



# North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

## Custodians of North Head

ABN 97093480659 P.O. Box 506, Balgowlah, NSW 2093  
northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au

Newsletter No 189 July 2024

### Special edition

### NHSF remembers Jennifer Juin Wilson (23.04.1952-30.05.2024)

Jenny's participation was a long and very active one.

As best any of us can remember (and to some extent verify from historical records), Jenny was accepted as a member in 2003 – nominated by Judy Lambert, Seconded by Judith Bennett. This was consequent upon, and part of, NHSF becoming an "Association" under NSW law. A total of 120 members were joined up all on that one day or shortly thereafter.

Already active as a Nursery volunteer, Jenny was elected to the committee and became Treasurer at the 2008 AGM. The first financial "Journal" created by Jenny as Treasurer was for the 2008-2009 year – but she clearly had access to Journals for the 2002-2008 period.

In January 2009 the first of what now totals 189 NHSF Newsletters appeared. The agreement to have an "Education Group" and a "Nursery Group" also occurred in 2009 with Jenny's role growing as time went on.

### Remembering Jenny

Toni Stevenson

I first met Jenny in 2008 at a NHSF meeting when Sue Halmagyi outlined her ideas for a native plant Nursery. Jenny was the Treasurer for NHSF at that time and until her death. I noticed how Jenny moved around the meeting room, making contact, organising etc. I can remember starting out with plant identification and seed collection, sometime in late 2009. I'm hazy how often Sue came along but Jenny was always there, taking notes. She had no hesitation in accepting responsibility for the Nursery seed and cutting collection and was generous with her time when it came to finding new recruits. Jenny was always on the lookout for needed seed. Once she had established the best time to go seed hunting, Jenny and others would go out on a non-Nursery day. Her most regular companion was Ian McCawley. It was a time where they could observe bushland, insects, fauna and changes brought about by human impact. These walks always ended at Bella Vista Café for that essential cup of coffee.

In the first year or so most Nursery work involved seed collection and growing plants. Jenny was very happy to plant as well as grow stock, but within a year her expertise was needed full time to run propagation work. Over the years Jenny and her team have produced many thousands of tube stock.



Jenny at work propagating new plants

Photo: Peter Macinnis

Over the years Jenny's commitment to the Nursery increased and she was always on the lookout for activities and projects which would reflect well on the Nursery. She could never be dissuaded from taking on something new or even relinquishing something old. As someone remarked recently, after viewing all the things Jenny took charge of, these days we are saying that it needs a couple of people to share each task.



Ready for a morning's planting in one of our many sites

Photo: Ian Evans

**What Jenny did:** Ran the propagation Nursery (endless tasks), day to day Nursery activities, in capacity of Treasurer kept accounts and paid for equipment and stock, shopped for morning tea, attended committees other than NHSF, Treasurer NHSF, Newsletter producer and distributor, photographer, kept the membership list, Third Cemetery morning, Nursery volunteers emails, etc. In fact a tireless worker for the general good of the Nursery and Foundation.

We will all miss her companionship and boundless enthusiasm.

## The Oval

Reintroduction of plants from our Nursery to the numerous bushland fingers established around the former Oval was another of the activities to which Jenny contributed over a long time.



## Jenny liked to 'get things done'

### New uniforms for Nursery volunteers Lynette Jones

Jenny was always aware of the safety of the volunteers, so as the result of a donation from Max Player she arranged to get high vis long sleeved cotton shirts, hats and a very warm jacket for the nursery vollies. All with NHSF embroidered on them and VOLUNTEERS in large letters on the back.



Jenny's photo of Nursery volunteers in their new safety uniforms

Some people even choose to iron their shirts!

The new uniforms have been well received, being very visible for NHSF as we work. Jenny took all feedback into consideration, and with determination got things done. Thank you Jenny.

## Morning Tea

Juanita Roberts

Morning tea just doesn't magically appear, set and ready as we walk back from the morning planting/weeding, anymore. Seems strange without Jenny but at least a uniting point where we can heal from our great loss while sharing good memories. Jenny was always on the ball, in the know, when the good deals and bargains were on to save money and always keep us stocked with our favourites. She would kindly walk back to the shed to get the Cheese biscuits if not enough that morning, as she knew we loved them after the sweet ones. She was always so generous and thoughtful to the extent her niece told us in the memorial speech that Jenny wanted us to continue the Birthday cake tradition after she was gone. Mine was the first birthday after, bittersweet as it is still hard to digest, she has gone. She will not be forgotten It will take a lot of people to fill her boots.

## Third Cemetery Volunteers

Kaye Lee

Just one of the many 'hats' Jenny wore at North Head was that of overseeing a small group of volunteers, bent on removing aggressive or invasive plants, trimming path edges, and weeding graves in the Third Cemetery. Unless raining, the first Wednesday of each month would find Jenny directing us to the particular tasks of the morning followed by a very congenial coffee break, invariably accompanied by cake, a Jenny must! This work continues, alas without Jenny, and perhaps less cake.



Photo collage: Ian Evans

## Research

Kaye Lee

My first encounter with Jenny was in the old Artillery Library, after I had drawn rough diagrams of most of the graves in the Third Cemetery. Detecting a shared interest in the lives of those buried in the cemetery, Jenny talked me into joining the Nursery Volunteers and later the cemetery group. We shared many discussions of the various graves and the lives and deaths of those buried there, and I found her ready knowledge of each one - based on endless research of the National Archives of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, Trove and many other sources - amazing. Each month, this Newsletter has included an historical article from Jenny based on her research.

Jenny's knowledge of previous research on the Cemetery led to a practical exercise at one point. Tying string to adjacent gravestones, Jenny found the approximate location of a headstone that had originally been plotted on earlier plans, but had disappeared over time. A few gentle prods with bamboo stakes and brushing away of sand soon revealed the long-lost headstone of Jean Baptiste Adonis, now re-erected.



Of particular interest to her were the graves of the 12 soldiers from the ship Medic (pronounced Meedic) who had died at the Quarantine Station from pneumonic influenza. Whilst headstones had been erected for these men, they were later removed, leaving us to only guess at who lay in which grave. This inspired a trip to Rookwood to view the bronze plaques erected for each soldier and to view examples of military headstones that would have originally stood in the Third Cemetery. Hopefully, these will be re-erected in the near future, which Jenny was looking forward to.

### Third Cemetery research

One of Jenny's enduring interests and commitments was in researching the stories of those who are buried in the Third Quarantine Cemetery.

Having documented the names of each person and prepared a display which is in our Bandicoot Heaven Community Education room, Jenny sought information from historic newspapers, and elsewhere to tell the story of those who rest in the Third Cemetery.

Many of our newsletter readers over the years have commented on their interest in this segment of each monthly newsletter.

Below is an extract of an article Jenny searched out about an individual buried in the Third Cemetery.

*Australian Town and Country Journal* (NSW: 1870 – 1907), Saturday 3 March 1900, page 10

## The Bubonic Plague.

### ANOTHER OUTBREAK IN SYDNEY

#### ONE DEATH—TWENTY-SEVEN PERSONS IN QUARANTINE.

Captain Thomas Dudley, of the firm of T. R. Dudley and Company, oilskin, sail, tent, tarpaulin, and flag makers and boat outfitters, carrying on business at 47, 49, and 51 Sussex-street, died at his residence, Drummoyne, on February 22, and next day the health authorities arrived at the alarming conclusion that the cause of his death was the dreaded bubonic plague. Directions were at once given for the complete isolation of the residence, and also of Captain Dudley's place of business in Sussex-street, steps which were carried out without delay. Steps were also taken to quarantine all those persons who had been most exposed to the liability of contagion. At 3.30 p.m. on Saturday the police received instructions from the Board of Health to at once isolate No. 4 Murray-street, Pyrmont, another suspicious case having been reported at that address. The patient in this instance is John Makins, 36, a clerk, or storeman, employed at one of the waterside stores near Sussex-street. His case is a very serious one, and on Tuesday he was delirious.

Kaye Lee has offered to continue this interesting aspect of Jenny's work.

## Taking photos of our activities

Collecting photos of Jenny's contribution has taken some time.

From our early days she was a keen provider of a photo-record of our volunteers and the results of their work.



Progress with one of our early Nursery projects - restoring native vegetation along the path opposite Bandicoot Heaven (Top: 2009, Centre: 2011; Bottom: 2017)

However, it wasn't just our work that Jenny captured.

Over her many years on North Head she took some great photos of flowering native plants, and of birds.

Jenny was more often found behind the camera lens than in front of it.

## Tributes to Jenny Our President's tribute

Matthew Taylor

At the memorial gathering that Jenny's family organized at Milestones (one of Jenny's favourite places for a 'function') for Friday morning 30 May, our President Mathew Taylor spoke on NHSF's behalf:

Jenny was a Lady of great passion who loved North Head. She had an encyclopaedic knowledge of plants and how to propagate them. This was shared with her nursery crew which she led with Toni.

Jenny contributed enormously to the workings of NHSF in her role on the committee and as our Treasurer. She produced our monthly newsletter ensuring interest and supply of content about North Head through gentle persistent reminders like

*"When are you going to write that article for me Matthew?"*

She managed our membership lists and a whole lot more that we will struggle to match.

Jenny made a huge contribution to people around her and there are a considerable number of plants and trees out there standing as a legacy of her passion for people & plants that are making North Head even more beautiful and providing habitat for bandicoots and Pygmy Possums long into the future.

### Messages of condolence

The extent to which Jenny's contributions at North Head are recognised is reflected in the large number of messages of recognition and condolence we've received since her passing on 30 May.

Messages came from our State MP James Griffin (who also recognised Jenny in his recent Parliamentary commendation of NHSF's work), staff at the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, scores of members and newsletter readers, and others with whom Jenny had had contact.

A small sample of these expressions of appreciation follow:

*I read, earlier in the morning, your beautiful encomium for Jenny Wilson, who I came to "know" almost solely through two or three conversations when she suggested I put to paper, for the Newsletter, my memories of growing up in the shadow of North Head. Your description of her generous and almost exhausting contribution to the Sanctuary Foundation adds to, and confirms the love of "our corner" of Sydney Harbour we shared. I am sad to learn of her passing.*

*As a country-based member of the Foundation I welcome the chance to read, through the newsletter, of the progress of the active members in their efforts to secure the continuing preservation of the gem that we all see as so important, yet so vulnerable. I end each of my readings of the Newsletter confident that the sanctuary is in the best of hands. I suggest we are all enriched by the opportunity to experience Jenny's wise and productive example.*

John Harris

*We were all shocked and very saddened to hear this news. Jenny will be much missed.*

*I'm very sorry that I wasn't able to attend the memorial service, ... But I was pleased to hear that the Harbour Trust was represented.*

*It must be a difficult time for the Foundation. Do let me know if there is anything we can do to help.*

Janet Carding

*As an educator, I like posing provocative questions for kids, and for one book, I was toying with "why do waves always run to the shore, and never away?" Now I know the answer. Chris and I were walking along east Manly Cove, workshopping the idea when we ran into Jenny, so I gave her the question. Without batting an eyelid, she said "because they'd look silly, going the other way".*

*Over the years, I have tried a few other questions on her, but that's the answer I will always remember.*

Peter Macinnis

**In Jenny's absence, our regular activities must continue.**

## Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

### New volunteers needed

We are open on **Saturdays and Sundays between 10am and 4pm**. Please call in, have a chat, buy some of our special wildflower cards designed by botanical artist and NHSF member Julie Holcombe.

We need to recruit new volunteers to help provide visitors with information about North Head and its bushland.

Anyone interested should contact Judy Lambert (email: [twswombat505@gmail.com](mailto:twswombat505@gmail.com) or phone 0427 217 580).

## Native Plant Nursery

The Nursery grows mainly Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub plants which our volunteers plant into degraded areas of North Head.



Grevillea speciosa (Red Spider Flower) Photo: Geoff Lambert

You are welcome to join us. There is always planting, weeding (never ending), and maintenance to be done in one of our many areas. Some knowledge of native plants and their identification would be very useful.

Please call in any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and noon. In really hot or wet weather we may not work or may leave early after morning tea.

Email: [toni\\_stevenson@bigpond.com](mailto:toni_stevenson@bigpond.com) if you would like to join our Nursery team.