



Killcare Wagstaffe Trust

Newsletter

April 2016

Annual General Meeting

Sunday May 1st at 9.30 am
at the Maitland Bay Information Centre.
Speaker Anne McLeod

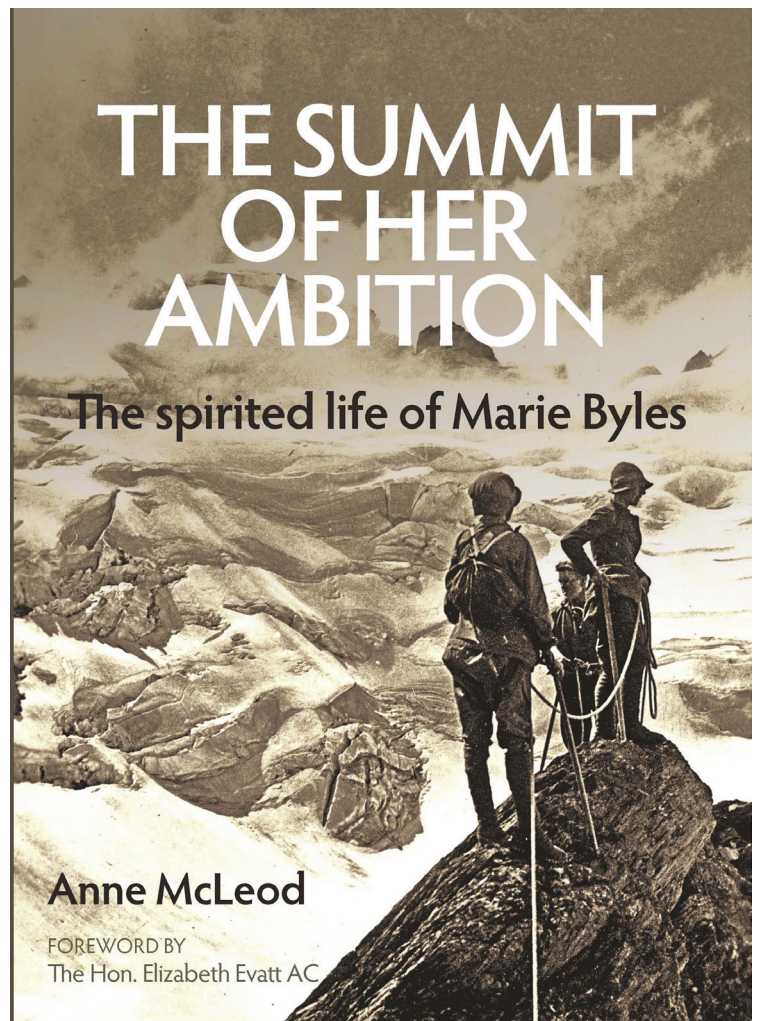
All visitors and residents are welcome

The next meeting is the AGM and all positions become vacant. The current committee has agreed to stand for their current roles but any new interest would be welcome. You can nominate at the meeting.

Anne McLeod, the author of a very recently released biography of Marie Byles will be our speaker after the general meeting. She will start around 10.30 and will be selling copies of the book afterwards.

"There is something in the contact between the human being and nature which is very hard to explain, but as you lie on Mother Earth and look up at the stars, the life force seems to bring a new health to your tired limbs and worried mind."

Marie Byles



Marie Byles (1900 – 1979)

Marie Byles was a pioneer feminist, conservationist and mountaineer.

She graduated in Law in 1924 at Sydney University. Although women had been granted entry to the Law Faculty for the first time in 1918, for almost all the time she was a student, Marie was the only woman in her classes.

She was unable to find a job as a solicitor, so worked for some years as a legal clerk. Eventually she became the state's first female practising solicitor, establishing her own practice in Eastwood in 1929. A lifelong feminist, she insisted on sharing the firm's profits with her staff, all of them women, some married. The work was mainly conveyancing, probate and some matrimonial matters.



She also became a publicist for the women's movement. Her writing focussed on discriminatory provisions in the law and discriminatory practices in the courts, drawing attention to cases where magistrates and judges interpreted the law to make woman's behaviour the issue on trial. As legal advisor for women's organisations in the 1930s she helped change legislation that discriminated against women's rights in marriage and divorce – most cruelly, in the guardianship of their own children.

During her twenties she became an enthusiastic walker and camper and was an early member of the elite Sydney Bush Walkers club which included Paddy Pallin. With friends she walked and camped in the coastal bushland behind Maitland Bay in New South Wales, becoming aware of its varied vegetation and splendid scenery. She began a campaign for the establishment of a 263 hectare national park, now Bouddi National Park and about five times the original size. The Park was formally created in 1935.

For many years she was a trustee of Bouddi and organized working bees to create walking tracks through the park. Her efforts are commemorated in the Marie Byles lookout in Bouddi.

A Plastic Bag and Bottle Free Peninsula

The Trust plans to make the peninsula plastic bag and plastic water bottle free. As a coastal community it behoves us to minimise this waste – dangerous to marine animals and contributor to long term landfill volume and toxicity.

Apart from the practical benefits, every community that can achieve this small step makes it easier for other communities to follow. The NSW towns of Kangaroo Valley, Mogo, Oyster Bay and Huskisson as well as others across Australia have all managed to do it.

France has passed a law banning single-use, non-biodegradable plastic bags from July 1 this year.



What will it mean?

We can declare the area plastic bag and bottle free when all commercial outlets on the Peninsula no longer offer plastic bags or bottled water. Instead, some type of re-usable bag will be offered, most likely with a small charge attached, if the shopper needs one. Filtered water stations will be installed at Killcare and Wagstaffe shops for people to refill their own bottles.

Most outlets have already expressed support. The Trust intends to help in the design and supply of re-usable bags and the sourcing of reusable water bottles.

Peninsula Palms

There are two palms that are native to the Bouddi peninsula – the Bangalow and the Cabbage Tree. Both are a lot less common than would have been the case before European settlement.

The **Bangalow palm** (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) can grow to over 20m. It has bright green leaves, a thin trunk, beautiful violet flowers and red seeds.

It loves water and can be found naturally growing in rainforest gullies from Mackay in Queensland down as far as Batemans Bay on the NSW south coast.

It has shallow roots and grows reasonably quickly making it an ideal addition to domestic gardens. It is a much better alternative to the popular Kentia palm which is not an Australian native.

It is used in many places in landscape plantings. It has become an invasive weed in Brazil and is known to invade sensitive ecosystems in New Zealand.





The Cabbage Tree palm (*Livistona australis*) is a slower growing palm than can reach over 30m.

It can tolerate drier conditions than the Bangalow, preferring open forest. It also has a wider distribution, reaching as far south as Orbost in Victoria. On the peninsula it is found on the slopes above Maitland Bay and in the gullies to the North of Hardys Bay.

It is a less suitable garden plant than the Bangalow, taking up a lot of space when young and producing dead leaves with sharp spines on the stems when older.

European settlers in Australia used fibre from the native palm to create the cabbage tree hat.

Indigenous Australians used to eat the heart of several species of palm, which was also known as the cabbage. It did not specifically come from the cabbage tree palm.

The Cocos palm, beloved of property developers, is an environmental weed and we are pleased to see many of those planted on the peninsula being removed over the last few years.



Cassia Day in April

Another Cassia removal day was held on Sunday April 3rd. Although there were only committee members present, a worthwhile amount of work was done in a short morning. We followed up on last years work along the Hardy's Bay foreshore and began work on the reserve around the grave between Stanley and Blythe Streets. We will make this an annual event.

This weed is easy to recognise at the moment with its bright yellow flowers. If you have any in your garden or on the road outside your house, now is a good time to simply cut the stem near the base and paint the stump with a herbicide such as glyphosate. Most are small enough to leave the plant where it lies to break down.