



North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

Custodians of North Head

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Join a Spring Wildflower Walk!

Judy Lambert

The Harbour Trust is hosting North Head Discovery Day on Sunday 6 September. It will feature a vibrant program of workshops, mini tours including wildflower walks, arts and crafts, family activities, yoga, bird watching and access to some of North Head's iconic landmarks. Experienced NHSF volunteers will lead the wildflower walks. Details will be available from early August on their website:

<https://www.harbourtrust.gov.au>



NHSF volunteers will also lead our usual longer walks later in September-October as below.

All NHSF walks will begin at Bandicoot Heaven at:

- 10am, Sat 29 August
- 2pm, Sat 19 September
- 10am, Sun 27 September
- 2pm, Mon 5 Oct (public holiday)

Numbers are limited and bookings are required for each of these 2-2.5hour walks. You can get more information and/or register for a walk during a visit to Bandicoot Heaven (Building 20 at School of Artillery) on a Saturday & Sunday between 10am and 4pm or by emailing twsombat505@gmail.com. Please include contact name, email address, phone number on walk day (in case of bad weather) and number of people in your booking group.

Please wear comfortable shoes, and bring a hat, insect repellent and a water bottle.

A short introduction and safety briefing will be provided at the beginning of each walk.

A cautionary cookie tale

Matthew Taylor

I was on duty at Bandicoot Heaven a few weeks ago and before opening the doors I felt in need of a coffee so I wandered down to the coffee cart run by the nice South American chap. Tempted by the cookie jar I also purchased a choc chip cookie.

Walking back up the hill to BH sipping my coffee and anticipating the first bite of the cookie held loosely in my right hand I did not realise I was now a prime target for biscuit banditry. A sudden fast-moving shadow, a clack of a bill snapping shut, a brush of wings and a swooping kookaburra had nearly swiped my cookie! But luckily it missed and the Kookie was chased away by noisy miners - with me cheering them on and shaking my (cookie clutching) fist at the attempted mugger. Before I'd finished

celebrating this near miss, a magpie saw the opportunity and swooped in from the other side to try and swipe the cookie a second time! However, the cookie gods were with me that morning and the magpie also missed. A rare triumph of human over bird thieves!

No doubt this was just opportunism rather than a co-ordinated attack but these cookies are clearly a well-known target for the miscreants, do-badders and n'e'er do wells of North Head! You have been warned!



Grab a coffee and cookie from Yorky's while you're at North Head.

Spring flowers

Peter Macinnis

I am starting to get excited because the spring markers like *Acacia longifolia* flowers are showing. I maintain that spring starts when Sydney Golden Wattle is out, but pessimists tell me that late June is too early.

On the past four Saturdays, my companions and I have counted species in flower, and got 25, 35, 46 and 47, so I win!



Acacia longifolia



Grevillea buxifolia

What else is out? All year round, *Grevillea buxifolia*, grey spider flower, *Woolisia pungens*, flannel flowers, *Actinotus helianthi* and guinea flower, *Hibbertia scandens*.

We are sliding into orchid season, but only one so far :- (That orchid is near the Third Cemetery, and I show it to trustworthy people.



Woolfsia pungens



Actinotus helianthi



Hibbertia scandens



Acianthus fornicatus

Newish arrivals: *Philothea* sp (there are two) and two species of *Conospermum*. You are not allowed to stop there: keep looking!



Philothea sp.



Conospermum

Third Quarantine Cemetery – Staff Sergeant Percy Edwards

Kaye Lee

The skills of dental mechanic Staff Sergeant Percy Edwards, who died in quarantine at North Head on 1 December 1918¹, would have been in great demand to Australian soldiers in WW1. Dental problems abounded in the field, due to the stress of combat, poor hygiene and the notoriously hard biscuits (hard-tack) issued, often the cause of broken teeth which made it difficult to bite the mouthpieces of gas masks^{2,3}. Unfortunately, Percy was never to contribute overseas, but his skills were put to good use locally, providing dental care to soldiers prior to their departure.



Born in Albury in 1890, and gaining proficiency in dental work with local dentist Mr H E. Noble⁴ Percy's first military Attestation Paper shows that he was accepted for service in the AMC Dental on 4 March 1915⁵. He did

not actually sign the document though until 15 June 1917. Puzzling perhaps, until his height is revealed

in a medical he was given after finally being accepted for enlistment. He was 5 feet 4 inches (163 cm) tall, too short for enlistment in March, 1915. By June 1917, however, height requirements had been reduced twice to 5 feet (152 cm) to induce more men to volunteer for overseas service⁶.

Now enlisted but in need of medical attention, Private Edwards spent a month in the military hospital at Milson Island for venereal disease, after which he was transferred to Liverpool Field Hospital in Sydney on 29 June 1917 for hernia surgery initially. On 6 May 1918 he was then transferred to the Army Medical Corps Dental Service at the Dental Hospital, Chalmers Street Sydney⁷ (the intervening 10 months perhaps spent both recuperating and carrying out dental work at the Field Hospital).



The beautiful brass plaque pictured that his fellow workers at the Chalmers St. hospital had created in his honour shows the respect in which he was held by them, albeit the slight error in his date of death⁸.

Finally he was posted overseas, returning first to Liverpool before leaving Sydney on 2 November bound for the United Kingdom on the HMAT A7 Medic. The Medic was however recalled to Sydney following the signing of the Armistice, and like so many other soldiers on that ship, Percy contracted pneumonic influenza. Admitted to the Quarantine Station on 25 November 1918, he finally succumbed to the dreaded disease on 1 December⁹.



With the recent restoration of the headstones of WW1 defence personnel in the Third Cemetery, Staff Sergeant Percy Edwards is now one of those honoured with a marble memorial. It sits next to that of fellow Catholic Private James Cahill and Russian Orthodox Private Peter Chirvin in the north east section of the Cemetery.

1 NAA: C526 REGISTER OF DEATHS AT QUARANTINE STATION

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=314138> Page 68

2 Wright NT The genesis of the Royal Australian Army Dental Corps Army Journal, May 1974 p.24-30

3 <https://myhillsdentist.com/blog/army-embraced-dental-care-dentures-during-ww1/>

4 Virtual War Memorial Australia <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/66704> Image & description

5 NAA: B2455 EDWARDS P G

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1935817> Page 1

6 Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/enlistment>

7 NAA: B2455 EDWARDS P G

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1935817> Page 4

8 Sydney Quarantine Station Moveable Heritage Collection QS2008.608

<https://ehive.com/collections/3671/objects/37301/plaque> –

9 NAA: C526 REGISTER OF DEATHS AT QUARANTINE STATION

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=314138> Page 68

* Special thanks to Q Station Interpretation Officer Helen Drew for all her assistance.

The Primary purpose of the NHSF is to “conserve, protect and embrace the natural environment of the North Head of Sydney Harbour and specifically to protect the biodiversity and geodiversity of the area.”