

Bibbulmun NEWS



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Newsletter for the friends of the Bibbulmun Track

New Campsites open near Albany



Verve Energy's Grasmere Wind Farm is now complete. As part of this project, the Bibbulmun Track has been realigned, Hidden Valley campsite removed and two new campsites constructed.

Approximately 3km of Track immediately to the west of the old Hidden Valley Campsite was realigned closer to the coast. The old route is now being used as an access road to service the turbines.

The new campsites are **Muttonbird** to the west of the wind farm and **Sandpatch** to the east. Relevant distance measurements are:

- 13km from Albany to Sandpatch Campsite.
- 13km between Sandpatch Campsite and Muttonbird Campsite.
- 12km between Muttonbird Campsite and Torbay Campsite.

A new Denmark/Albany Map 8 will be available soon. To view the location of the campsites on our website go to the Trip Planning / Section by Section Guide / Denmark/Albany.



Muttonbird Campsite (above)
The new Sandpatch shelter and lookout, from which the view is incredible (right).
Maintenance volunteers Beth & Denis Sawers had morning tea there before clearing the last of the overgrown sections with Margaret Ross

INTRODUCING OUR NEW WEBSITE

It is with great excitement that we introduce the new Bibbulmun Track website to you. Aside from an updated look, the new website will make planning your next walk a lot easier.

New features include:

- Google maps – see the Track and location of campsites, access points, service providers and much more.
- Maps for all current realignments, diversions and alternative routes.
- A distance calculator.
- Section-by-section guide with all key planning information in one place.
- In addition, you can now have your own profile page.

Benefits of logging in to your profile page include:

- No need to re-enter all your details each time you book an event or buy merchandise.
- See your history of events and merchandise purchases.
- Members can now renew or update their details easily online.
- Volunteers can submit time sheets and maintenance reports online.
- End-to-enders can enter the details of their walk and upload a photo for the Rogues Gallery.



The 'Info' tab provides all the key information about that section into the one place including: highlights, suggested walks, how to get there, towns, maps, GPS coordinates, weather and more!

The Gallery features lots of new photos and the Realignments and Diversions tab keeps you up to date with current variations on the Track.

Use the legend at the side to show the location of various points of interest including campsite, access points, accommodation and services.

In the Section-by-Section guide of the website you'll find an interactive map.

HOW TO LOG IN

If we already have your email address:

Your profile page has already been created. Simply:

1. Click 'Login' at the top right corner of the website. (In the black bar)
2. Click the *Forgotten your password?* Link.
3. A page will come up requesting your email address. Enter your email address and click submit.
4. Login to your email and open the email from the Bibbulmun Track Foundation. Click on the link to generate a password as instructed. (If this link is not working then open a new web tab, then copy and paste the link into the browser bar and press 'Enter' key)
5. You will then receive a new email from the Bibbulmun Track Foundation providing you with a password.
6. Use this password to Login to the Bibbulmun Track website. (Be very careful if you copy and paste the password that you don't have an extra space at either end.)
7. Once logged in. Click on 'My Account' in the black bar at the top. You will see a tab called Change email/password where you can change the automated password to something that you will remember.

If we don't have your email address:

If you haven't received an email from us lately, it means we either don't have your address on record, or we may have an out of date address.

In this case email us with your name, address and membership number (if you are a member) and we will activate your profile and give you further instructions.

You can still phone, email or pop into the office.

If you're not keen on using the website for bookings or submitting forms you are of course still welcome to phone us or pop into the office.

A big thank you to Lotterywest for funding this project, and to iPixel for the excellent design and development.





FROM MY Desk

Welcome to the winter edition of Bibbulmun News.

It has been an exciting, and busy, couple of months as a number of major projects have at last come to fruition. From the initial discussions to completion, some of these projects have been on the agenda for two to three years and it is very satisfying for everyone involved to see them become a reality.

These projects include:

- The realignment of the Track, removal of Hidden Valley campsite, and the building of two new campsites (Muttonbird and Sandpatch) at either end of the Albany wind farm. Verve Energy paid for the realignment and the new campsites and worked with DEC staff to complete the project in-line with the completion of the wind farm extension.
- The building of two group campsites and a new spur trail to link the Bibbulmun Track with the Wellington Dam recreation area to provide a new three-day/two-night walk for schools and youth groups. Funded by Lotterywest.
- The building of a new group campsite at Mt Cooke to alleviate overcrowding at the existing Mt Cooke campsite. Part funded by Alcoa.
- The launch of the new Bibbulmun Track website incorporating Google Maps technology for improved trip-planning, GPS coordinates, links to YouTube videos, hundreds of new photographs, the ability for members to have their own profile page and much more! Funded by Lotterywest.
- The development of a volunteer management portal to enable volunteers to submit their maintenance reports and log their volunteer hours electronically. This has been integrated into the new website. Funded by Lotterywest.
- The development of a formal volunteer management plan to streamline our processes and document everything that has been sitting in Gwen's head (our fabulous volunteer coordinator!). So if she goes on extended leave we won't fall apart at the seams! Funded by Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR).

My sincere thanks to everyone involved in these projects including:

- Lotterywest, Verve Energy, Alcoa and DSR for funding.
- DEC Recreation and Trails Unit for coordinating the Track infrastructure building projects.
- DEC regional staff for undertaking the work in their regions.
- Volunteers and members for contributing their ideas and comments into the volunteer management plan and website surveys.
- iPixel for turning our ideas for the website into a reality.

Whether walking the Track, browsing the website or submitting your volunteer hours, we hope you will enjoy the benefits of these projects. If you have any feedback about any of the above please feel free to email or call us – or just pop into the office and have a chat!

Happy Walking!

Linda Daniels
Executive Director

Thank you Thank you Thank you

A sincere thank you to the following walkers who have generously made donations to the Foundation. Our Dunny Donation tally has reached \$21,000,

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|------------------|----------------------|
| Auswalk | Graeme Johnstone |
| Gabriel Caratti | Valerie Jordan |
| Dianne Clayton | Christine Kennea |
| Dennis Curtis | Melanie Kilpatrick |
| Sally Fox-Slater | David Large |
| Noel Harris and | Phil Lehmann |
| Linda Palmer | Martin Lehner |
| Denise Helsz and | Trish Parker |
| Alan Pitman | Tracey Supierz |
| Louise Hinkley | Elizabeth Telford |
| Trevor Hite | Western Walking Club |

Thank you to Accent Rubber Stamps & Trophies, 68 St George's Tce for the kind donation of a rubber stamp to replace a well-worn one.

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

Through the National Trust, donations made to the Foundation are put into a special account and assigned specifically to projects which enhance the environmental sustainability of the Bibbulmun Track. The National Trust provides this service free of charge so you can be sure that 100% of your donation is used for Track projects.

To make a tax deductible donation, cheques can be made out to the Bibbulmun Track Foundation with your name and address. Cash and credit card donations are also welcome of course! We will then provide you with a receipt from the National Trust receipt book which indicates the donation is specifically for the Bibbulmun Track.

All donations, large and small, are gratefully received and all help to preserve our beautiful Bibbulmun Track.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS: 2012 Annual General Meeting

Members are notified that the 2012 annual general meeting of the Foundation will be –

- on Thursday 25 October 2012 at 5.00pm;
- at Level 1, Mountain Designs Building, 862 Hay Street, Perth.

The agenda of the meeting is –

1. Apologies.
2. Confirmation of the minutes of the 2011 annual general meeting.
3. Chairman's annual report.
4. Executive Director's annual report.
5. Treasurer's annual report.
6. General business –
 - Appointment of auditor.

Members intending to attend are asked to notify Gwen by telephone on 9481 0551 or by email to friends@bibbulmuntrack.org.au.

Elections

Under rules 31 and 32, members are notified as follows –

- There are 6 positions coming up for re-election.
- Members are invited to nominate for election.
- A member's nomination must be in writing and be signed by the member and be received by the Foundation before the close of nominations.
- Nominations close on Friday 5 October 2012 at 4.00pm

- Any poll needed to elect a Board member will be conducted at the 2012 AGM.
- The term of office of each person elected to fill those vacancies will be 2 years from and including the date on which he or she is elected.

The elections will be held because –

- The terms of Simon Holthouse, Leonie Kirke, Bruce Manning, Mark McLauchlan, Louise Yeaman and Patrick Tremlett have expired. All members are seeking re-election.

Linda Daniels
Executive Director
Bibbulmun Track Foundation

YOUR LETTERS

Dear Sir/Madam

My end-to-end was completed with Brian McAuliffe who has already submitted his application and has been given end-to-end recognition.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank:

- my walking partner Brian McAuliffe whose camping experience and leadership got us to the end.
- the Bibbulmun Track Foundation for all their assistance provided in the planning stages for our walk. The information provided by the staff and on-line was invaluable and was the best money spent joining the foundation.
- the Bibbulmun Track volunteers for their tireless efforts in keeping the Track visible and safe.
- DEC for the upkeep of the Track, the campsites and especially the provision of water and toilet facilities which I especially appreciated.
- the staff at all the town visitor centres who provided accommodation and meal assistance.
- all the fellow walkers we met on the Track who were more than willing to share their experiences.

In brief:

Brian McAuliffe (62) and myself (60). Our goal was to set ourselves a challenge and complete the walk in 42 days. With the diversion we completed the Track in 40 days with only minor blisters thanks to fixomul tape, a few bites from the blood sucking mosquitoes and sand fleas, a few mouth-fulls of spider webs and general muscle soreness from time to time. Along the journey from the rugged northern hills of the Darling Scarp to the sandy seaside hills of the south we experienced all the Western Australian wonders (except for the noisy pig hunters around Dwellingup and Collie) of the different landscapes, wonderful scenery, the natural wildlife (kangaroos, birds, snakes etc) and flora. Brian lost 10.5kgs and I lost 15kgs on the Track which was a bonus. In all, the walk was an experience I am glad I took up and will never forget. I would happily recommend it to others, although probably over a bit longer time frame. Again thanks to all those people who commit themselves to the Track so others like myself can enjoy a life time experience

Regards

Fred Worthington

Canning Vale, WA

To Friends of the Bibbulmun Track and Dedicated Staff

We have just finished the Bibbulmun and Beyond Tour, north to south, from May 21 to May 28, 2012.

Our original expectations of the Bibbulmun Track were sketchy to say the least – as no-one we spoke to over in the eastern states had heard of it, let alone walked it! We expected a cool, Mediterranean climate, plenty of good rains, lots of trees (possibly even a few big ones), a few 'roos and emus, a mountain range or two, salad rolls to eat along the track, and even the occasional log cabin to stay in.

Instead, on the contrary, we were thoroughly spoilt with:

- Beautiful, fine sunny weather; blue skies, starry nights
- Luxurious evening accommodation
- Wonderful evening and on-track meals
- Superb organisation
- Care to every detail, no matter how seemingly small, including special dietary requirements
- Brilliant descriptive details of each day's walks, including topography, track conditions, maps, weather reports, etc.

All of this was attributable to the Bibbulmun Track Foundation, and especially to our guides, Steve Sertis and Charmaine Harris. Their passion, enthusiasm, and general knowledge of the track and its surroundings, including history, tree/plant species, soil types, geology, are all testimony to their deep, spiritual connection to the Track, and love of all things natural and undisturbed.

Both have walked the entire track on numerous occasions, Charmaine being one of the *first double end-to-enders*.

From the outset, when we climbed on board the bus at Perth, to when we were dropped off there some eight days later, we were made most welcome, put at ease with lots of laughing and joking, with everyone joining in and determined to have an unforgettable experience.

What made it unforgettable? On our last evening together, we gathered around in the peaceful setting of the Stirling Range, to share our thoughts. Too many to include here, however here are some highlights: the variation of bush and beach; the undulations and the flat bits; cliff views, heathland and forests; camaraderie, laughter and sharing stories and also time for peaceful reflection; being transported to and from our accommodation in our limousine (editor correction: mini-bus); connecting with the communities we passed through; our guides' incredible hard work behind the scene; chocolate; being with people who all wanted to be here "we might all have our differences, but all our synergies lined up".

This was about so much more than the track.

It was a marvellous eight fun-filled, exciting and enjoyable days. From all of us who attended – Rob, Sue, Karen, Stephanie, Anna, Natalie, Sue B., Liz, Kate, Wendy, Ann, John, David, Amanda and Kevin, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for making our dreams come true.

I'm sure all our lives are that little more enriched for the experience.

"We all came here with a dream, and Charmaine and Steve made the dream happen"

"Up the Waugals!"

Kevin Webb (NSW) and Amanda Horne (ACT)

Ed: Kevin and Amanda were on our Bibbulmun and Beyond Tour in May.

Dear friends,

In the latest Bibbulmun News I was reading a letter submitted by another walker commenting on the sunrise at Warren shelter. Thinking of my last visit to Warren I revisited my photo album to see if I had been fortunate enough to see one of the beautiful sunrises. To my surprise I found a short poem in the album which I had forgotten about. It was written by my daughter Sarah (she often accompanies me on the Track) not about the sunrise but another experience. The story has been shared many times amongst family and friends with much hilarity so I thought to share the humour with you (although Sarah didn't think it was funny at the time). Written in October, 2007 it goes like this.

MORE THOUGHTS FROM THE BIBBULMUN TRACK

We started early up the hill, to stay at Warren camp
but by the 12th kilometre I stopped and gave a stamp.

"The keys!" I cried "they're left behind for the car that's left in Northcliffe".

So raced away back thru' the bush before my legs got stiff.

So jacket zipped right to the top and drink bottle in my hand
and rain drops splashing in my face, the bush didn't look so grand.
But I had to run to Pemberton and back to Deb and Mum,
for forgetting the car keys this time they needed to kick my bum!

But luckily I got a lift just near the Gloucester tree
and then back to the Cascades
When I had the keys on me, the lovely couple gave me a ride.
Saved me 8 long K's so I only had to run 11,
how I did that I'm still amazed.

Two hours later we were off again, three ladies crashed in the hut.
So now I'm sitting writing and not moving from my butt.
32 kilometres is certainly enough for me,
so let that be a lesson... ALWAYS remember your keys.

Poor Sarah was exhausted and had sore knees for the rest of the walk, not the best thing to be running flat strap through the bush ha ha!

Needless to say now, before we set off on the first day of any walk, if we have a vehicle awaiting us at the other end, we always double check the keys are safely in someone's pack.

Cheers,

Sally Wise

From C S Lewis we had The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. Not to be outdone, not from the fields of Narnia but from the alternative world of Balingup, volunteer Peter Dear brings us:

The Boot, the Spider and the Wasp by Peter Dear

Even on a very warm day a walk in the bush, with comfortable boots and a stick in your hand, is a pleasant experience. But nothing beats relaxing in the shade afterwards, having shed your sweaty boots and left your feet airing in the breeze, preferably in a director's chair with a mug of camp tea or a glass of last year's grape juice.



In this instance, one of these sweaty boots became both a funeral parlour and possibly a baby nursery in one of nature's little horror stories.

In the Transit Caravan Park at Balingup, under peppermint trees alongside the oval, we set up our tents after the day's extended maintenance walk, relaxing and watching cricket practice. My sweaty boots lurked a few meters metres away.

Suddenly, a large grey spider descended from above, on a length of web, and hovered alongside me as if I were little Miss Muffet, sat on her tuffet. I grabbed my camera for one of those superb nature shots ... and watched in amazement and shock as a large spider wasp swept down and attacked the spider repeatedly, beating it to the ground.

Needless to say, the superb nature shot never eventuated. In a frenzied attempt to find safety the spider scrambled to a boot and despite many stings it climbed up and vanished inside. With no hesitation, the wasp followed...not good news for the spider. Fleeting, the thought of the following day's walk with these two creatures engaged in a one sided tango of death down in the toe of my boot became less appealing!

I've not had a soft spot for spiders in the past, but this one, soon to be part of the food chain while still alive, was to be pitied. It had no chance against the wasp. Spider wasps are not kind to spiders.

And so, a little later the cloth gaiter was removed from the boot with a walking stick and the boot left turned on to its side. The photo shows the paralysed spider with the deep red of the wasp above it, lurking further back in the boot.

Somewhat later Maureen took the boot away from the tents, to dislodge its occupants. Ted and I, cowards that we are, watched in anticipation, ready of course to render assistance if necessary.

The wasp appeared quite upset on being shaken out with the spider; but after a jerky dance it decided to remain with its catch rather than follow Maureen, who, with a little yell, retreated a safe distance.

Thirty minutes later the victorious wasp was nowhere to be seen, having probably buried itself under the ground litter to lay its eggs on the spider.

Some info from the CSIRO website

Spider Wasp. Life History.

Spider wasps are solitary and don't build up large numbers. They nest alone, generally in a burrow in the ground, not in a colony like other wasps and ants and bees.

The female catches spiders of various kinds as food for her larvae. She stings the spider to paralyse it and then usually drags it into her burrow where she lays an egg on it. When the larva hatches, it starts to eat the still living spider. When mature, the larva pupates to emerge as an adult the next summer.

Food Sources.

Spider wasps paralyse spiders as food for their larvae. Unlike the parasitic larva, adult wasps are nectar feeders.

Before you go...

ALWAYS CHECK THE LATEST TRACK NEWS & CONDITIONS

For updates, refer to the "Latest Track News" accessible from www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au.
Or contact the appropriate DEC District (see contact details below).

Before heading out on to the Bibbulmun Track it is important that you check the current Track conditions and are aware of any changes that may impact on your journey. Refer to the 'Latest Track News' accessible from www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au or contact the appropriate DEC District (see contact details below).

There may be maintenance or construction projects near or on the Track that result in temporary diversions or changes. These will not be marked on your maps. Temporary diversions are marked with white Waugal trail markers (black serpent on a white background). If you encounter these when walking, follow the temporary markers, not your map. The Waugal trail markers will revert to the normal black on yellow when the diversion rejoins the main Track again.

Please remember the Bibbulmun Track is a walking track only. No wheeled vehicles, including trolleys, wheelbarrows, prams or bikes should be on the Track. Please help to preserve the Track and the environment by keeping to 'boots only'.

Prescribed Burning Operations

DEC conducts a program of prescribed burning operations each year. Prescribed burning operations are undertaken for a variety of reasons, including property protection, fuel reduction and biodiversity management.

These burns are carefully planned but may cause some disruption to Track users. Where prescribed burning operations impact on the Track, temporary diversions will be put in place. Prescribed burning operations are dependant on appropriate weather conditions and for this reason dates of burns are not available in advance. For information regarding prescribed burns, please contact DEC District offices.

Groups on the Track

Non-commercial groups of walkers with eight or more members that are staying overnight on the Track are requested to fill out a Notification of Intent (NOI) form and submit it to the DEC Recreation and Trails unit. NOI forms can be obtained from our website or contact the Recreation and Trails unit.

Car access to the Track

Walkers are reminded that vehicles can only access the Track at designated points. These are marked on the maps and guidebooks as red or green car symbols. Other roads that lead towards the Track might be restricted or have locked gates as they enter disease risk areas. Attempting to access the Track at non-designated points can spread disease or damage wildlife. Please use only the access points marked on the maps and guidebooks.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please! Do not leave any food anywhere at the Bibbulmun Track campsites.

- Food left behind attracts animals to the site
- The presence of small animals attracts snakes
- Food is not secure from animals even when left in tough plastic containers
- It is inappropriate to feed native animals and it could kill them
- Food left for any length of time may no longer be safe for human consumption

If you are not going to eat it, then please carry your food out with you. This includes food in sealed tins and other containers. Please consider our Maintenance Volunteers as they have enough to carry without the extra burden.

DEC CONTACTS:

Recreation and Trails Unit

tracksandtrails@dec.wa.gov.au
Ph: (08) 9334 0265

DEC DISTRICT OFFICES

Perth Hills District (Mundaring and Dwellingup)

Kalamunda to the Harvey-Quindanning Road
Map 1& 2 or Sections 1 to 20 in the Northern Guidebook
Contact Elisa Skillen on (08) 9538 1078 or elisa.skillen@dec.wa.gov.au

Wellington District (Collie)

Covers Harvey -Quindanning Road to Mumballup
(Donnybrook-Boyup Brook Rd)
Map 3 or Section 20 to 25 in Northern Guidebook
Contact Nick Evans on (08) 9734 1988 or nick.evans@dec.wa.gov.au

Blackwood District (Balingup)

Covers Mumballup (Donnybrook-Boyup Brook Rd)
to Willow Springs (Gold Gully Rd)
Map 4 or Sections 25 to 30 in the Northern Guidebook
Contact Andrew Sandri on (08) 9731 6232 or andrew.sandri@dec.wa.gov.au

Donnelly District (Pemberton and Northcliffe)

Covers Willow Springs (Gold Gully Rd) to Pingerup Road
Maps 5 and 6, Section 30 in the Northern Guidebook and Sections 31 and 42 in the Southern Guidebook
Contact John Hanel (08) 9776 7095 or john.hanel@dec.wa.gov.au

Frankland District (Walpole)

Covers Pingerup Road to Denmark River mouth
Maps 6, 7, 8 or Sections 42 to 53 in the Southern Guidebook
Contact Howard Manning (08) 9840 0400
or howard.manning@dec.wa.gov.au

Albany District (Denmark and Albany)

Covers Denmark to Albany
Map 8 or Sections 53 to 58 in the Southern Guidebook
Contact Luke Coney (08) 9842 4500 or luke.coney@dec.wa.gov.au

The 7 principles

- PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE
- TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES
- DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY
- LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND
- MINIMISE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS
- RESPECT WILDLIFE
- BE CONSIDERATE OF VISITORS





Department of
Environment and Conservation



Danielle Stone, Trails Coordinator

Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre 6983 Tel: 9334 0265 Email: recreationandtrails@dec.wa.gov.au

DEC Recreation and Trails Unit

Wow, the past five months have flown by! It's the start of the new financial year and with it comes a lot of planning and reflecting on the year for the Recreation and Trails Unit (RTU). Over the past three years we have been able to complete a significant amount of maintenance work along the Track. Many thanks to Scott Hunter our Construction Supervisor, the District staff and of course the Volunteers, many of whom spent a week or two assisting Scott. Check out Hewett's Hill, which is the latest campsite to receive one of Scott's facelifts.

We were able to upgrade twelve shelters, install six bridges, relocate toilets and repair or install new steps at Quarram, Long Point and Lake Williams. We have also repaired and replaced rainwater tanks and drainage systems and rehabilitated areas around some of the campsites. Many parts of the Track were in need significant rehabilitation, erosion control, resurfacing and tree hazard control work, which probably helped to save campsites from any major structural damage during the June storms.

Two days of storms impacted the Track significantly with winds reaching speeds of 140km/h in some areas, causing extensive damage from Dwellingup to Albany. This is one of the largest areas that has ever been impacted by a single storm front.



A tree fell across one of the boot cleaning stations

Districts worked hard in the weeks that followed to check campsites; unfortunately the large number of fallen trees made access extremely difficult, and this became a very tough and time consuming task. Some districts were also called in to help Main Roads to clear trees and debris, so it has been a very busy few weeks and the work is still on-going. Elisa Skillen and the Perth Hills District will be repairing damage sustained by Dookanelly Campsite in the coming weeks. Staff members are working hard to remove fallen trees and branches but due to the sheer volume of area to cover this will take some time. We are asking walkers to be careful and for volunteers to send in those maintenance reports, as this gives the District staff a clearer picture of the damage.

You will be pleased to know the realignment in Albany near the Verve Energy's Grasmere Wind farm is complete and the two new campsites, Sandpatch and Muttonbird, are now open. A new map #8 with the two additional campsites will be available in the coming weeks.

Lastly, our own Long Trails Volunteer June Wishart, who assists in the office here at RTU, has decided to call it a day after 11 years of service. Many heartfelt thanks to June for her commitment. Without the help of volunteers like June the Track would not be the world class experience it is today!

Danielle Stone – Trails Coordinator



If you have been in the Mundaring area recently, or have been reading up on the Track Conditions you will be aware of a diversion near Mundaring Weir. The Water Corporation is currently undertaking construction works to upgrade piping and the areas around the station. This has required the closure of the weir wall and the creation of an alternate route through the area. This diversion will be in place until mid-November.

Weir Wall Closures

Due to upgrade works on Mundaring Weir, sections of the weir wall will be closed for intervals over the next six to twelve months. The exact timing and length of closures are unknown so please check the Track conditions pages for updates prior to walking in this area. A diversion is in place.

Walker Story – Back on Track

Stewart invites us to see how an aged and unfit person (his words) may enjoy the benefit of walking the Track:

“Get a hobby,” my wife said. “Or you’ll become a nuisance when you retire.” Heeding her advice (as I always do) I resurrected my interests in bushwalking and photography from a past life. In late 2009 I decided to put my enthusiasm for these interests to the test and walk the Bibbulmun Track, but only in segments. By August 2010 I had only got as far as North Bannister and this took five separate hikes, none longer than 40 kilometres. It was now September 2011 and I needed to get back on the Track before the experiment failed altogether. The next planned leg was North Bannister to Dwellingup, a distance of 70 kilometres, which I planned to complete in 4 days.

Over the last couple of months I had delayed my start due to work and family commitments and weather conditions. It is hard to get all the planets to align – not too hot – not likely to rain – no birthdays or other events planned – and most importantly the wife available to drop me off and pick me up. Anyway a date in early October was set and I was heading off regardless.

The first day was Gringer Creek to White Horse Hills. My good wife dropped me off at the North Bannister roadhouse, not as early as planned due to my miscalculating the driving time. (Now I was in trouble because she was going to be late for work).

I soon covered the distance from the roadhouse past Gringer Creek Campsite to the Albany Highway crossing. I really didn’t feel as though I was getting anywhere until I was on the southern side of the highway.

It was springtime and wildflowers were everywhere. Not apparently abundant at first sight, as you might expect from some descriptions, but more a sprinkling of colour amongst the greens and browns of the bush. But as my eyes adjusted I became more aware of them and they began to dominate the landscape.

It was a hard climb over the hills for an old fellow but I finally made it into camp just before 2.00pm.

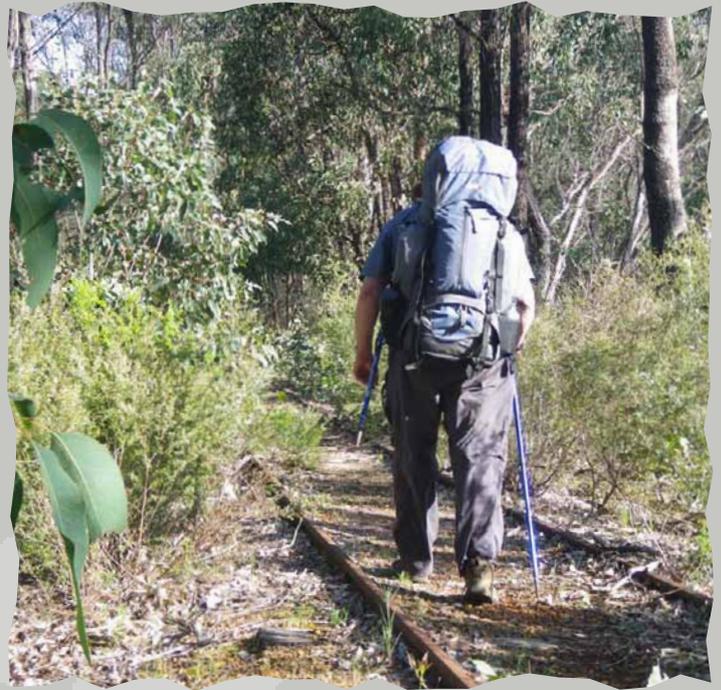


View of Boonerring Hill

Day two would take me from White Horse to Mount Wells, a day of more wildflowers, plus views from high places. It was only 15 kilometres, but I still set off early to avoid the heat of the day. The climb into Mount Wells was testing for someone with my level of fitness but I just shifted down a couple of gears to the ‘grandpa shuffle’ by progressively shortening my stride until I achieved a rate of progress that was sustainable, no matter how slow.

Once there it was fun exploring the Mt Wells facility, climbing up and down the tower and checking out all the paths. The hut was a pleasant alternative to the other shelters on the Track and with the stove alight, a lot cosier.

I had regrettably underestimated the amount of reading material I would need on this trip and so had to start rationing the remaining chapters of my book to last the distance. I got some entertainment examining the log book to profile the walkers who had passed through Mt Wells. I was interested to learn that in the last year nearly 290 people were logged and they ranged in age from 4 to 75. Roughly 10% came from overseas, 10% from interstate and the remainder from WA. About one third of travellers did not overnight at Mt Wells and the same percentage (but not the same people) were attempting to walk the Track end-to-end in one outing.



Stuart ‘on track’ to Dwellingup (top). Sunset at Mt Wells (above)

The third day involved the section from Mount Wells to Chadoora – great, no more hills to climb between here and Dwellingup. The Track crosses numerous roads, some of which are substantial, well maintained and used to service the nearby gold mining operations which can be heard along the way and even seen at some spots. Walkers are regularly reminded of the logging heritage of the area by tree blazes and the remnants of past logging camps.

The rain forecast for yesterday arrived today. It was not too uncomfortable but enough to get out the wet weather gear and to justify carrying its extra weight. Arrived at camp soon after 10:00am so I had plenty of time to explore the surrounds and check out the nearby well and Swamp Oak Brook.

Fourth and final day – destination Dwellingup. This was to be my last day on the Track. Not that I hadn’t enjoyed the time by myself (I didn’t encounter one other person from start to finish) but I was looking forward to some fatty food and a fizzy drink in Dwellingup. I was also looking forward to seeing the parts of the old Dwellingup to Boddington railway on the way. For the last eleven kilometres the trail closely follows this line. The railway didn’t disappoint. Getting intimate with the infrastructure of a bygone era really helps you get a feel for the past and one thing is for certain, the grade will not be too taxing.

It is 20 kilometres from the campsite to the town and after the previous days’ efforts time started to drag towards the end. I was fortunate the Hotham Valley tourist train was not at Etmilyn Siding when I arrived otherwise I might have been tempted to ride the last seven kilometres.

I arrived in town around 11.00am and rang my wife to check that she was on her way to pick me up. After abusing me for not contacting her (there had been no mobile reception anywhere along the Track) she confirmed her ETA and I set out to find some fatty food and fizzy drink and to read a book lent to me on a ‘try before you buy’ basis by the kind lady at the Information Centre.

Stewart Barrett

Roll up! Roll up! - for a free day at the Royal Show

Help out at the Bibbulmun Track stand for a couple of hours and spend the rest of the day enjoying the Royal Show.

The Bibbulmun Track stand can be found in the Landcare Pavilion which is a welcome haven from all the hustle and bustle of the Show. This year's Year of the Farmer theme will incorporate some exciting new exhibits and daily Scitech shows for the kids.

If you enjoy talking about the Track and your experiences then put it to good use and volunteer for a stint on the stand. A free pass allows you to spend the rest of the day enjoying the Show.

If you are interested call Jean on 9321 0649 or email marketing@bibbulmuntrack.org.au

entertainment Entertainment Book - Hurry up, get yours from the BTF!

Many thanks to everyone who helped our fundraising this year! We've sold 119 books and raised \$1,547 to date.

We still have a few books left if you haven't got around to getting one yet. The Entertainment Book is an excellent way to make sure you keep doing the things you like to do, no matter what the economy does. It includes offers for Perth's best restaurants, cafes, take-away chains, attractions, activities - there is something for the whole family!

Still only \$65 collected from the BTF office. Add an extra \$9 for regular postage or \$12 for registered post. Call 9481 0551 now or order online.

Please Support Our Track Towns

No doubt you have heard in the news that tourism businesses are suffering badly with the high dollar and other factors. This rings very true for many of the small towns along the Bibbulmun Track. So next time you head off on a walk, please consider resupplying in the towns, enjoying a meal out, and spending an extra night to relax and enjoy the country hospitality. We're sure you'll get a very warm welcome!

FREE - Trip Planning Advice

Going on an extended walk or end-to-end?

Our free trip planning advice service is just one of the many benefits of being a member.

Experienced walkers will help you to plan your journey. If you can't make it into the office, then this service is also available via email.

Father's Day Gift Ideas

Sunday 2nd September

Short of ideas for Father's Day? **Here are some ideas:**

Bibbulmun Gifts for Father's Day - Sunday September 2nd

- 'The Bibbulmun Track, its history, its beauty, its walkers'. BTF member and volunteer, Jim Baker, takes his readers on an interesting and wonderfully descriptive end-to-end journey on the Bibbulmun Track. \$27.50 (donation made to BTF with each purchase and personalised copies signed on request)
- A place on the *Walking with Dad* event!
- A Bibbulmun Track Membership (includes free trip planning advice session if he needs help getting out on the Track)
- Member Merchandise specials: (no further discount applies)
 - White Polo shirts only \$22.00 (rrp \$27.95)
 - Nalgene Water Bottle only \$10.00 (rrp \$14.40)
- Father's Day Gift Vouchers available for any amount can be redeemed on merchandise or an event from the Calendar. (Note: email or phone orders only)

For other ideas see our great range of merchandise online at www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au





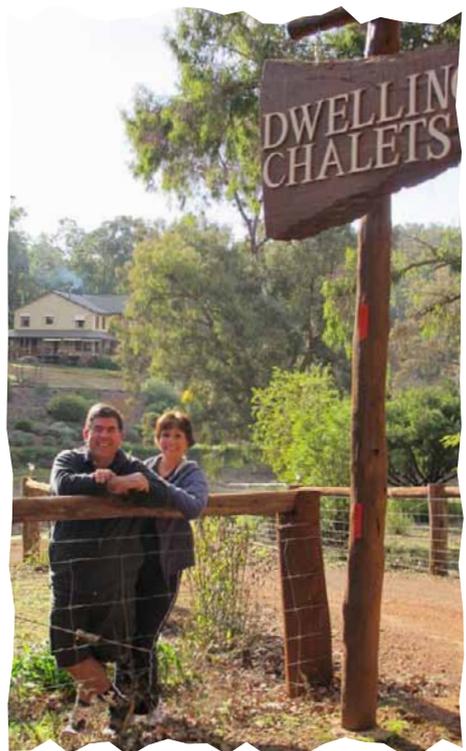
My Dwellingup Bibbulmun Walking Break

Jean Byrne, the Foundation Marketing and Tourism Manager, joined up recently with Niall McIlroy from the West Australian newspaper on a media visit to sample a Bibbulmun Walking Break in Dwellingup.

I arranged this visit for Niall as part of a major feature that appeared in the West Australian on 21st July, and decided it might be a good idea to sample the delights of Dwellingup for myself.

Dwellingup has always been a favourite destination of mine; I experienced my first multi-night walk on the Track in the Dwellingup area and I remember taking the kids on the Hotham Valley train over 10 years ago. Since then I have been to Dwellingup on many occasions on business.

Although our walking breaks are normally for a minimum of two days and two nights, we opted for a mini-break, staying just one night. We met at Dwellingup B&B and Chalets at 9.30am and were welcomed by owners Mark and Margaret. The



Mark and Margaret welcome us to the Dwellingup B&B and Chalets.

property is surrounded by jarrah forest about four kilometres from Dwellingup and only 500 metres from the Track. After introductions and a quick look around the B&B we settled into our rooms. Mark then dropped us off at Yarragil Form for our 12 kilometre walk back to the B&B.

As we began to ascend from the road I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was – this was the first time I'd been out on the Track without my backpack for ages. That's the beauty of a Bibbulmun Walking Break, it is so pleasurable to stroll and talk and enjoy the wonderful surroundings without all that weight on your back!

It was a beautiful day; despite a chilly start, the sun was shining and after the first hill the layers started to come off. The bush was lush after the first winter rains and we were awed by the results of the recent storms, with huge limbs and whole trees flattened by what must have been immense winds. Our walk took us through a mixture of jarrah, marri and sheoak forest as we followed the Murray River.

We reached Swamp Oak Campsite by lunch time and investigated what culinary delights Margaret had packed for us – all part of the Bibbulmun Walking Break service!

We were just about to start out for home when two pack-laden walkers appeared out of the bush. I heard one say, "You're Jean from the Foundation!" I'm not sure whether Niall was impressed that I was so famous!

Anyway, it turned out to be members Janice and Wayne Bertram, who were going to brave the cold night to celebrate Wayne's 50th birthday. It couldn't have been better for the West Australian story if I had choreographed it myself. Out came the 50-year banner, candles and silly hats. We sang happy birthday while Niall snapped away with his camera for photos to accompany his story. Wayne and Janice have been members since 2002. They met and married on the Track and it will always hold a very special place in their hearts.

We arrived back at the B&B to find Mark feeding their collection of kangaroos – Margaret has been taking in injured animals and hand rearing them for the last few years and has built up quite a collection that roam freely around the property. In fact we had

a delivery that evening, wrapped up in several layers of blankets and placed by the fire. The orphan was a very young *pinkie* and Margaret wasn't sure whether it would last through the night, as kangaroos require a constant 32 degrees when they are this young.

We settled into our rooms and had time to take a shower before dinner. I was extremely impressed with the B&B accommodation, which takes up the entire first floor of the newly built home and includes four impeccably furnished spacious ensuite rooms, a guest lounge and kitchen area. A balcony provided beautiful views over the property to the jarrah forest beyond.

In the evening Mark took us into Dwellingup to dine at the recently refurbished Blue Wren Café. It was a perfect end to a perfect day and feeling replete we returned to the warmth of the house and I was happy to sink into my comfy bed.



Wayne Bertram celebrates his 50th Birthday at Swamp Oak Campsite with wife Janice. The couple met and married on the Track so it holds a special place in their hearts.

After a good night's sleep and a delicious cooked breakfast we said our good byes, but not before I inspected one of the six self-contained chalets on the property. The chalets are immaculate, beautifully finished and furnished, sleeping between four and eight people.

Track Town - Dwellingup

THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION FOR A GETAWAY WEEKEND

Only one and a half hours drive south of Perth, Dwellingup is the ideal destination for day walks or a weekend break.

Nestled in the jarrah forest of the Darling Escarpment, Dwellingup is a popular camping destination and home to Lane Poole Reserve on the Murray River. The Reserve occupies 55,000 hectares and offers a variety of adventure activities and tranquil settings.

Dwellingup was almost obliterated by the bushfires of 1961 but is now a year-round destination for visitors seeking an interactive experience with the natural environment.

In addition to bush walking activities include white water rafting, mountain biking, taking a ride on the heritage steam train and visiting the Forest Heritage Centre.

A great day's walk can be had along the Bibbulmun Track by taking the train to Etmilyn and hiking the nine kilometres back to town. This walk features excellent examples of jarrah, red gum, grass trees and banksia, together with a variety of palms and ferns unique to this part of the forest. It is advisable to contact the Hotham Valley Railway for timetable information.

In spring there is an abundance of wildflowers including hovea, kangaroo paw and cat's paw, together with spider, cowslip and purple enamel orchids. In addition a vast array of brightly coloured fungi is on display, including the awesomely coloured coral fungi.

Long distance walkers are able to purchase supplies from the town's general store, Dwellingup History and Visitor Centre or from the camping store next to the post office. Additionally, Dwellingup is an excellent spot to take a break and rest those weary feet for a time.

Accommodation options range from tent sites, walkers rooms and chalets at the caravan park, self-catering cottages and bed and breakfast to luxury chalets. Delicious meals can be enjoyed at the Blue Wren Café, Touch of Aroma and the Community Hotel. Take away food is available from the cafe, general store and roadhouse.

The Dwellingup History and Visitor Information Centre is well worth a visit. Constructed from local timber the Centre houses a fully restored Mack fire truck and a unique collection of historical items related to Dwellingup and other old mill towns in the region.

The staff will be happy to offer assistance during your visit to Dwellingup, the ultimate destination for a getaway weekend.

FACT FILE

Dwellingup History and Visitor Information Centre
Marrinup Street

Opening hours:
9am – 3.30pm Wednesday
to Friday and 10am – 3pm
Saturday & Sunday.

Phone: (08) 9538 1108.
Web: www.dwellingup.wa.com



The Foundation's marketing manager, Jean Byrne, accompanies Niall McLroy from the West Australian on a Bibbulmun Walking Break.



Niall is pointed in the right direction for the 12km walk back to the B&B.

We were glad to hear that the little joey had made it through the night and had even taken a feed. The temperature had got down to minus three degrees and my little car was covered in a layer of frost. It made me shiver as I spared a thought for Janice and Wayne camping out at Swamp Oak – brrrr!

Bibbulmun Walking Breaks are available in eight destinations along the Track – Kalamunda, Dwellingup, Collie, Balingup, Pemberton, Northcliffe, Walpole and Denmark and each destination has its own unique flavour. The breaks are for a minimum of two days and two nights and it's possible to link the destinations to make a longer walking itinerary.

It is the perfect getaway. Just choose your destination and we will take care of all the arrangements. Included in your break is your accommodation (choose from B&B or self-contained), packed lunches, two transfers to the Track and a Day Walk Map Pack which includes a map, walk suggestions and notes for a choice of walks. Dinner is generally taken in the Towns. All you need is a comfortable pair of boots.

I can highly recommend the experience. I left Dwellingup feeling refreshed and rejuvenated and ready to face the world!

So if you like the idea of a pack free, stress free break call me on (08) 9321 0649 or email tourism@bibbulmuntrack.org.au for a free quote.

Jean Byrne

Yes, THEY DID IT!

It's heartening to see many walkers persevering to finish their sectional end-to-ends, sometimes taking several years to accomplish them. Their feats in walking the whole length of the Track are recognised equally with those who are able to complete it in one go.

Our congratulations go to all end-to-enders on their achievement.

As usual, entries are in chronological order of completion with overseas and interstate visitors mentioned first, followed by walkers from within WA.

Kelly Hurrell (26) from Canada says her Bibbulmun end-to-end (sectional, 17.10.11 to 17.12.11) was one of the most rewarding and amazing experiences of her life, with sections between Pemberton and Denmark being her favourites. Highlights included walking among the karris and tingles, Greens Pool, watching sunsets and meeting people along the way. She was lucky enough to see an echidna as well as a quokka and dolphins. Her backpack was her best equipment, but she carried a kitchen set that she never used. Kelly advises setting out without an agenda – just go with it and enjoy every minute.

Kathleen Dunn (27) from the USA, walked with **Kieran Price** (26) of Geraldton as “K+K” (n-s, 07.11.11 to 15.01.12) on an adventure that *just happened* because the Track offered something to do with their time and somewhere to stay. They are justly proud of their achievement. Noggerup to Grimwade was a favourite section for both of them. A lack of supplies at North Bannister meant they ate cold muffins for three days! Kathleen thought that Foster-Clark's instant custard was the best-ever treat. Her highlights included the ancient forests and starry skies, Christmas morning at Lake Maringup and swimming in Glen Mervyn dam. Highlights for Kieran included swimming at Mandalay Beach, and the beer and burger at North Bannister. A lightning storm over Gap Beach was also memorable. They particularly enjoyed seeing so many birds, especially the black cockatoos. Kathleen upgraded to a warmer sleeping bag at Collie, and Kieran managed to cope with dodgy straps on his backpack.

Christine (37) and **David** (45) **Copland** returned from NZ to complete an end-to-end they started while living in Perth (sectional, 2007 to 27.04.12). Christine says the south-west of WA is highly underrated, with its awesome forests and special wildlife. Her favourite sections were through the karri forests and David enjoyed the south coastal sections. Highlights for both were the animals they encountered – including the kangaroos at DRV and a quenda at Gringer Creek campsite. The Bibbulmun Track was easier than other walks, but Christine found the availability of water was restricted. A bandana for mopping away the sweat was her best equipment!

Bruce Bundt (49) from the USA had a very memorable walk (sectional, 15.12.09 to 22.05.12). He says the WA bush is such a special place and he found his experience to be spiritually nourishing. He thought the Track was well marked and the campsites were excellent, superb in comparison with other walks. Bruce liked both the karri forests and the coastal section. His Exped sleeping mat was his best piece of equipment. Bruce advises filtering your water and packing as lightly as possible.

Paul Homes (48) of Booragoon walked with Steve Davies (sectional, 01.03.02 to 16.10.08) and thought it was time well spent in completing his end-to-end. He enjoyed meeting other walkers at campsites, sharing ideas and stories with them. He liked the fresh air, the peace and being out of suburbia. Giants to Rame Head was Paul's favourite section as it passes through diverse environments from the forests to the coast. He also enjoyed the wildflowers. He saw a lot of wildlife including some Australian mammals that he hadn't seen previously. A Mountain Designs pack was his best equipment and he urges others to get out there and do it.



Admiring the view, Conspicuous Beach

Our CONGRATULATIONS to
another 34 walkers on
achieving their end-to-ends.
Five came from overseas and
29 from Western Australia.



Julie (50) and **Thomas** (60) **Back** of Glen Forrest were simply Tom + Julie on their journey (sectional, 21.04.00 to 08.06.10). They'd originally planned to complete the journey in three years, but found work and other commitments intervened far too often. Their favourite section was from Walpole to Albany, where they particularly liked the coastal scenery from Rame Head to Peaceful Bay.

Patrick Keogh (76), of Edgewater, who shared much of his walk (sectional, 11.06.02 to 01.09.11) with Des Alach (see below), passes on a huge thank you to DEC, Track volunteers and BTF staff for all their continuing work. Patrick's favourite sections included Balingup to Pemberton and he says Blackwood campsite is just magical in all seasons. He also liked the coastal sections between Denmark and Albany with their variety, ocean views, wild winds and the wind farm, and he enjoyed the company of many wonderful people he met along the way. Patrick rates the Bibbulmun as excellent, along with other walks he's completed – the Larapinta Trail (NT) and the Abel Tasman (NZ). Walking poles and his sleeping mat were his best equipment, and the worst, his poncho, is no longer with him! Patrick maintains we are lucky to have such a great track in WA and urges everyone to enjoy it while they can.

Lil O'Toole (53), of South Perth, walked with **Beth** (56) and **Denis** (71) **Sawers** of Albany (sectional, 15.09.08 to 29.10.11). Lil is very appreciative of volunteers' efforts on the Track. She thought their journey was a fantastic way to see the best of WA's south-west. Food supplies were mostly organised by Beth and Denis, and perfectly calculated. The karri and tingle forests were favourites of all of them and Beth also liked the coastal sections. Lil's highlights were the bush, the views, the campsites at the end of a day's walk, and arriving in one piece in Albany! Denis liked his walking boots, Beth liked her walking poles, and Lil also liked her bean-bag-aeroplane-pillow-thingy. They advise packing light, including just the essentials. And don't forget the loo paper.

Marcel Kempe (44), of Shelley, was *Mars* on his great adventure (n-s, 06.11.11 to 23.12.11). He met some great people, saw some amazing countryside and enjoyed the personal challenges. Frankland River to Giants was his favourite section and he says the Bibbulmun Track has the best track facilities in the world. He loved his Exped mattress, maintaining that all others are now outdated! He urges all walkers to respect the Track, and to look after themselves too.

Jim Baker (66) of Bull Creek, better known as *Wrong Way Jim* has completed another end-to-end (sectional, April 2009 to 30.03.12) and warns others that it's addictive! Jim dehydrated and vacuum

packed his own food, but found no problems in getting basic foods in the towns along the way. His favourite section was Walpole to Denmark. Whilst enjoying the solitude that Track walking affords, interaction with other walkers is always a highlight for him, and he particularly enjoyed the cold beer supplied by Scotty, of DEC, at Boat Harbour. He lists Scotty as part of the wildlife he saw! Jim feels the Track is as good as when he first walked it in 2001, but it's great to see the refurbishment happening along it as well. All Jim's gear worked well, and he liked his new pocket-rocket stove. He advises planning in advance as it will make the experience better.

David Anderson (43) of Brunswick, aka *Pack Animal*, has also completed another end-to-end (sectional, 16.11.11 to 30.03.12). As usual, he reports "all good".

Cliff Osgood (71), of York, has many good memories of his journey along the Track (sectional, 03.10.10 to 04.04.12) and particularly enjoyed meeting other walkers. He posted parcels ahead to towns and caravan parks. Cliff's favourite section was walking from Hidden Valley to Albany in pouring rain. He says possums seem to love his sleeping bag (*is there a story here?*). Cliff feels that you've never walked as far as you think you have, and he's not discounting doing it all over again. Walking poles were best equipment, and the worst was an umbrella, destroyed by wind the first time it was used.

Brian McAuliffe (62) of Karrinyup walked with Fed Worthington on his end-to-end (n-s 01.03.12 to 10.04.12) and found it was a lot tougher than he expected – the constant scrambling over rocks on Mt Cooke and Mt Hallowell was quite hazardous with his pack. He says the campsite facilities are great, and well maintained. Brian resupplied at track towns along the way. He liked the Valley of the Giants and walking through the Big Brook Arboretum. His metho stove was his best piece of equipment, but his backpack was too heavy. He advises keeping weight to an absolute minimum.

Mark Richards (47), of Tapping, (sectional, 18.11.11 to 14.04.12) found each short walk whetted his appetite for more! The scenery, landscapes, flora and fauna were awe-inspiring. He described it as "A personal journey on many levels, which provided nourishment for the body, mind and soul. I loved the serenity and solitude. I learned a greater appreciation of nature and the beautiful south-west. I also acquired a deeper admiration and respect for those that came before, the explorers and the settlers, but most importantly the Aboriginal people, who roamed the areas in harmony with nature, for thousands of years." Highlights were

many – the rugged beauty of the south coast, majestic tall forests, the impressive sunsets, starry nights and breaking dawns. Mark maintains that it is the journey, not the destination, which matters most.

Tony Hargreaves (66) of Pickering Brook, known as *Tony H or Denbury Boy*, has enjoyed his walks (sectional, 12.06.09 to 14.04.12) so much that he's sorry he didn't get started until he retired. He found it an excellent experience and is looking forward to walking the Northcliffe section of the Track when it's re-opened. He was fortunate to have back-up support from his wife on many sections. Tony liked the Blackwood area and also enjoyed the sunset and a misty morning at Waalegh. He saw a huge variety of wildlife including eagles and an echidna, and not forgetting the mice and ticks! The Bibbulmun was more interesting than a previous walk in Holland. Best equipment was walking poles and boots, but his first tent got wetter on the inside than out!

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"A personal journey on many levels, which provided nourishment for the body, mind and soul. I loved the serenity and solitude. I learned a greater appreciation of nature and the beautiful south-west." – Mark Richards

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Mary Anne (53) and **Peter** (59) **Addenbrooke**, of Mirrabooka, were *Pack Mates* on their end-to-end (s-n, 22.02.12 to 22.04.12) which they describe as a wonderful, never to be forgotten experience. They found it was great to have the time to appreciate every section of the Track and the campsites as well as the towns along the way. A good selection of manufactured and self-packed pasta and rice meals was enjoyed along with special treats brought in by friends. Denmark to Walpole was their favourite section and wildlife included snakes, 'roos, possums, quendas and many ticks and march flies! The insect-proof inner of their tent was their best piece of equipment, and the worst was sweaty ponchos. They advise pre-planning and taking advantage of Bibbulmun Foundation staff and booklets.

Des Alach (64) of Trigg managed to fit his end-to-end around his work commitments (sectional, 08.12.06 to 25.04.12), but found the first few days of each walk were difficult as he had to get used to wearing his pack each time. He tried many types of food in attempts to get it just right. Walpole to Denmark was his favourite section and, although the Pingerup Plains were wet and difficult to negotiate at times, Des found the open spaces there were a highlight, as were the coastal sections. At times during his walk he needed all his

determination to keep going. He's glad he replaced his pack with a Deuter model after his first one fell apart. Des advises to keep your guide book handy when walking so you can check the walk notes.

Garry Keymer (71) of Albany (sectional, 14.04.10 to 29.04.12) is a regular walker on the Track and never tires of it. Most of his walks have been in the company of his wife, Elaine, and they find it interesting and varied in the different seasons, each with its own distinct beauty and characteristics. Garry says the Track always refreshes the soul. He sent a food drop to North Bannister, but found all other towns were okay for supplies. Their walk last spring from Dookanelly to Balingup was breathtaking with the sheer amount of wildflowers due to the rain. In ten years of walking the Track, it was by far the best display. Walking poles and a Thermarest were his best equipment. He maintains that preparation is the key to a successful journey.

Tom Hilliar (64) of Coo loongup appreciated the upgrades to the campsites and Track that he encountered on his walk (sectional, 09.04.11 to 04.05.12), and also thought the bush was looking much less stressed after reasonable rains last year. He posted some food parcels of home dehydrated meals ahead of him, and picked up a few extra supplies along the way. Sections between Grimwade and Northcliffe were his favourites on this end-to-end. He met a couple of ladies, who were a laugh a minute along this section and says this typifies the sort of experiences that can make one walk totally different from another. Tom found there were far more people on the Track during his last walk. A variety of wildlife was seen, but he is still waiting to see the elusive echidna! All of Tom's equipment worked well and he advises others to simply "get out there – now!"

Ian Rae (58) of Mt Barker (sectional, 25.07.08 to 19.05.12) inspired **Leigh Wallace** (62), also of Mt Barker, so much so that he joined in for the adventure (sectional, 10.10.08 to 19.05.12). Leigh described it as an unforgettable experience producing a far greater appreciation of the environment and the

sheer beauty of the bush. Fellow volunteers, DEC, and the BTF are highly commended for such outstanding facilities. Ian says "If I'd known at the beginning of my walk what I now know I might have had twice the fun!" His favourite section was from Rame Head to Giants due to its diversity from coast to karri forest, whereas Leigh preferred the tall timber country around Pemberton and Walpole. The breathtaking view of the mist rising up from the Pingerup Plains was a sight to behold. Leigh liked his hiking boots and walking poles, and Ian described his Helinox chair as simply super. They advise others that good preparation will enhance the enjoyment and you won't regret a moment of the adventure.

Sandra Smith (62) of Mt Richon and **Gayle Malcolm** (61) of Mt Nasura were the *Hill Sisters* on their end-to-end (s-n, 29.03.12 to 20.05.12). It was a lifetime experience for them and Gayle enjoyed the opportunity to bond with her sister. The shelters were welcoming at the end of each day and huge thanks go to DEC, the BTF and volunteers whose work they saw again and again. Food was prepared in advance and delivered to them by family in each town. Sandra loved the whole Track, but Gayle thought Denmark to William Bay during a storm was her favourite section, especially the rough ocean at Light's Beach. They both enjoyed the diversity of the daily terrain and changing vistas. Gayle learned to recognise the various trees and collected many tips from fellow walkers. A variety of wildlife was seen and Sandra couldn't believe how big the dugites were in the southern sections! Walking poles were favourites for both. They advise packing light with quality equipment, using separate waterproof bags inside your pack, and stopping often for *pack-rests*.

Mary Combe (65) of Joondalup had a fantastic time (sectional, 23.06.01 to 25.05.12) on her walks, with great campsites and a well marked trail. She had no problems with food supplies in country towns. Mary found it hard to nominate a favourite section as they are all so different. Highlights included lunch on the top of Mt Cooke, seeing the shelter roof at the end of each day, the wildflowers and wading into Walpole in the middle of a storm. She especially loved the feeling of just being in the bush. Among the wildlife she saw, Mary found an echidna in a toilet! Her sleeping bag and mat were her best equipment and she says her legs were her worst as they wanted to give up when going up hills. She says it doesn't matter how long your end-to-end takes – just keep going.

Julie (40) and **Steve Melville** (44), of Willagee, were simply *Steve and Julie* on their walk (s-n, 01.04.12 to 28.05.12). Julie loved "the tapestry of people you meet and the way the Track strips us of our urban identities, bringing everyone together on an equal playing ground". Steve found the trip very fulfilling and was challenged mentally more than physically. Both liked the camaraderie on the Track. They posted food parcels in advance to keep their packs lighter. Sections between Walpole and

Balingup were favourites, even though they were hard. Roos, rats, emus, snakes, spiders, quendas and mice were seen. Steve liked his sleeping mat and stove. Julie also liked her sleeping mat – and her husband to carry the extra stuff! Julie discovered bamboo clothing takes a long time to dry and Steve just wanted gloves. They say to take your time and enjoy it.

"I have worked and walked on the Heysen Trail in SA, the Larapinta Trail in the NT, end-to-end, the Australian Alps Walking Track in VIC and countless other walks. Nowhere do the facilities and community commitment, or the bio diversity come close to those of the Bibbulmun Track." – Matthew Gawler

Margaret Ellis (66) of Nedlands (sectional, 21.04.03 to 02.06.12) found it was good to be in the bush, away from the city and computers. Over her many walks she became better at choosing and packing her food, and relied less on pre-packaged food. Favourite areas were Mt Cooke, Mt Wells and Conspicuous Cliff. Margaret's highlights included early morning walks with spider webs glistening in the sun, the wildflowers with white clematis and purple hardenbergia growing together, walking through a forest after a storm, a birthday celebration at Graffiti Cafe, the Donnelly river in full flow and the misty valley below Blackwood campsite. She saw a variety of wildlife including a kangaroo that rummaged through her pack at Donnelly River Village, and had to be hauled out by the neck! Her pocket rocket gas stove and warm sleeping bag were her best equipment. Margaret advises packing as light as you can.

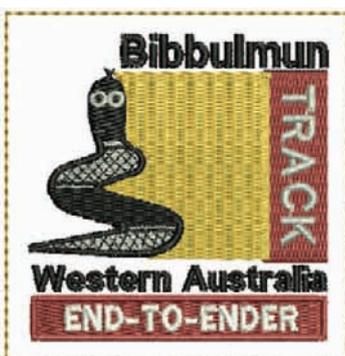
Sybille Lawrenz (46) of West Leederville had an incredible adventure (s-n, 16.04.12 to 06.06.12), experiencing a wide range of emotions, raising her love of nature and feeling very proud of her accomplishment at the end. She found that Back Country meals worked well for her. Sybille's favourite section was from Walpole to Dog Pool, and she also enjoyed Blackwood campsite. Meeting other walkers was always a highlight. As well as snakes, Sybille encountered some beautiful kangaroos along the coastal sections. She feels there can be no comparison with other walks as the Bibbulmun is truly unique. Her tent was among her best equipment, and a water-pump weighing 800gms was her worst.

She advises other walkers to ensure that their food supply is well organised.

Compiled by Charmaine Harris
(BTF Volunteer and end-to-ender)

Have you got your
End-to-End BADGE?

FREE when you register your
first end-to-end!



Stride Into Spring

WALKER STORY

Notes from an End-to-Ender

Matthew Gawler walked the whole Track between August and September this year, accompanied by Jo Smith. These are some of his reflections on the experience:

Loved it; there is something 'Zen' about walking for two months when the problems of life are left in the real world and your top concern is getting the Macno to focus on an orchid that is stubbornly blowing in the wind.

Loved the bio-diversity of the Track. The woods of North Ontario are perfect for an extended canoe trip; you can easily paddle from lake to river to lake for 60 days or more, but you will not see exciting new flora and fauna around every corner.

Having spent the majority of the last seven years on extended wilderness trips I was not expecting a huge epiphany and deeper personal understanding, but chilling out in the bush with my girl for two months was great.

Comparing the Bibbulmun Track to other bushwalks is challenging. It is in a class of its own. If you are seeking high adventure and remote wilderness then the Bibbulmun Track might not be for you. If, however, you would like to spend an extended time in the bush, walking where logistics are simple and achievable, then the Bibbulmun Track is excellent. Nowhere else in Australia has a bushwalk brought so many communities together; inspired so much volunteerism and attracted so many novice walkers out on extended walks.

I have worked and walked on the Heysen Trail in SA, the Larapinta Trail in the NT, end-to-end, the Australian Alps Walking Track in VIC and countless other walks. Nowhere do the facilities and community commitment, or the bio diversity come close to those of the Bibbulmun Track.

Matthew Gawler



Spring has got to be the best time to walk on the Track. So why not shake off the winter blues and head for the hills! The Bibbulmun Track is not far away. Experience the morning dew on emerging new growth – the creeks are flowing, the wildflowers are blooming and the weather is fine (well most of the time!).

Try an Event

Identify and learn about the many wildflowers in bloom on a guided day walk near Kalamunda on **BIBBULMUN BLOSSOMS** or if you're feeling more adventurous join our resident wildflower expert, Steve Sertis, on the long weekend in October for a three day hike in one of the most scenic sections of the Bibbulmun Track on the **WILDFLOWER WANDER TREK**. For full details and prices see your calendar or book online.



Do it Yourself

Armed with a copy of the walkers guide *Wildflowers of the Bibbulmun Track and Jarrah Forests* you will be well equipped to identify the abundance of wildflowers found on the Track. Members spring special only \$10.00 (rrp \$24.00) – no further discount applies.

Do it in Style

With seven unique destinations to choose from this is the perfect time for a Bibbulmun Walking Break (See story on page 10.)



Accommodation, Tours and Services

The following businesses support the Track as Affiliated members. Please take a look and remember them when you next book a tour or accommodation. The Foundation is happy to welcome Colliemfields Hotel who have joined recently. Thanks to all our Affiliated Organisations for their support!

BUSINESS NAME	TOWN	TYPE OF BUSINESS	PHONE NO.	DISCOUNT OFFERED TO MEMBERS
ADVENTURE WILD	PERTH	Tour operator	www.adventurewild.com.au	
ADVENTUROUS WOMEN	PERTH	Tour operator	www.adventurouswomen.com.au	
ESCAPE DAY SPAS	PERTH	Health	(08) 9383 4328	
INSPIRATION OUTDOORS	PERTH	Tour operator	(08) 6219 5164	
KALAMUNDA RAILWAY CARRIAGES ACCOMMODATION & THREE GUMS COTTAGE	KALAMUNDA	Accom/Track transfers	(08) 6293 1902	10% on accommodation
MUNDARING WEIR HOTEL	MUNDARING	Accom/Rest-café	(08) 9295 1106	
DWELLINGUP ADVENTURES	DWELLINGUP	Tour	(08) 9538 1127	10% on self-guided walk & canoe tour.
DWELLINGUP B&B & CHALETs	DWELLINGUP	Accommodation	(08) 9538 1155	10%
DWELLINGUP CHALETs & CARAVAN PARK	DWELLINGUP	Accommodation	(08) 9538 1157	No.
TADDY CREEK	DWELLINGUP	Accommodation	(08) 9285 2736	On application.
COLLIE RIVER VALLEY TOURIST PARK	COLLIE	Accommodation	(08) 9734 5088	10%.
COLLIE VISITOR CENTRE	COLLIE	Tourist Bureau	(08) 9734 2051	10% on souvenirs.
COLLIEFIELDS HOTEL	COLLIE	Accommodation	(08) 9734 2052	
WHISPERING PINES B&B	COLLIE	Accommodation	(08) 9734 3883	10%.
GLEN MERVYN FARMSTAY	MUMBALLUP	Accommodation	(08) 9732 2208	To groups of ten or more.
BALINGUP BUDGET ACCOM. THE HIKERS HIDEAWAY	BALINGUP	Accommodation	(08) 9764 1049	Special rate of \$24.
BALINGUP HEIGHTS HILLTOP FOREST COTTAGES	BALINGUP	Accommodation	(08) 9764 1283	
BALINGUP LAVENDER FARM	BALINGUP	Attraction/Café	(08) 9764 1436	10% off essential oil of lavender.
CHESTNUT BROOK COTTAGE	BALINGUP	Accommodation	(08) 9764 1606	10% (direct bookings only).
JALBROOK COTTAGES - KNITWEAR GALLERY	BALINGUP	Accom - Attraction	(08) 9764 1616	Sun-Thu only, outside school holidays.
OAKFIELD COUNTRY HOUSE B&B	BALINGUP	Accommodation	(08) 9764 1641	10% off standard rates (direct bookings only).
KIRUP LODGE	BALINGUP	Accommodation	0422 976 690	
NELSONS OF BRIDGETOWN	BRIDGETOWN	Accom/Rest-café	(08) 9761 1641	
YOHO PIZZA	SOUTH WEST	Catering	0403 734 814	10% off orders over \$150.
NANNUP VISITOR CENTRE	NANNUP	Tourist Bureau	(08) 9756 1211	
DONNELLY RIVER HOLIDAY VILLAGE	DONNELLY RIVER	Accommodation	(08) 9772 1244	From \$20 pp.
BEST WESTERN PEMBERTON HOTEL	PEMBERTON	Accommodation	(08) 9776 1017	
BIG BROOK COTTAGES	PEMBERTON	Accommodation	(08) 9776 0279	
OLD PICTURE THEATRE HOLIDAY APARTMENTS	PEMBERTON	Accommodation	(08) 9776 1513	10%.
PEMBERTON CAMP SCHOOL	PEMBERTON	Accommodation	(08) 9776 1277	
PEMBERTON DISCOVERY TOURS & CAR HIRE	PEMBERTON	Tour/Transport prov.	(08) 9776 0484	10% off tours, Track transfers and car hire.
PEMBERTON VISITOR CENTRE INC	PEMBERTON	Tourist Bureau	(08) 9776 1133	
PUMP HILL FARM COTTAGES	PEMBERTON	Accommodation	(08) 9776 1379	
RAINBOW TRAIL CHALETs	PEMBERTON	Accommodation	0438 561 664	Complimentary bottle of Rambouillet wine on arrival.
BIBBUMUN BREAK MOTEL & TRANSPORT	NORTHCLIFFE	Accom/Transport prov.	(08) 9776 6060	No.
CANTERBURY COTTAGE	NORTHCLIFFE	Accommodation	(08) 9775 1055	
RIVERWAY CHALETs	NORTHCLIFFE	Accommodation	(08) 9776 7183	10%.
WATERMARK KILNS	NORTHCLIFFE	Accommodation	(08) 9776 7349	On application.
CHE SARA SARA CHALETs	WALPOLE	Accommodation	(08) 9840 8004	
COALMINE BEACH HOLIDAY PARK	WALPOLE	Accommodation	(08) 9840 1026	10%.
NATURALLY WALPOLE TOURS	WALPOLE	Tour/Transport prov.	(08) 9840 1019	On application.
WALPOLE LODGE	WALPOLE	Accommodation	(08) 9840 1244	
NUTKIN LODGE	PEACEFUL BAY	Accommodation	(08) 9840 8650	10% on standard rates.
PEACEFUL BAY CHALETs & BACKPACKERS	PEACEFUL BAY	Accommodation	(08) 9840 8169	[change] On application.
BLUE HOUSE DENMARK	DENMARK	Accommodation	0438 339 071	10%.
BLUE WREN TRAVELLERS REST	DENMARK	Accommodation	(08) 9848 3300	5%.
OUT OF SIGHT! TOURS	DENMARK	Tour/Transport prov.	(08) 9848 2814	10%.
DENMARK VISITOR CENTRE	DENMARK	Tourist Bureau	(08) 9848 2055	
DENMARK WATERFRONT MOTEL	DENMARK	Accommodation	(08) 9848 1147	15%.
KARMA CHALETs	DENMARK	Accommodation	(08) 9848 1568	5% - outside long weekends and school holidays
THE COVE	DENMARK	Accommodation	(08) 9848 1770	10%.
WINDROSE B&B	DENMARK	Accom/Transport prov.	(08) 9848 3502	10%.
PELICANS AT DENMARK	DENMARK	Accommodation	0413 122 176	
CAPE HOWE COTTAGES	LOWLANDS BEACH	Accommodation	(08) 9845 1295	10% - not in conjunction with any other specials.
WILLIAM BAY COUNTRY COTTAGES	DENMARK	Accommodation	(08) 9840 9221	On application.
1849 BACKPACKERS	ALBANY	Accommodation	(08) 9842 1554	
ALBANY BAYSIDE OCEAN VILLAS	ALBANY	Accommodation	0400 216 971	
ALBANY VISITOR CENTRE	ALBANY	Tourist Bureau	(08) 9841 9290	No.
BAYVIEW BACKPACKERS YHA	ALBANY	Accommodation	(08) 9842 3388	Same as YHA members.
EMU POINT MOTEL	ALBANY	Accommodation	(08) 9844 1001	
NORMAN HOUSE	ALBANY	Accommodation	(08) 9841 5995	5%.



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Head of Student Development
Tranby College WA

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Apart from the beautiful surrounding bush, the village is renowned for its friendly wildlife. The general store and cafe, is open from 8.30am to 5pm. We have the best coffee in town, cakes, lunches and lots of walker supplies.

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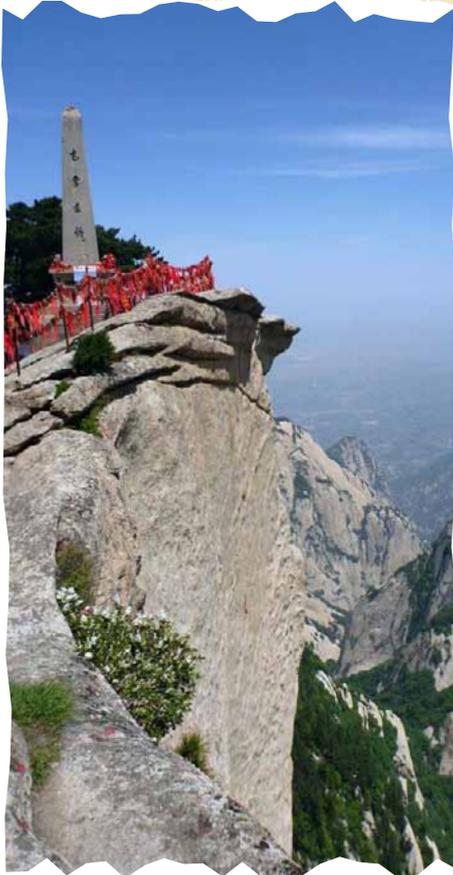
A VOLUNTEER'S LIFE

After I retired from teaching, the Bibbulmun Track appealed as an interesting challenge. The need to put something back into such a great free asset led to a conversation with our intrepid Volunteer Co-ordinator and a position as part of the *Monday Team* in the BTF office. What a great way to meet new people and to hear stories from walkers who come from all parts of the world to share our backyard. Each day brings different challenges, which with a good team working together in harmony we usually manage to resolve.

When the section of Track from Beavis Campsite to Seven Day Road became available, two friends and I took up the challenge of maintenance work. This gives us a reason to walk a beautiful part of the Track four times a year. Over the years we have seen the effects of drought and have rejoiced in the resilience of the bush. Caring for our section has become part of our lives. Watching our efforts overcome erosion started by vehicles has been very satisfying. The ritual of an early morning pie from the Nannup Bakery setting us up for the day's labour, followed by afternoon tea in Nannup on the way home is a bonus.

The chance to contribute in some small way to the welfare of the Track along with the chance to meet new people, even if sometimes this is only fleetingly along the Track, makes the volunteer's life more than worthwhile.

Peter Sweetman



The eastern peak of Mt Huashan

OUR GREAT WALL OF CHINA ADVENTURE

In May the Foundation escorted two groups of members and friends to China. Over seven days we walked various parts of the Great Wall ranging from remote, unrestored sections with crumbling watch towers and narrow pathways to fully renovated sections where the towers stretched out into the far distance and the steps climbed steeply up and down the ridge of each peak in the mountain range.



This group photo was taken on one of the restored sections of the Great Wall

The scenery did not disappoint; it was spectacular. Every five minutes there was a new vantage point and the cameras got as much of a workout as the walkers.

Before and after the trek we had some time to explore a few of the majestic and historically significant sites of Beijing including Tiananmen Square, Summer Palace and the Forbidden City. It was a bit surreal to visit places that were so familiar from seeing them on the television or the big screen. We also got to explore local markets, eat delicious Chinese food (which was, on the whole, much tastier than the version we get in Australia), and enjoy wonderful foot massages.

A few people then departed for home, while the remainder took the overnight train to Xian with its pagodas, mosques and ancient city walls. From here we went to the site of the Terracotta Warriors. Despite having seen so many pictures and knowing what to expect, it was still an extraordinary sight.

We then explored Mt Huashan, which is considered to be one of the five sacred mountains in China. Despite taking a gondola up part of the way, the hike up to each of the four peaks made for a challenging day. In hindsight, taking on just three peaks and

leaving time for a cold beer while enjoying the magnificent views would have been a more enjoyable option.

Having said that, our local guides were brilliant. They were very knowledgeable, friendly and invaluable for getting us around, as very few Chinese people speak English. It was a fascinating and very enjoyable trip. Many thanks to World Expeditions for arranging the itinerary and to all those who joined us.

Our next trip is to Peru, so if Machu Picchu is on your bucket list, see the article on the opposite page!

Happy travelling,
Linda

P.S. This trek is not suitable for the unfit or faint hearted. We were thankful we had done many hours of training on the Kokoda track in King's Park in preparation!



A stunning vista from on of the towers shows the Great Wall snaking off into the distance

HIGHLIGHTS OF PERU AND INCA TRAIL

The Bibbulmun Track is often described as one of the greatest walking trails in the world, and I am sure that as you walk through the tall forests of the southwest you would agree that it certainly fits that description. But have you ever wondered about some of the other great trails of the world? Have you ever thought that you might like to stroll along some of their paths?

The Bibbulmun Track Foundation members get together once a year to take on a trail outside of WA. Recently we've been to China, before that to New Zealand, Tasmania, and also Nepal.

Now we're heading off to Peru to walk the fabled Inca Trail to the legendary lost city of Machu Picchu. Please join me on this fantastic adventure to explore Peru with its fascinating Latin American culture, ancient Inca architecture and spectacular natural scenery, stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the Andean Mountains.

The trip is organised by the Peregrine Travel Centre in Perth and will take 22 days, departing Perth on May 12th and returning on June 2nd 2013. We will fly through Santiago in Chile and then on to Lima to start our Peruvian adventure.

Highlights of the tour include a visit to the Ballestas Islands, sometimes referred to as the Little Galapagos, to see thousands of rare sea birds and sea lions. We will fly over the intriguing Nazca Lines, an assortment of strange symbols and images of birds and beasts on a giant scale hidden in the desert. We will visit the Colca Canyon, twice as deep as the Grand Canyon, and drive through the stunning scenery hoping to spot one of the world's largest birds, the condor.

We will visit Lake Titicaca and stay on an island in a home stay situation, experiencing the traditional lifestyle, where the local Indian people are renowned for their handmade textiles and ceramics. We will



A floating island on Lake Titicaca

spend several days in Cuzco, exploring the streets, alleys and markets of this exciting town that mixes the 17th Century Baroque style of architecture with highly developed Incan engineered temples and ruins.

Finally we travel to the start of the classic Inca Trail where we will trek for four days through the Peruvian and Incan heartland to get to the fabled lost city of Machu Picchu. This is a spectacular trip on which we will reach altitudes of 4200m when crossing some of the mountain passes. Our route passes through many Incan ruins and sleepy rural hamlets, all under the watchful eye of the white capped Andean mountains

that stretch over 6000m into the sky.



If you are keen to join me on this wonderful adventure please contact Anna Bulleid at the Peregrine Travel Centre Perth for more details (anna@peregrinewa.com.au or 9321 1259). Anna will be able to provide you with a detailed itinerary, book flights and organise visas and travel insurance. There are only a limited number of daily trekking permits permitted by the government for the Inca Trail, so it is essential to get your name in early to secure one.

The cost of the trip ex-Perth is \$7,489.00 per person on a twin share basis, the group size will be a maximum of 16 (plus guides, leaders and drivers) and we require a \$600 deposit to secure your place.

Mike Wood.
Chairman, Bibbulmun Track Foundation.
Proprietor, Peregrine Travel Centre WA.



The cathedral in the fascinating city of Cusco.



Machu Picchu

PRIZE WINNERS!

Congratulations to the winners of the monthly membership renewal prizes...

April

Winner of this month's membership renewal prize draw

1st prize: Paul Harris won a Beach and Forest eco adventure for two donated by Pemberton Discovery Tours.

2nd prize: Maureen Foley won a Polycarbonate cutlery set.

Bibbulmun Bytes competition: Diane Tinker won an Xbowl.

May

Winner of this month's membership renewal prize draw

1st prize: Matt Siddell won an 8 ltr ultra-sil dry sack.

2nd prize: Eliot Brill won a Polycarbonate cutlery set.

Bibbulmun Bytes competition: Maximo Lopez won a Polycarbonate cutlery set.

June

Winner of this month's membership renewal prize draw

1st prize: Mark Dunkley won a Kitchen Set.

2nd prize: Terry O'Hara won a Bush Book *Snakes of Western Australia* donated by DEC.

Bibbulmun Bytes competition: Mal Gannaway won a Polycarbonate cutlery set.

PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION

Congratulations to Paul Harrison for coming up with the winning caption from Edition 59.

Paul won a Polycarbonate cutlery set.

"Awesome parallel parking...next time just try to face the same way as the traffic.."



Unless stated otherwise, all the prizes mentioned above were generously donated by Foundation sponsor Sea to Summit. We love their gear and are sure all our prize winners will be very happy!



Office Gossip

Over the past few weeks most of the office team have been busy with the new website- proofing, testing and checking all the fine details. Finally the old site closed and within moments the new one went live. As expected with a site of such complexity and with such a large amount of information, there have been glitches, but these have been resolved quickly thanks to Brendan from iPixel and Linda.

To those who discovered the odd glitch, many thanks for letting us know so quickly and thanks also to those members who have kindly offered to try out some of the great new features. It is a learning curve for both staff and volunteers as many of our office procedures are now integrated with the website and we are training 'on the job'.

We were pleased to have some of our marvellous volunteers recognised at the Sport and Recreation Volunteers Recognition Breakfast arranged by the Department of Sport and Recreation as part of National Volunteer Week.

"Events like this are about celebrating those people who inspire us by giving up their time to make sport and recreation happen in their community," said DSR Director General Ron Alexander.

Foundation volunteers recognised at this event were Jim Baker, Gayle Kealley, Lesley Kerr, Caro Knight, Chris Plunkett and Guy Spouge.

Our team has had some changes recently as we farewellled Kathy and welcomed Merryl and Jane to our team.

We're always pleased to see members in the office calling in to renew memberships, purchase merchandise, seek advice about the Track or just to say hello!

Gwen Plunkett
Office Manager and Volunteer Coordinator



Jim Baker with DSR's Evan Stewart. Jim was interviewed at the event regarding his role as a volunteer

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bookings are essential on all our events.

Book online at www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au, or email events@bibbulmuntrack.org.au for a booking form, or fax/post the form from the events calendar brochure.



Beginners



Intermediate



Experienced

P-PLATES DAY WALK



Feeling fit, done a few day-walks and want to get into overnight trekking? This is an innovative yet somewhat physically challenging 15km circuit walk which will teach you all you need to know for overnight bushwalking. Experience breathtaking views while walking to a Bibbulmun Track campsite. There, experienced guides will introduce you to the equipment they use for overnight trekking and answer all your queries. Own transport required (1½hrs from Perth). A good level of fitness is required.

Date: Sunday 19th August, 9am – approx 4pm.

Cost: \$30 members, \$40 non-members.

BIBBULMUN TREK FOR BEGINNERS



Never done any overnight bushwalking before? If you don't want to walk all day or tackle any unexpected 'cardiac hills' with an overnight pack, this weekend is for you. We walk around 8.5km each day traversing only minor hills and camp with a tent at a Bibbulmun Track campsite. Gain confidence and learn all the tricks of the trade from guides who are end-to-enders. 1¼hr from Perth.

Planning night: Friday 10th August, 6.30pm.

Date: Saturday 18th to Sunday 19th August.

Cost: \$140 members, \$160 non-members. Includes comprehensive planning night, trip preparation manual, map, experienced guides and equipment hire. BYO food. Own transport to walk start.

RAMBLE & PADDLE

A fantastic walking and paddling weekend escape in Dwellingup. Stay two nights in Dwellingup, walk 13km on the Bibbulmun Track carrying only a day pack, be fascinated by a tour of the historic Murrinup POW camp, perhaps visit some local attractions and then, on Sunday, paddle down the tranquil Murray River. Be quick, this one fills up fast! "I had no idea how much fun and value for money this weekend was until I did it!"

Date: Friday 24th (4.30pm) to Sunday 26th August.

Cost: \$275 members, \$295 non-members. Includes 2 nights basic accommodation with late check-out, return transport from Murdoch Park'n'Ride rail terminal, all transfers, two continental breakfasts (other meals not included, our Friday night briefing is at the local pub where we can have dinner), guided POW tour, experienced guides, canoe equipment and instruction.



WILDFLOWER WANDER TREK



Enjoy the beauty of the spring flowers as you spend three days hiking in one of the most scenic sections of the Bibbulmun Track. Starting from Mundaring you will be amazed at the scenery each day has to offer – the mysterious boulders, the expansive views and the misty mornings. Great for sectional end-to-enders or those yet to explore the Track beyond Mundaring in the Perth Hills.

Planning night: Thursday 20th September, 6.30pm.

Dates: Saturday 29th Sept to Monday 1st October (long-weekend).

Cost: \$200 members, \$220 non-members.

Includes return transport ex Murdoch Train Station/park'n'ride, comprehensive planning night, trip preparation manual, map and equipment hire. BYO food. Walkers must be fit, have previous overnight experience carrying full packs, and not be chronic AFL supporters!



The Bibbulmun Track Volunteer Guide Training Program is sponsored by Western Power

DWELLINGUP DAMSELS



Two days of bush rejuvenation for ladies with little or no previous overnight trekking experience. Join our experienced guides walking 17km over 2 days in the Dwellingup area.

Planning night: Friday 10th August, 6.30pm.

Date: Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th August.

Cost: \$185 members, \$205 non-members. Includes return transport from Murdoch Park'n'Ride rail terminal, experienced guides, comprehensive planning night, trip preparation manual, map and equipment hire. BYO food.

GET LOST WITH STEVE!

Do you have little or no direction in your life? Do you really know how to use a compass and not just find north? Today we go through a series of practical and theoretical exercises on and near the Track in Mundaring. Get Lost with Steve and you will have fun learning and perfecting basic map reading and compass skills. Own navigation compass required. Involves approx 7km walking on and off tracks.

Date: Sunday 12th August, 9am – approx 5pm.

Cost: \$65 members, \$75 non-members.

Includes theoretical and practical activities, morning tea, map reading booklet and Track map. This is the basic course. See Get Found with Steve in the next Calendar of Events for the next level.



Galloping Gourmet Chris and Merry Ce's Bibbulmun Epicurean Adventure

A Walker's Story

Ce Kealley and Chris Piggford are long serving volunteers/guides with the BTF. Walking the Track for them involves adventures of gastronomic indulgence – read on:

We chose the CHOGM Friday public holiday for the start of our gourmet gambol from Collie to Dwellingup.

In keeping with the Galloping Gourmet legend, we decided to push the boundaries of Track epicurean experiences and make this all about food. Chris's Track name, the Galloping Gourmet, is two-fold. *Galloping* describes his lovely long legs that lend themselves to striding out, barely changing gear between the undulations and the flatulations (a term coined by friend and fellow walker Dan Hugo several years earlier). *Gourmet* – well, read on. I, on the other hand, with my short podgy pins pant along pathetically behind him in an attempt to keep up.

And so began our Bibbulmun Epicurean Adventure.

Our normal tradition is to alternate the provision of dinner; which means I carry extra food to cater for the GG's higher metabolic furnace. My compensation is that he carries the cooking gear. The additional days' worth of food meant we needed to be innovative with lunches and breakfasts as well, minimising as far as possible any foods that were in fully constituted form.

Lunches were rehydrated lamb-chutney, chilli-pork or mango-chicken rissoles; baked beans with feta and vegetables (tomatoes, capsicum, mushrooms, spinach) served in tortilla wraps. The GG at times added left-overs from the previous night's dinner. Breakfasts were a variety of oat or rice porridge; bacon and eggs; bacon, baked beans and feta; or muesli (home baked with home-dried fruit).

Dinners – now this is where the Gourmet earns his stripes. I am usually a lazy, one-pot chef, although I have graduated to using three (see below). GG however uses every cooking implement available. For example, his famous meat pie requires the meat component, (quality beef, cooked until the meat falls apart, with other ingredients added prior to drying) to have one pot, with the mashed real spuds, home-made tomato sauce and home-grown spinach, all in separate containers. The beauty of doing your own mashed potato, apart from the superior taste, is that you can add milk, butter and seasoning before dehydrating, and not have to carry them separately. The GG's pastry is a packet variety, mixed on-site and cooked to perfection between layers of foil on the camp-fire cooking plate. Truly a work of art!

My three pot extravaganza was char-sui pork and fried rice. Again, all meal components had been

prepared and dehydrated at home. Eggs for the fried rice were prepared separately. To dehydrate, separate eggs, whip whites until meringue consistency; and yolks until thick, pale yellow. Dry separately. To reconstitute, add cold water, leave for an hour, then cook as desired.

Our walk continued and when we reached the Jurassic section, close to Yourdamung campsite, I was once again enamoured with the beauty and diversity of the jarrah forest. Here were abundant grass trees hundreds of years old, prehistoric looking banksias, swamp oak, interspersed by snotty gobblers, jarrah and marri – absolute magic – was that a dinosaur I saw?

It was on the first occasion of our completing this section when I earned my Track name Merry Ce. Walker Hal, Stumbling South, likened our group to the Hobbits*, due perhaps to our penchant for morning and afternoon tea and fine foods. Now, due to the warming days, we were obliged to incorporate plenty of breaks, with nineses, tenses, and elevenses plus a leisurely hour for lunch with boots off and feet up. The plethora of flora added to the desire to amble at an easy pace.

Dinner was my two-pot fare of Moroccan lamb with eggplant and pearl couscous – pretty delish even if I do say so myself.

After-dinner talk of wild pigs, pig-dogs and unauthorised vehicles had me dreaming of car lights, and sniffer-dogs – so vividly that in trying to shoo them away with my sleeping-bagged feet, I slid off



Jurassic section between Harris Dam and Yourdamung

the bunk and onto the ground! Amazingly, when I awoke the car lights and dogs were gone.

On to Possum Springs, we aimed for an earlier start, not looking forward to the hills, heat and humidity, fortified by a hearty breakfast of bacon, eggs, shallots and feta. Despite filling all our water containers to the brim, by the time we got to the last and nastiest hill, my supplies were depleted. My hero kindly shared his last litre and we staggered into camp, straight to the tank to down a litre of the sweetest nectar ever tasted. Note to self, pack a spare bladder to cater for days when three and a half litres of water is not enough! Our reward for effort was Chris's signature dish of meat pie, homemade tomato sauce, spinach and mashed spud as described earlier – yum!

On again, another hot day, and into camp by lunchtime. Needing an energy fix we lunched first – baked beans with feta in tortillas – then took a delightfully refreshing swim in the Murray River and relaxed for the rest of the afternoon. The Gourmet presented another dining masterpiece



Haves and have-nots

Eyes on the Ground Maintenance Program

Recent storms wreaked havoc across much of the southwest and the Bibbulmun Track was badly affected in most areas. Along with DEC staff, Bibbulmun Track Foundation maintenance volunteers have been busy clearing debris from their sections. Their reports to DEC of problems requiring assistance make the clean-up easier as DEC crews can go directly to those areas.

NEWMONT
ASIA PACIFIC

BODDINGTON GOLD

with Madras chicken curry, Basmati rice, Agra peas and homemade yoghurt.

Up with the sparrows to get an early start and within a couple of hours the humidity cranked up and the day became hot, hot, hot! I felt I was about to spontaneously combust. Eight hours later I crawled into the shelter totally shattered and convinced warm-weather walking is not for me. Every muscle, tendon and toe complained bitterly. After many cups of tea and rests it was time for the final meal of Thai salmon Mornay. We have found that if we are intending to use rice or pasta in our meals, pre-cooking at home allows the use of whatever variety you like, easy rehydration, and without using too much precious fuel.



Moroccan lamb with eggplant and pearl couscous

What a sweltering night! Overnight rain did little to relieve it. A final breakfast of baked beans, bacon, capsicum and feta then off on the final leg. The vision of beer and burgers at the Dwellingup pub were wonderful motivators and we made it well before lunch so had to fill in the time drinking extra beer.

Feeling pretty pleased with ourselves, we ambled to the Caravan Park where our chalet with spa awaited us. Heartily recommend the place – a very friendly and excellent transition with its natural woodland surrounds, the spa... and of course a glass or two of red. A great conclusion to an excellent walk.

*Ed note: *Merry* is one of the Hobbit characters in J.R. Tolkien's trilogy *Lord of the Rings*

You too can learn to become a Galloping Gourmet – just come along to our Food in a Fuel Stove events! It's great fun and you actually get to cook and taste various meals on the night.

The team looking after the section Caversham Rd to Harris Dam picnic area comprises three generations – grandad Alan Barker, his daughter Mandy Szeliga and granddaughter Amy. We received this message from Mandy:

Due to the storms last week I thought it a good idea to go and check for damage on my section between the Harris Dam Carpark and the Harris Dam shelter. It took dad, Amy and myself some time to clear this section as best we could not leaving us enough time to do the section from the shelter to Caversham Road which I will get on to as soon as I can.



Volunteers Mandy and Amy Szeliga clear fallen branches from the Track after June's wild weather

As you can imagine it was a mess with fallen branches everywhere as well as whole trees. I have also attached a mud map for Nick and the boys to get an idea of where the worst damage occurred which requires a bit more muscle than we were able to muster. Also shown on the map for the boys are a couple of fallen trees on the Harris River Road which we could see from where the Track crossed.

The Foundation really appreciates the hard work put in to maintain the Track by Mandy and her team as well as all our other enthusiastic volunteers.

LEAVE NO TRACE TIP

Walking Poles and the Environment

Most walkers are familiar with the seven principles of *Leave no Trace* (see the item on page 6 of this issue), but few have probably considered the effect of walking poles, which are becoming more and more popular. BTF member Tricia Wilson brought these comments from a New Zealand magazine to our attention:

So what happens to the terrain we walk over when using walking poles? It breaks down at a quicker rate. A study by DOC (NZ Department of Conservation) reports that the carbine tip of a walking pole exerts some 3000kPa of force (the Tongariro Alpine Crossing track suffers in excess of 400 million jabs every year). The report suggests that the pole tips be capped with a rubber cover (the poles all come with these when you buy them) and this would reduce the tip force to only 70kPa.

Tricia points out that the rubber covers come off the poles very easily and are quickly lost. Does anyone have any thoughts or ideas on this topic?



NOTICE BOARD

75TH ANNIVERSARY

Western Walking Club is celebrating its 75th anniversary. All past members are invited to join us for lunch on Sunday 7th October. For further information and booking please email mclark@iinet.net.au or phone 9354 3107

WANTED: WALKING COMPANION

Contact Karen Dowling, Telephone 0414 751 179 or email crakar@iinet.net.au

I am looking for a walking companion who can pretty much walk whenever. I am happy to organise the walks and details. Don't worry if you think you're not experienced enough or fit enough it's not about that.

WANTED: WALKING COMPANION

Contact Pippa. Telephone (08) 9309 7174 or email Williams.Pippa@Kingsley.Meath.org.au

Mature lady seeks experienced walker for company Northcliffe to Walpole around April 2013.

FOR SALE: WOMEN'S BOOTS

Contact Trish. Email trishberridge@hotmail.com

KEEN mid-boot. Waterproof. Size 38. Boots are 18 months old, hardly worn and in good condition. Sell \$125

WANTED: FEMALE WALKING COMPANION

Contact Valerie. Telephone 0402845166 or email hiking1942@yahoo.com

Looking for lady companion in her 50's or 60's who would like to walk short walks (5 days or less) at short notice. Looking at Collie to Balingup for starters.

WANTED: WALKING COMPANION

Contact John. Telephone 9284 3173

Walking companion required to assist non-driver get onto track – prepared to share cost – for day walks or occasional overnight walk.

WANTED: WALKING COMPANION

Contact Caz. Telephone 0439 097 344 or email supercaz78@hotmail.com

34yr female in Rockingham/Mandurah region seeking another like-minded walking buddy or group, prefer female of similar age to do occasional overnight or day hikes from time to time, also planning Walpole to Albany stretch of Bibbulmun Track in the near future.

FOR SALE: ASSORTED GEAR

Contact Caz. Telephone 0439 097 344 or email supercaz78@hotmail.com

Women's Scarpa Kailash boots only worn for 1wk, women's Keen boots worn for an E2E, 2 x women's merino (Icebreaker) long sleeve zip neck tops, 1 x women's NZ brand "earth, sea, sky" raincoat, 2 x kovea portable stoves, lightweight walking/travel pants with zip off shorts, 1 x snowgum fleece. All different sizes and prices.

FOR SALE: WOMEN'S WALKING BOOTS (2)

Contact Deb. Telephone 0438 973 698 or email debmickle6158@hotmail.com

Scarpa Kailash GTX Hiking Boot suede upper and Gore-tex lining, Skywalk Sole. Size 40. UK 6.5/US 8.5. Worn twice. Colour Pepper/Stone Weight (pair): 1210gm. Retail \$280. Sell \$60

Scarpa ZG65 XCR Hiking Boot with Gore-tex lining. Grey /Charcoal. Size 40/UK 6.5./US 8.5. Vibram sole. Weight (pair): 1160gm. Average wear and condition. Lots of walking left in them. 1210gm. Retail \$270. Sell \$50

WANTED: WALKING COMPANION

Contact Danny. Email djoyce1954@live.com

I'm 58 male and would like a walking companion for Pemberton to Walpole at the end of September to mid-October. Estimate 11 days duration.

WANTED: FEMALE WALKING COMPANION

Contact Cheryl. Telephone 0437 881548 or email fatcat62@westnet.com.au

I'm a female 49 and live in Narrogin, looking for other females around that area to do weekend walks, day walks and camping out on the Bibbulmun Track.

WANTED: WALKING COMPANION

Contact Barbara. Email sbpt@wn.com.au

Will be walking the Track in stages, due to family and work commitments. Planning to start in April, 2012 after the school holidays.

WANTED: OVER 55s PEEL BUSHWALKING CLUB

Telephone 9537 8209 or 9582 3703 (Preston or Ian respectively) or email psuijden@bigpond.net.au

The Y.A.H.O.O. Over 55s Bushwalking Club walks every Thursday in the Peel Region. April to October 12 km to 20+ km bushwalks – Estuary & beach walks 10-12 km November to March. Enquiries welcome.

WANTED: WALKING COMPANION(S) – SECTIONAL END-TO-END

Contact Karen. Telephone 0409 173 667 or email Karen.treble@csiro.au

I'm female 47 and unable to complete the end-to-end in one go due to work commitments. I wish to start in the north in August for 7-10 days. I wish this to be a "enjoy the bush" walk of the Track.

Want To Advertise on our Notice Board?

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GETTING INTO GEAR – GEAR FOR INTREPID TRAVELLERS.



MANY BIBBULMUN TRACK WALKERS DON'T CONFINE THEMSELVES TO THE BIBBULMUN TRACK, OR OTHER WEST AUSTRALIAN TRAILS. THEY TRAVEL ALL OVER THE COUNTRY – AND THE WORLD – TO EXPERIENCE THE PLEASURE OF WALKING IN ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS. WHILE SOME GEAR SUCH AS TOP LOADING BUSHWALKING PACKS, STOVES AND SLEEPING MATS MAY BE *DE RIGUEUR* ON THE BIBBULMUN TRACK, THEY MAY NOT BE NECESSARY ON TRAILS IN EUROPE, FOR EXAMPLE. IN FACT IN SOME CASES THEY MIGHT BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO USE.

So, if you're thinking of travelling to Europe, North America, the Himalayas or even on the Foundation's newly announced trip to Peru to do some walking, here are some ideas to help you along the way

Firstly, your pack. When you're travelling you don't necessarily need to take everything out of your pack when you get to your lodge, B&B or *pension*. Gear at the bottom of a top loading bushwalking pack can be difficult to get at without emptying the whole thing; something you won't want to do every night. And the last thing you need is for the harness to get caught in a conveyor belt or the buckles to be smashed in a car door. To avoid these problems, think about taking a travel pack or a hybrid pack instead.

These packs double as a suitcase and a pack. The harness system on travel packs hides away under a flap at the back, and they will open from the front like a suitcase for easy accessibility. Often they have a detachable day pack that zips on to the front of the main pack.

I would recommend this style of pack if you are doing more travelling than walking, that is getting on and off buses, trains or planes, staying at B&Bs and pensions, or when travelling in a car or mobile home. Mountain Designs offer models such as the Gulliver, the Exodus or the Odyssey in this range. Deuter makes a model called the Traveller in three sizes so you can get a pack that fits in all the gear you intend to travel with and if you're smart it won't be too much!

Hybrid packs, on the other hand, are designed more with walking in mind than travelling. The harness system still hides away behind a flap of fabric, the pack still loads from the front, but it can be loaded from the top as well, like a traditional bushwalking pack. It may have a zip off day pack on the front but these are often much smaller in size and can be treated as a pocket.

Some Mountain Designs models are the Columbus and the Endeavour; Deuter have the Quantum series. Deuter also put a front loading option in a model of their traditional Air Contact Range, called the Pro. This comes in four sizes but doesn't have a hide away harness.

If you are buying a pack for a walking holiday in the European Alps you can probably get away with something quite small, as many of the walks pass through villages or visit mountain huts where you can buy accommodation, food and even wine for the night. You need only to carry a change of clothes, and perhaps a silk liner, as they also supply blankets and pillows. A pack size of around 40 to 50 litres would be sufficient for this type of travelling, although you do

have to consider gear that you may have brought for town use – perhaps use the postal system to send it on from town to town so that you don't have to carry it! In some countries you can leave gear at hotels or lodges in locked storage and collect it on your return.

Some other useful travel items include the Steripen. Push the button once, pop the end into your water bottle (a wide mouth bottle is best for ease of access) and in a minute or so your water is sterilised by ultraviolet light. The Steripen is small, light and runs off batteries, very handy for not having to buy expensive bottled water while overseas – and for not getting unpleasant tummy bugs!

I also like to pack my clothes into waterproof stuff sacks or dry sacks, of which Sea to Summit make an extensive range. Not only are they waterproof but I can reduce the volume of the clothes by crushing the extra air out them – virtually vacuum packing everything. I also colour code the bags so I know exactly which one has my socks and jocks and which one has my T-Shirts, which hopefully don't get

crumpled either! Not having to unpack my whole bag is very handy as it means I don't have to repack it the next morning.

Another thing to be considered is the security of valuables. Pacsafe make an entire range of products with protection built in to make it difficult for anyone to steal your valuables. These include neck wallets, money belts, pants belts made to hide cash and even daypacks and shoulder bags with a slash proof mesh. You won't need these in the West Australian bush, but on the train travelling to the start of the El Camino trail in Spain...?

Safe travels.

Mike Wood
BTF Chairman



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FREE for members – \$15 for non-members.

Please complete and sign payment details below and sign the Event Conditions.

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I acknowledge & assume all risks associated with participation in any events being conducted by the Bibbulmun Track Foundation & will hold the Board, Executive Director, employees, servants & agents free from all liability, caused of action, debt claims, & demands of every kind & nature whatsoever which may arise out of, or in connection with the use of facilities, equipment, &/or participation in the events I have chosen.

Walks are based on conditions at time of printing & may be subject to change. Event details will follow via email or post.

The Bibbulmun Track Foundation reserves the right to cancel a tour with a minimum of 24hrs notice.

NO REFUNDS OR EXCHANGES

(Except where an event has been altered or cancelled.)

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In making a booking I acknowledge that I, and any other persons that I am booking for, understand and agree to the above conditions & I have included full payment for the event/s in which I wish to take part. I understand that many events have limited places & that if my application is not accepted, my moneys will be refunded in full.

BOOKINGS CLOSE AT 12 NOON ON EACH THURSDAY PRIOR TO AN EVENT

WALK RATINGS: BEGINNERS INTERMEDIATE EXPERIENCED

WALK BOOKINGS

No. of Adults

No. of Adults

2 September 9am

15km return walk from Brookton Hwy to Plunket Rd

16 September 9am

16km return walk from North Bannister to the Serpentine River via the Gringer Creek Campsite (Fit and experienced walkers only)

23 September 8.30am

22km return walk from Perth Hills National Parks Centre to Helena Campsite (Fit and experienced walkers only)

7 October 9am

15km Mt Cooke circuit walk via Mt Cooke Campsite

18 November 4pm

8km return sunset walk from Camel Farm to Hewett's Hill Campsite

Send this back to the Bibbulmun Track Foundation, PO Box 7605, Cloisters Square, 6850 with cheque OR fax to 9481 0546 with credit card details. Bookings cannot be made over the phone or by email.

The Bibbulmun Track Guide Training Program is sponsored by Western Power.





TRACK TRIVIA

HI FELLOW WALKERS!

I'm writing this in the UK, enjoying the cold, damp chill of the English summer. Today is mid-summer's day, it's pouring with rain and the maximum temperature for the day is 17 degrees. Enough to make me long for the winter in Perth!

I've just completed the Coast to Coast walk across the north of England, so I'm feeling pleased with myself, having covered the 320 km in eleven days. That's with a day pack, staying in accommodation each night, but it was still a demanding trek through some rugged countryside and at times horrible weather. I hope (editor permitting) that an account of my trip will appear in a future edition of the Bibbulmun News. If anyone is interested in obtaining details of the walk please email me on jim_baker@bigpond.com and I'll be happy to share my experiences with you.

Prior to my UK trip I took a stroll along the Track from Pemberton to Balingup, just to get a few hills under my belt before tackling some of the steep climbs in the English Lake District National Park, which contains part of the Coast to Coast route.

Not only were the hills still there (I rate the section between Beavis and Boarding House as tough as any on the Track) but the weather went obligingly Pom-like, with rain on most days. Frankly, after suffering the drought of March, it was a real pleasure to walk through the karri trees in the rain and smell the freshness of the forest.

It was good to see quite a number of walkers out and about; of the six shelters along the way I had company in all but one. Everyone was wet and cold and with the fire ban still in operation there was little to do about it except to take in hot food and drink, put on thermals and get into your sleeping bag. But as ever, everyone was cheerful, helped one another out and there was a lot of laughter and joking.

The refurbished campsites were a pleasure to behold, with Beavis taking pride of place for me. Unfortunately the comparison makes some others, Gregory Brook in particular, look very tired, but their time will come. Well done Scotty, the DEC staff and the vollies involved in all the work that has gone into this ongoing project.

The final (I promise) word on scroggin. I am advised from various sources that it stands for *sultanas, chocolate, raisins and other goody-goodies including nuts*. I don't believe it. Goody-goodies? Come on!

During my research into this vital question I came across an American organisation called Scroggin, Scroggin and Company. Hallelujah! An answer at last – they turned out to be real estate agents; another dream shattered.

It was heart warming to meet a couple of guys walking the Track who were older than me – it happens less and less often these days. One of them, a gentleman whose first name was Ron, was one of the most interesting walkers I have yet happened upon. In his mid-seventies, Ron was born and raised in north California, is hugely travelled and has been living in Queensland for thirty years. A professional dancer, he partnered Juliet Prowse, star of the film Can-Can, and rubbed shoulders with performers such as Sinatra, Sammy Davis Junior and Dean Martin. He is a student of history and politics and we had some of the most fascinating conversations that I can remember under the stars – when it wasn't raining!

I also had great times (don't misinterpret this) with two trios of ladies who were fighting the elements. Sally, if you read this, thanks for the plaudits about my book.

This to me is the essence of walking the Track. It is genuinely *walker friendly*, in the sense that you can walk in the way that suits you. Go alone, with your partner or with a group. Walk a kilometre or 965 kilometres. You can experience solitude and/or wonderful camaraderie on the same walk.

I walk alone on the Track, in the knowledge that I am always safe, with the proviso that I have the correct clothing and equipment to cope with any problems. As a comparison, the walk I have just completed in the UK took me into completely unsigned areas of bog land where you are walking at 800 metres beneath the clouds, with visibility

down to ten meters. Challenging? Yes. Friendly? Well, not really, so you don't do it alone, unless you're Bear Grylls.

Memorable moments on our Track included a meeting with a Korean family group at the Beedelup Falls. Early morning, cold and grey and the tiniest dribble of water is making its way down through the rocks. I greeted them.

"Ahnnyeonghahsehyo." (*Hello*)

They leapt to attention, transfixed by a foreigner who spoke their language. (Which I don't really, despite living in Korea for five years).

The father bowed his head in deference to my few remaining grey hairs.

"Ahnnyeonghahsehyo. Sir, when does water come?"

Tricky question, they obviously though someone switched the Falls on and off.

"Ah, well, probably about July, I would think."

I strode away, leaving them pondering. I hope they're not still waiting.

Lastly, a question of trees. Being an avid reader of Tolkien, I thought the Giant Tingle was Treebeard, the sentinel of Fanghorn. However, my latest stay at the Blackwood campsite has shown that the Ents have invaded Balingup. (This is no real surprise, given the history). See the picture below.

Happy Walking to You All!

Wrong Way Jim



Tree face? Blackwood campsite

Challenge Yourself!

TEAM PLACES AVAILABLE – SPREAD THE WORD!

We're seeking teams of four to compete for the title of "Challenge Champions 2012".

This is a fantastic team building event unlike any other – with four days of activities to hone your problem solving, first-aid, and outdoor skills whilst hiking the Bibbulmun Track.

The four heats take place in October and November – so there's still plenty of time to recruit a team and get into training. If you can't enter a team yourself

– please help spread the word to your friends and family – especially those who work in large companies!

The Challenge is a major fundraiser for the Bibbulmun Track Foundation and teams can fundraise their entry fee using our fundraising page at www.mycause.com.au

For more information go to our website or email events@bibbulmuntrack.org.au for an info pack.



Challenge yourself and sign up for the 2012 Bibbulmun Team Challenge.

Photo Caption Competition

Come up with a caption for this photo of maintenance volunteer Lari MacDonald in front of a fallen tree near Willow Springs. The winner will receive a prize from Sea to Summit.

Entries can be submitted by fax, email or post.



Wellington Dam Spur Trail is now open

The 16km Wellington Dam spur trail is now open, linking the Bibbulmun Track from Yabberup campsite just south of Collie to the Wellington Dam recreation area in the Wellington National Park.

The spur trail has been built to provide an alternative route for school expeditions. The route was identified as ideal given to its proximity to Perth, vehicle access at each end and easy linkage to other recreational activities in the area including mountain biking and canoeing.

The three day/two night walk from Collie to Wellington Dam incorporates the Bibbulmun Track to Yabberup campsite and the spur trail from there to Wellington Dam. The spur has two new group campsites:

- Lyall's Mill campsite, which is approximately 250m from Yabberup campsite on the Bibbulmun Track.
- Arcadia campsite, which is on the spur trail between the Bibbulmun Track and Wellington Dam.

Lyall's Mill campsite is approximately 20km south of Collie and 6km north of Glen Mervyn Dam. This provides the choice of either a challenging or an easy day's walk, depending on the age of the group and/or the travel time to get to the drop-off/pick-up point.

All the resources required to plan a group expedition can be found on the Foundation website under Trip Planning / Schools & Scouts / Expedition Planning.



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Reflections from the Registers-

t h o w + y e b e a ! z + b k z -
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Mount Wells:

24/03/99

A man of my advancing years should not be encouraged to climb that which we have just climbed. However we are pleased to be here, with another hill behind us. In a couple of days we will be in Dwellingup (hummah!) where we hope to sample those aspects of civilisation that we have almost forgotten, i.e. showers and beers, to name but two. Leaving tomorrow for Chadoora.

**Bill & Audrey
(The Pommie Bastards)**

03/03/99

Kris and Leila reached the summit yesterday after trek from Inglehope Road, on our way, eventually, to Albany. (Ed: Spot the problem, folks?). Great view, great sunset. Misty morning this morning, all well!

Kris

03/03/99

The above two ladies left this morning and quickly returned, when they realized they were walking in the wrong direction. Then they left for White Horse Hills. (Ed: Which makes even less sense. I wonder if they are still out there?).

Anon

White Horse Hills:

19/10/03

A funny old lady called Mary
Of walking alone she was wary
The noises at night

Caused one helluva fright

The whole thing was plain bloody scary!

Not really true. I had a great night's sleep. Just took a good fire and a couple of whiskies. Thanks to CALM and the vollies for providing such pleasure.

Mary

Chadoora:

11/11/06

For the second night in a row I have the pleasure of being on the fringe of the Bibbulmun Team Challenge, watching the collection of bizarre objects, cruel murders, weapon making, the singing of silly ditties and all manner of fun. Wish I were part! It's also cool to put faces to the names of people I've read about. Oh yes, it will be good to return to solitude... but that's part of the thrill and the challenge, no? The wonder of the exhilarating silence...may it long continue.

Wildgoose (aka Lucy)

Dookanelly:

27/04/10

Only the second day into the walk from Dwellingup to Collie and already we are thinking of eating Roi. He is the biggest of the three of us, therefore the main source of meat and so we explained to him that it is just commonsense. Unfortunately we have as yet been unable to find a stick big enough to use as a spit, so he'll survive one more day. The best advice I can give him is to sleep with one eye open.

John, Matt and Roi

Blackwood:

05/04/08

After staggering into camp last night it was a relief to take the shoes off. The view was incredible and soothing balm to an aching body. This morning to watch the mist rolling in the valley, smelling bacon cooking - a better start to a Sunday I can't imagine. Then back home - and a shower!

The Venturer Ladies

04/09/08

I'm sitting here this morning, waiting for my coffee water to boil, looking down into this gorgeous valley and waiting for Maria from The Sound of Music to race up the hill, arms outstretched - "the hills are alive..." - but no, so far just a squadron of red-tailed black cockatoos, more raucous than Maria. Once again, my sleep here on a bed of pine needles was as luxurious as the sound deadening quality of this forest. The valley mist show was over early this morning, the season is changing, I must move on.

Ralph

27/10/08

Sitting on the rocks out at the front of the campsite, thinking that the views are like Austria, that this is Paradise - when a bloody great black dugite went slithering past us! Why is there always some glitch in Paradise?

Johanna and Pete

13/10/10

In a moment of morbid curiosity, I ate some Staminade powder on its own for breakfast. It tastes as horrible as you would expect it to.

Nadia

09/11/10

It seems a little bizarre to be listening to a chorus of kookaburras while walking in a pine forest in Western Australia.

Cam

20/12/10

I'm surprised at how many pine trees are being allowed to grow here. Should I be?

Anon

26/12/10

To Anon. Have you noticed you're in a pine forest?

Bingo

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TRAILING AROUND THE WORLD

VIA FRANCIGENA

ENGLAND, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND AND ITALY

In June 2011, Peter Whitehead and his friend Peter Stubbings set off to walk the Via Francigena. This is a synopsis of their walk, in Peter Whitehead's words.

One fine June day in 2011, Peter Stubbings (henceforth referred to as Pierre) and I set out from Canterbury for Rome, with heavy backpacks, laden with camping and cooking gear, à la Bibbulmun Track trek. However, whereas the Bibbulmun Track is 1,000 km long, the journey we were undertaking was 2,000 km long with the Alps in the way.

The English Section

Only 40km. A day's stroll of 25km through picturesque countryside, camping at Shepherdswell and then down to Dover for a ferry ride to Calais the next morning.

The French Section

Now it started to get interesting. Everyone in France speaks French so we thought we'd better do the same if we didn't want to starve to death. We also realised we would never get to Rome by following the signs there aren't any.



The starting point. Peter W (on the left) and Pierre at Canterbury Cathedral

THE HISTORY OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA

Around 1,000 years ago, a Pom by the name of Sigeric the Serious (honestly!) was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury and summoned to Rome by the Pope to receive his pallium a cloak which is a symbol of his office.

Sigeric set off from England, walked 2,000 kilometres to Rome, received his cloak and, unlike modern pilgrims, turned around and walked back again.

The world is forever grateful that on his return journey, one of Sigeric's clerks wrote a diary which detailed the route and the towns in which they stayed. This became one of the major pilgrim routes of Europe for many centuries.

The next realisation was that the route passed mainly through villages which had no shops or cafés. Consequently, begging for water became a daily occurrence with the locals only too pleased to give us bottled water from their fridges. They were constantly puzzled when we said we were walking to Rome. After a couple of weeks, a very helpful ancient Frenchman explained that all the cemeteries had a tap with drinking water and all villages had cemeteries and so the begging stopped.

In the northern part of France we usually managed to find campsites, some of which were free as we were pilgrims with our own tents. But soon, as the tourist spots disappeared behind us, we found ourselves camping in forests or behind hedge-rows in one instance, in a rubbish-tip. Each day, we would seek out the mayor's office, tourist bureau or church at one of the towns or villages along the way to get a stamp for our pilgrim-passports.

Passing through the Somme was a sobering experience with its countless immaculately kept cemeteries of the Great War some with thousands of crosses.

Then a catastrophe... After about 400km, Pierre announced, "I have a blister on the ball of my foot."

Anyone who's had a blister there knows it is doom. It penetrates through the flesh and takes weeks of non-activity to repair.

Pierre had three choices: sit and wait until it repaired, go home or buy a bike. He decided on the

last option, and from that moment on, as far as my daily walking was concerned, I was on my own, as was Pierre.

My research prior to leaving had enabled me to download over 2000 waypoints along the route into my GPS. Each day I would give Pierre the last coordinate of the day to punch into his GPS, leave him to find it and meet him there, where we would find a place to stay.

And so, I kept walking while Pierre rode his bike.

The next couple of weeks we followed the great canal system of France through the Marne, the Saône and Champagne regions until after about five weeks we reached Pontarlier. We were about to leave France, and the next morning we set off for Sainte-Croix, about four kilometres inside the Swiss border.

The Swiss Section

What a contrast. Every village in France has some young hoon with a trail-bike, quad-bike or motor-bike which emits 1000dBs usually around the early evening as the villages come alive. In Switzerland, there was not a sound of that nature in the seven days we were there.

Two days after arriving in Sainte-Croix we were in Lausanne, on the shores of the lake and the next day walked along its banks to Vevey, where we camped. The view of the Italian Alps across the lake there was worth a million dollars for a \$10 camping fee!

We continued around the lake, heading for the south-eastern corner where the flat valley of a bygone ice age gave us brief respite from the mountainous roads of the past few days worse was to come. We passed through Montreux and Martigny where we visited a Swiss family that we had met earlier in France, and set off early the next morning... a day I will never forget.

My plan was to walk to Bourg-Saint-Pierre at 1,650m up the Grand Saint Bernard Pass with a view to pushing on the next day to Grand Saint Bernard itself, on the Swiss-Italian border at 2,500m. I had misread the co-ordinates and thought the distance to Bourg-Saint-Pierre was easily coverable in one day. Wrong!

Pierre headed straight along the road on his bike and was at Bourg-Saint-Pierre in four hours. In contrast, after four hours I was only two kilometres from Martigny having risen to 900m, traversed around a horse-shoe mountain on a goat-track then back down to 500m.



The French Canals



Pierre at St Bernard

I crossed the valley and headed up the other mountain to 1000m along a track which was nothing other than painted marks on moss-covered boulders. After eight hours I had no phone signal, my GPS was pointing me in the wrong direction and then, at 1000m the GPS died and it started to rain

Fortunately, out of nowhere, a mother and daughter came walking past. I asked them directions and they confirmed that I was, indeed, heading for Bourg-Saint-Pierre. But they made three things clear it was a windy road, it was up and down and it was a long way.

Out of the blue, I saw a sign: Bourg-Saint-Pierre 8km. Two hours later, I was walking into the town. Mobile reception was back on and my GPS, miraculously, albeit after threatening it with violence, started to work again. A very worried Pierre had been waiting patiently at the campsite for nine hours.

For me, fifteen hours non-stop, about 28km and a vertical rise of 1200m. The next day was a doddle and in four hours I was in Grand Saint Bernard.

It had taken us 42 days to get to the Italian border. It was to take us another 42 days to get to Rome and the adventures were only just beginning.

The Italian Section

The day we crossed the border was the day the weather changed. Within a few days, as we dropped elevation, the temperature climbed to the high 30s and into the 40s. It was unrelenting for six weeks and we never saw a single drop of rain until Rome.

After a few days we headed into Ivrea where we knew of a Salesian Hostel (the Salesians are a Catholic Order which specialises in teaching trades to underprivileged youths and providing cheap accommodation) and the next day we arrived in Santhia where our very good friend Marco arrived to walk with us for the next week, with his elder daughter, Federica. Marco found a room for us for the night and so, the next day we set off for Vercelli; the three of us plus the biker.

The weather was shocking. 30m above sea-level, 90% humidity, 42deg in the shade. Rice-paddies or corn-fields as far as the eye could see. Not a single tree anywhere, not a breath of wind, not a cloud in the sky. This went on for two weeks without relief.

After about five days with Marco, we arrived in Pavia and prepared to cross one of Italy's major waterways, the Po River.

There were two ways to cross the Po, either walk

many kilometres to a bridge or call the ferryman, who arrived in a decrepit old motorised punt with a very unreliable engine.

We made our way gingerly down a floating jetty, and climbed into the boat with our backpacks, cast off and pushed out into the fast-flowing stream. A couple of pulls on the two-stroke lawn-mower engine nothing. Then suddenly it fired and off we went, hurtling up-stream towards what looked like nowhere in particular. After around three or four kilometres we turned sharply behind a headland and into a backwater. We headed at full-speed straight towards the side, a quick slamming into reverse and we were there. Marco's sister was there waiting for him. A quick cheerio and we were on our own again.

We crossed a couple of passes around 1000m, then down to the coast where there was a slight relief from the searing heat, then headed into Tuscany, passing through several towns where granite and marble are mined and processed. Surprisingly they were dusty, dirty, unkempt places out of kilter with the romantic image of marble statues and grandiose palaces and basilicas.

However the ancient cities were exciting, beautiful, colourful places such as Siena, Monteriggione, San Miniato, San Gimignano, Radicofani, San Quirico, Acquapendente – wonderful places. I will return someday.

In San Miniato we needed to stay at a hotel since the monastery was full. We walked into town and found a café the only restaurant in the world with a zebra-crossing. The café is on one side of the street,



Peter crossing the Po River

the dining area is in an arched covered area on the other side of the road, on a bend in the busiest part of town. We wondered if our meal would arrive intact or end up on the road – the waiter was fearless.

It was during this period that we started to meet fellow pilgrims for the first time.

We wended our way south – only 400km to go. No rush we were around 10 days ahead of schedule. We slowed down. With 200km to go Pierre declared that he was ready to start walking again. The first day back on his feet was a tough one: hot, hilly and long but the resting place was magic, a small ancient town called Radicofani. Once again we stayed at a hostel supplied by the local church. A couple of days later we arrived at Lake Bolsena, a wonderful lake about 70km from Rome, then on to Viterbo.

The next day we had a long and dangerous walk alongside a busy main road and half way along, some idiot in a car going the other way stopped just as he passed me and pipped his horn. I was not in the mood to add to the hazard, we were on the brow of a hill, so I waved him away and kept going, whereupon Pierre told me that the idiot was the parish-priest from the next town who had stopped to offer us a bed for the night.

We trudged on to Vetralla and as the heat faded we set off to look for the parish-priest's house. On arriving in the cloisters of the church, a man beckoned for us to follow him. He led us into a refectory where the priest (the idiot) stood and asked for quiet. As the room fell silent he explained



84 days and 2000km behind us...

to those present that we were pilgrims and that we had walked all the way from Canterbury. On hearing this, everyone stood up and gave us a standing ovation.

The priest came over to greet us and gave me a huge smile and a hug. I could feel the enormous warmth of this humble, caring man and I felt no embarrassment at all, just privileged to have met him.

The last few days were spent walking through hazelnut groves and then we were in the outer suburbs of Rome. Disappointingly, but hardly surprising for any metropolis, everywhere was dirty. Seedy enclaves of the less fortunate.

Our last night was spent in a convent. A beautifully kept place but we saw no nuns other than the one who greeted us. She asked for our passports and pilgrim passports which were returned, duly stamped, the following morning.

And so, the last day. We set off before dawn. Within an hour we were lost yet again and had to back-track several kilometers. We side-tracked through a beautiful park on our way to the Vatican with a view of Saint Peter's in the distance.

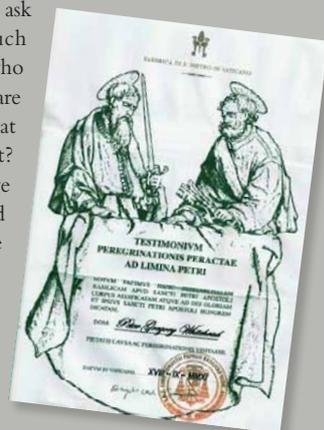
Pierre and I locked arms and, together, we walked into the Square to the last GPS coordinate and embraced.

Twelve weeks of amazing adventures, trials and new friends.

After that, it was a train back to Rome, a flight to Kuala Lumpur and finally Perth and the welcoming, loving arms of my beautiful wife Julie.

Stepping out of our comfort zone is something we all should do from time to time to help re-focus our lives, to give an insight into where we are in life and to ask ourselves such questions as who are we? why are we here? what is important? what do we care about and whom do we care for?

But most importantly to be alive...



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