



North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

Custodians of North Head

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

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Spring Wildflower Walks

Judy Lambert

Spring is fast approaching and we are expecting a great wildflower season after the recent rain.

If you'd like to join us for a guided walk (2-2½ hrs easy walking on tracks, some steps), **book your**



place by emailing me at tswombat505@gmail.com or call in to Bandicoot Heaven (Bld 20, North Fort Road, off North Head Scenic Drive) 10am-4pm Sat-Sun. Include your name, email address, contact phone number on the day (in case of bad weather) and the number of places you need, **Numbers are limited, so please book in advance.**

Walk dates: Sunday 29 Sept 10am-12-30, Monday 7 Oct (public holiday) 10am-12.30, Wednesday 16 Oct 10am-12.30, and Sunday 27 Oct 2-4.30pm.

Meet at Bandicoot Heaven. Please wear comfortable walking shoes, and bring a hat, insect repellent and water bottle. A short introduction and safety briefing will be provided at the beginning of each walk.

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held at Bandicoot Heaven at **2pm on Saturday 21 September**. A guest speaker from the Sydney Botanic Gardens will talk about the 'Restore & Renew' project which has broad applications for restoration and biodiversity management in the face of climate change. **Please save the date** & join us at the AGM. A formal notice will be sent 2-3 weeks prior to the meeting.

Bandicoot Heaven – volunteers needed

We are open on **Saturdays and Sundays between 10am and 4pm** providing information about North Head to visitors. If you would like to be one of our volunteers contact Judy Lambert – M: 0427217580 E: tswombat505@gmail.com

Defence of Sydney Tour

Thanks to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust and to Peter Lawrence, Restoration Volunteer and our guide on the day, NHSF volunteers were taken on a tour of The Plotting Room and the recently completed Battery Observation Post.

To book your *Defence of Sydney Tour*, go to:

<https://events.ticketbooth.com.au/event/defence-of-sydney-tour>

Stony Range Spring Festival is on Sunday 8 September 9am-3pm at Dee Why's beautiful native plant oasis, 810 Pittwater Road, Dee Why with plant sales, displays, activities and refreshments available for young and old.

Viewing Platforms Win Major Awards

Jan Ritchie

Now is the right moment to visit North Head as the relatively new headland viewing platforms, Yiningma and Burragula, have just won both the esteemed NSW Medallion of the 2024 NSW Architecture Awards and the Robert Woodward Award for small project architecture.

Prompted in 2016 by a large rockfall into the harbour from the southern facing cliffs, the original lookouts were closed, and the stability of the whole area checked out. For safety reasons generally, it was decided to build new platforms further back from the edges, but with increased height to provide a widespread view.

A partnership of architecture firms CHOFI of Manly and Bangawarra of Sydney worked with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to come up with the design, praised by the Award judges for its attempt to honour First Nations' perspectives with meaningful connection to Country. The influence of the Indigenous company Bangawarra made certain the completed project would embed local Aboriginal knowledge into the landscape.



Southern viewing platform

Photo: Ian Evans

With the escape of a planned hazard reduction burn in October 2020 following the rockfall, resulting in a blackened landscape, major renovations were

carried out over the whole end of the headland including upgrading the original Fairfax Walk joining the two platforms. Reflecting the importance of the headland as a meeting place for Indigenous people, gone are the original lookout names Fairfax and Artillery and instead, Aboriginal names now replace them. Yiningma meaning steep cliff edges is the northern one facing the ocean. Burragula is the southern one looking over the harbour with the name referring to the local long-nosed bandicoot and its appearance at sunset.

The combination at Burragula of wind, acoustics and the surrounding sandstone seating produces an unintended but very special effect. Visitors to Burragula are encouraged to stand in the middle of the circle and sing or speak strongly to find their voice magically echoing back to them and even causing vibrations.



Circle on viewing platform

Photo: Ian Evans

Local Indigenous elders tell us that the headland was traditionally where whales were sung to safety. Is this a welcome re-ignition of a valued tradition?

The Scourge of The Pond

Peter Nash

The most diabolical weed we encounter at the frog pond on Scenic Drive is Pigeon Grass or, for those more botanically inclined, *Setaria sp.* It has various pseudonyms including yellow foxtail, bristle grass and cattail grass but is a common weed all over the world that has become naturalised throughout eastern and southern Australia.

Pigeon Grass is an annual that grows up to 75cm, likes full sun and normally likes a well-drained soil, as well as our pond edge. Apparently its seed can be used as a substitute for rice so I will volunteer to bake a cake for the person who comes up with the best North Head recipe for a "rice salad" from Pigeon Grass seed and a few other plants such as *Taraxacum officinale* (dandelion), *Portulaca oleracea* (purslane) and scurvy weed (*Commelina*, a native ground cover).



Photo: Ian Evans

Third Cemetery

Kaye Lee

Good news! The Sydney Harbour Trust, in collaboration with the Office of Australian War Graves, has arranged for reinstatement of the previously removed headstones of military personnel in the Third Cemetery. Repairs to the graves of Hector Hicks and Annie Egan have recently been carried out.

The Third Quarantine Cemetery is an idyllic resting place for some 237 victims of disease and misadventure in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Surrounded by Eastern Suburbs Banksia scrub, and with an incredible view of Sydney Harbour, it provides a wonderfully peaceful setting for those buried there and for the many visitors it attracts. But why was a third cemetery needed in the first place?

During the smallpox outbreak in Sydney in the 1880s which claimed many lives, there were numerous complaints made about the running of the Quarantine Station and the hospital ship Faraway and as a result, a Royal Commission⁽¹⁾ was appointed to enquire into and report upon their management. Included in the Commission's report, were questions concerning the Second Quarantine Cemetery, and testimony given on 20 October 1881 by witness Dr. Louis Foucart, Assistant Health Officer of Port Jackson stated the following:

"I found the grave-yard a great objection. When I was there, the smell was very offensive; the people were complaining, and certainly they had grounds for complaint, with all the small-pox graves so near them. I found the grave-diggers were burying the bodies so that there was not more than 14 inches of soil on top of the coffins, so it was reported to me. I went there and found the stench overbearing, and I had the graves covered with lime and banked over with clay; and I employed a very intelligent man, Constable Cook, to go with me and sound the ground round about; the result was that we found an excellent grave-yard at some distance from the ground which had a south-eastern aspect with a fall in the right direction, towards the south-east, and with about 14 feet of soil all through it. So I recommended that spot as the place for a new cemetery. My recommendation was adopted and we shut up the old cemetery."

True to Dr. Foucart's word, the first burials, that of Selina Elliott, Jimmy Maley and Frederick Southcott had already been carried out in the new cemetery (in September 1881), and burials continued there until 17 August, 1925 when tuberculosis sufferer Samain, from the SS Tasman, became the last person to be buried in the Third Cemetery.

(1) REPORT of the ROYALCOMMISSION appointed on the 13th September, 1881 to enquire into and report upon the management of the QUARANTINE STATION and the HULK "FARAWAY" downloaded https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/historictabledpapers/files/131247/LCTP%201881%20537-551%201882%201-134_114.pdf on 12/07/2024