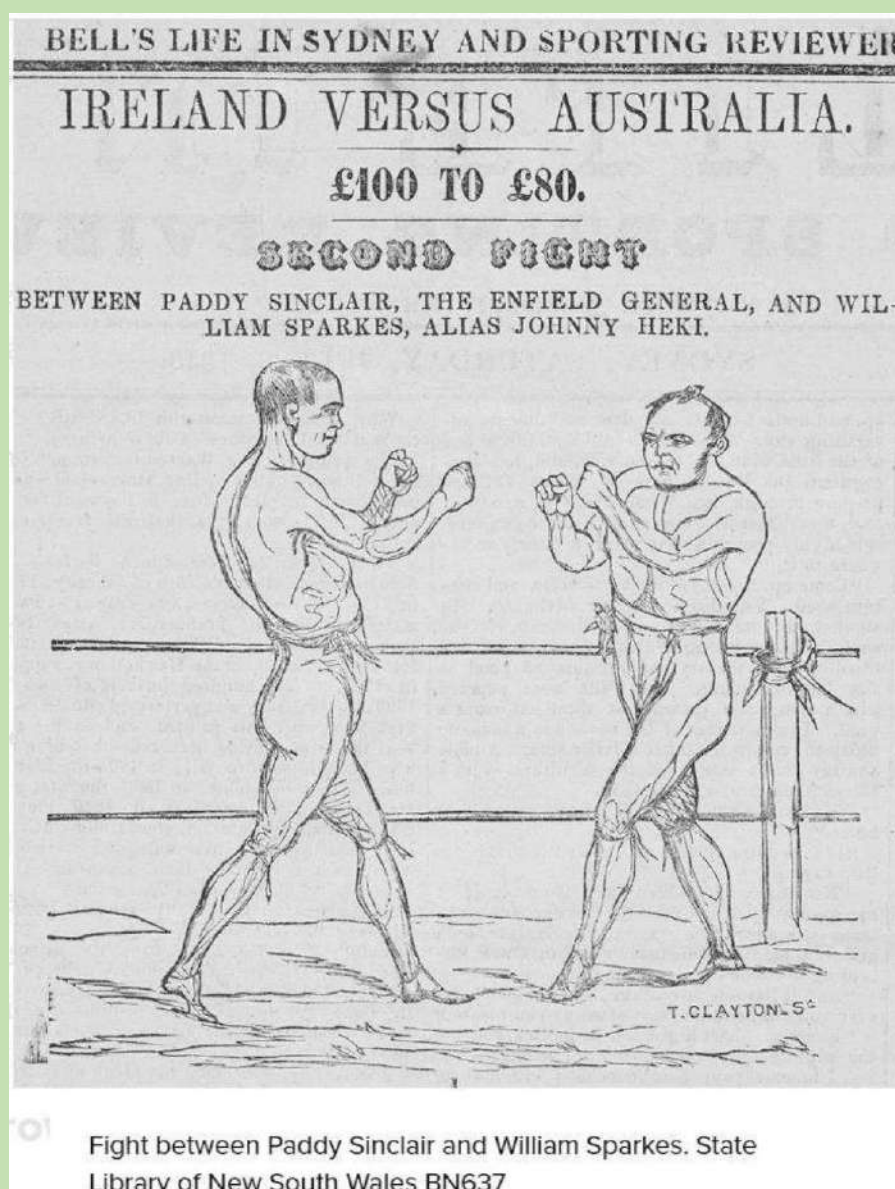
Pugilism in Sydney:

Pugilism, or bare-knuckle boxing, was a brutal, bloody sport that was popular in Australia for about 70 years. Prize fights in Sydney were reported in the newspapers from the 1820's and most newspapers of the day reported them in a disapproving tone. The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 10 March 1829 noted "...there appears to be a growing taste in our infant community for the brutal and demoralising effects of prize-fighting..."

However, Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Chronicle, a proponent of all sporting endeavours, actively supported prize-fighting and reported round by round descriptions of the mills. The location of these mills was not generally revealed till the last moment to prevent 'the beaks getting an inkling and to spoil sport'. The prize money for these fights was considerable, 30 pounds reported for an 1838 fight between William Sparkes and William Hall. This would be equivalent to more than \$4000 today. However, the real money was in the betting, already a great Australian tradition. As the nineteenth century progressed the police made it increasingly difficult to arrange prize-fights in Sydney and the action moved to the country with fights reported at Parramatta, Windsor and, in the south, around Tempe. The Georges River was also the venue for several prize-fights in the 1840's and 50's with some taking place near Horse Rock Point (what is now Sylvania). Tempe (Cooks River or Mud Bank) became a very popular fight venue. This area had a working-class population of brick makers and lime burners who often provided the protagonists. The participants in this sport usually used aliases although their real names were often reported in the press. The Sparkes family (real name thought to be Parkes), who came from Sparkes Camp on the Cooks River, were a family of boxers with all five brothers' proponents of the sport. William Sparkes travelled to England for a fight with one Paddy Sinclair in 1847, a fight he lost after breaking his arm in the 63rd round. On his return to Sydney, Sparkes was greeted by a crowd at the Sydney Quay as a national hero.

The mill at Port Hacking occurred rather by accident. A prize-fight between Young (John) Sullivan (he was 23 years old) and George Dodd (real name George Curran) from Tasmania was arranged with a prize of 300 pounds for the 4th August 1863. George Dodd was hauled before the courts on the 1st August on a charge of being 'about to break the peace' and ordered to pay a surety of 50 pounds, presumably not enough to stop him fighting. Young Sullivan was a seasoned campaigner with many fights to his credit, mostly victories, why, like Dodd, he was not bound over to keep the peace is a mystery. On the day of the fight two of the Illawarra Steamship Navigation Companies ships, the Kiama and Mimosa (see information below) came from Circular Quay to Kurnell with about 400 people to view the spectacle. However, the police under senior sergeants Taylor and Rawlinson were also there. Not to be denied their sport the multitude re-

embarked and proceeded to the Hacking where 'in a bight on the southern side of the bay' the fight took place. This fight was possibly Jibbon Beach. The Kiama and Mimosa were steamships of considerable size and Jibbon beach has sufficient depth of water close-in to facilitate the unloading of the passengers and, like Kurnell, Jibbon's sand beach would also be an ideal place for a boxing ring. The roadstead off Jibbon beach was a common place for large ships to shelter from southerly storms. Prize fights, before the Marques of Queensbury's rules were often protracted affairs and this one was no different. Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Chronicle, 8 August 1863, reported at length on the fight. which started at 3:00 pm and lasted till almost 5:00 when, with darkness falling, a long trip back to Circular Quay and the protagonists tiring it was declared a draw after 28 fairly uneventful rounds 'neither of the men showing signs of severe punishment though both seemed extremely weak'.



Bell's Life however expressed themselves well satisfied with the mill and suggested that a rematch would be in order. The multitude re-embarked onto the steamers and returned to Circular Quay by 8:00pm.

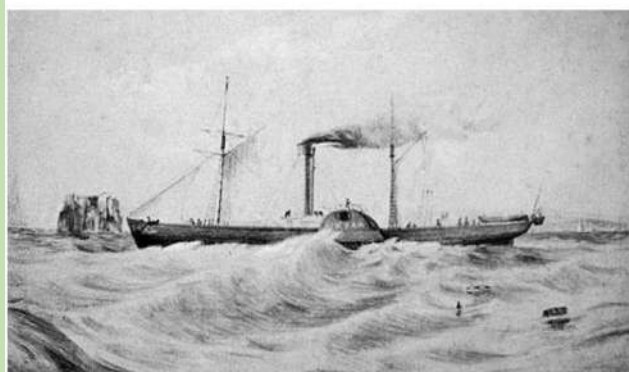
Conclusion:

Thus, ended Port Hackings only recorded bare-knuckle prize-fight, probably an unplanned event forced on the organisers by circumstances. An uneasy truce was declared between the proponents and detractors of boxing when the Marquis of Queensbury rules were phased-in in the 1870's making the sport acceptable for at least a small majority of the population. Bare-knuckle boxing in colonial Australia became an avenue to express our national identity with the idolization of sportsmen. The ongoing idea of boxers as celebrities can be seen in the mythology that still surrounds 20th-century champions like Les Darcy and Lionel Rose.

The Illawarra Steam Navigation Company ships *Kiama* and *Mimosa*

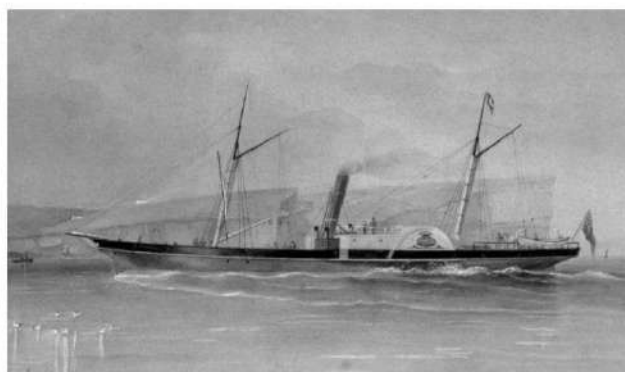
Ship	Built	Type	Tonnage	Length	Beam	Draft
<i>Mimosa</i>	1854	Paddle Steamer	162	141'/43m	18'/5.5m	9'/2.7m
<i>Kiama</i>	1854	Paddle Steamer	145	121'/37m	20'/6m	-

Note: The *Mimosa* was lengthened to 163'/50m in 1863



Mimosa

Image: State Library of Tasmania



Kiama

Image: ANMM Collection

References:

St Peters Cooks River History Group, 2012, Pugilism

<https://stpeterscooksriverhistory.wordpress.com/2012/06/11/pugilism>

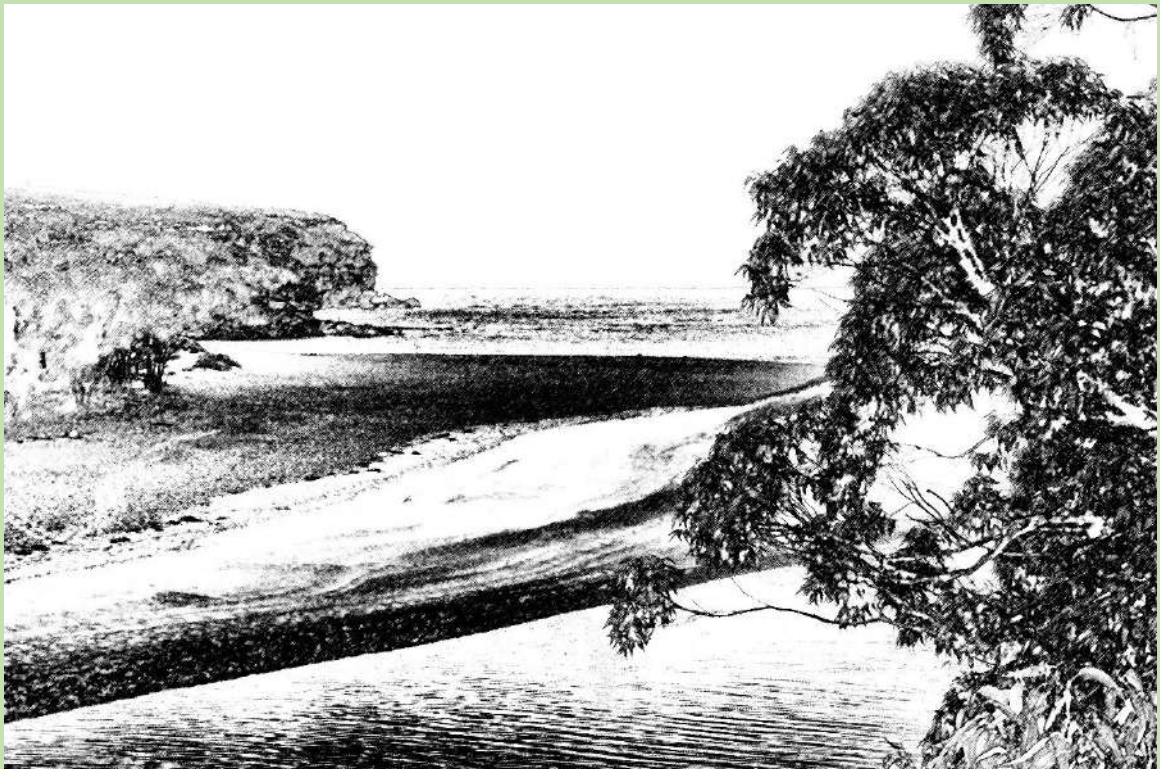
If you have stories about events in the past in Royal National Park, please feel free to contact the editor. Email to brian.everingham@gmail.com

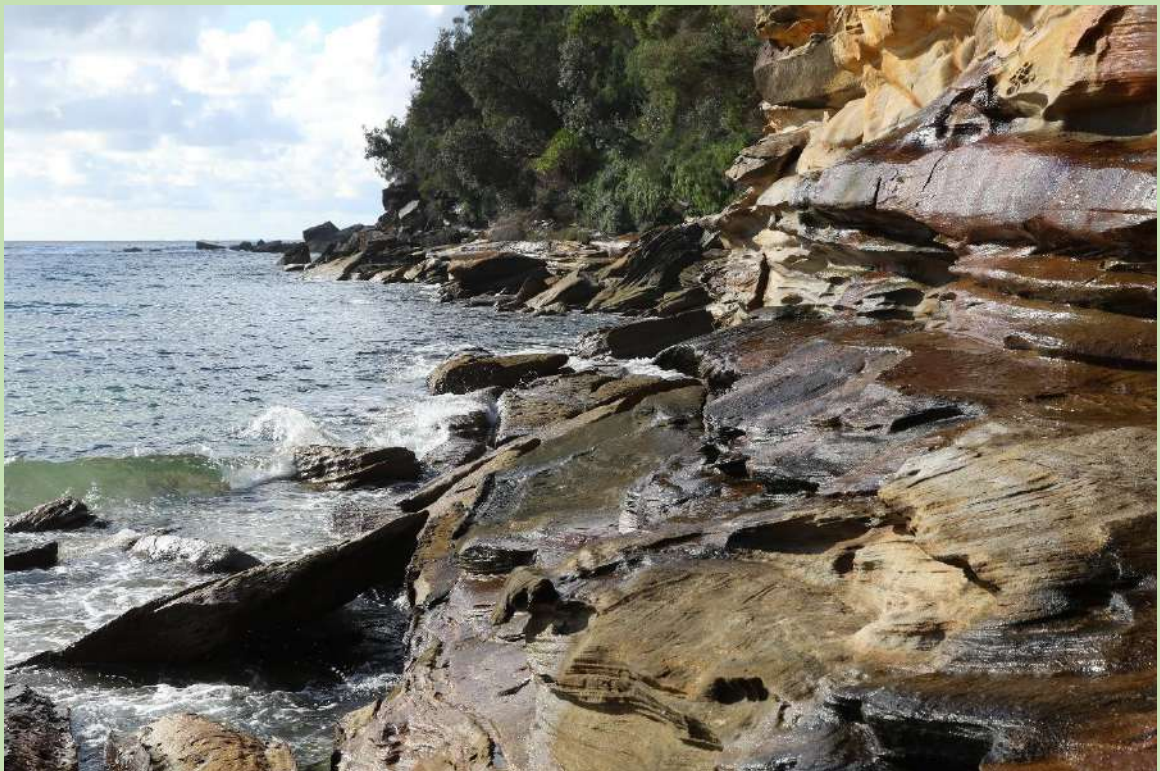
Out and About National Poetry Month With the NPA

On April 1st a small band of brave souls joined Brian Everingham to celebrate National Poetry Month on the cliffs around Wattamolla.

Noting that the focus of this exercise – not an April fool's Joke – was to celebrate National Poetry Month and the description of the event included what better place to be inspired than the coast of Royal National Park, to bring along a poem and share with the others, meander around the coast and record your impressions. They were also told to bring notepad or camera or sketch book. They were then asked to return home, produce their own poem, share it.... and so, within this trip report are my own efforts, both written and photographic! Poets and photographers need not fear of the competition but the bush would be quiet if only the best voices sang!

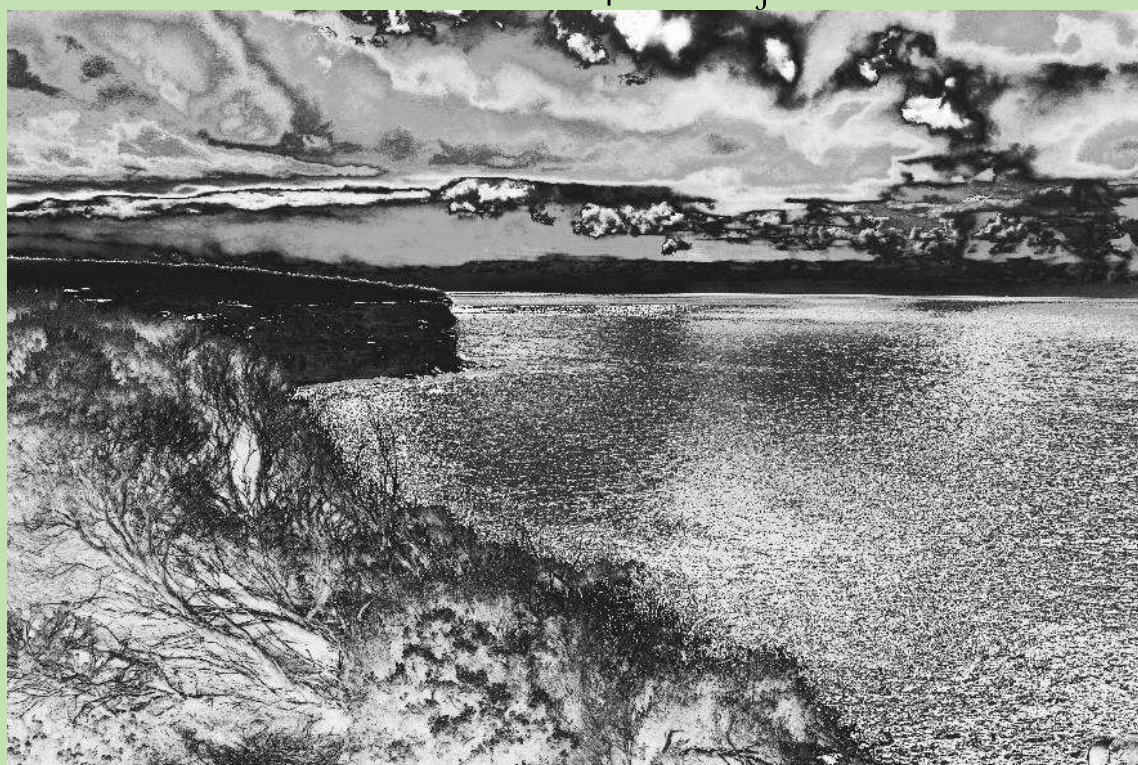
*Greeted by a wave of a rufous tail
Guided on our way by a flash of red
Warbled onto rock in an orange glow
And farewelled by the tail of an up-turned wave*







*Getsam-méd into rock
Discarded, relinquished refuse*



*Perched precariously under ominous skies
We cling and cling
Persevering
Hoping for a better dawn*



Next year why don't you join us! It was a lovely way to engage with our beautiful national parks.

Introducing Our wildlife

Golden-headed Cisticola

Cisticola exilis



Do forgive the weed Kevin – it's amazing just how many wild birds like lantana

The specific epithet *exilis* is the Latin word for "small", "slender" or "thin" so don't expect a big bird if you go out looking for this beauty and, as in most "birdwatching", the best way to spot them is to hear them. It produces a variety of sounds which range from "teewip" to a "wheezz, whit-whit". Once you tune in to it you might come up with a better way of describing it.

It is omnivorous, primarily eating invertebrates such as insects and small slugs, but also eating grass seeds. It usually inhabits a single place throughout its life too so once you know where one is you can often go back and wait and it will come out and show itself.

The bird constructs its nests in shrubs, grass tussock, and other types of vegetation, no more than 3 metres (9.8 ft) above the ground. They are built with green leaves, soft plant down, and grass, with the plants being used so that the nest is camouflaged, and it is then stitched together with spider web!!!!

Now this diminutive bird has quite a range, living in the countries of Australia, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

There is one other species of *Cisticola* in Australia, the Zitting, but it is confined to the north so don't worry too much about that unless heading north



Be warned that it is sometimes a little tricky to tell these little things apart from Little Grassbirds when spotted in this type of habitat but the call does give them away.



Brian Everingham

Sydney Harbour National Park Islands

In case you are not aware there are several islands within Sydney Harbour National Park and you are able to visit four of them.

The islands open to the public are:

Goat Island

Known as Me-mel by the local Cadigal people, Goat Island was once inhabited by Bennelong and Barangaroo. Guided tours are available to explore the rich history of Goat Island. You can take tours to this fascinating island including one called "Goat Island Convicts, castles and champagne tour". If interested it is run by Sydney Harbour Tall Ships. The site has so much history that even at its size you can fill in an entire visit and wish you could stay longer.

Shark Island

While it is open to boats and kayaks, at a landing fee of \$7.00, you must take everything with you. Book and pay online or call the National Parks Contact Centre on 1300 072 757. It's the tiny island 1km off the shore from Rose Bay. Note that Captain Cook Cruises run a service during school holidays.

Clark Island

This little island is off the tip of Darling Point. Lieutenant Ralph Clark cultivated the island as a vegetable garden in 1789 after arriving with the First Fleet the year before. Though his vegetables were continually stolen, the name Clark remains firmly attached to the island, which is now a recreational haven for Sydneysiders. Conditions for visiting this are as per Shark Island but Tribal Warrior also run a fascinating boat and island tour as you learn about the Aboriginal culture of Sydney Harbour.

Fort Denison

his former military site is the most complete Martello Tower in the world. It's currently closed for maintenance but expected to reopen late in 2022 and when it does check it out. It is a fascinating place with so much history.

Ref: <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/sydney-harbour-national-park>