

Bibbulmun NEWS

DECEMBER 2023 - MARCH 2024
SEASONS OF BIRAK & BUNURU
ISSUE #94
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Newsletter for the Friends of the Bibbulmun Track



Top: The 25th Anniversary end-to-end walkers spent the last night of their journey at Sandpatch Campsite.

From L to R: Tracey Monro, Naomi Hanna, Terry Kozinieć (back), Joseph Keh, Karen Gurry, Stewart Carter, Steve Sertis, Steve Clark, Erica Anderton, Annie Smith, Sue Archer.

Left: On 13 September the end-to-enders led the parade up York Street to the Southern Terminus.

From L to R: Steve Clark, Steve Sertis, Naomi Hanna (back), Joseph Keh, Annie Smith, Karen Gurry (back).

"Trail Tails and Hiking Highlights" member's night

Following on from our AGM on 26 October, we had the pleasure of watching a moving video that captured some of the highlights of the 25th Anniversary celebrations before hearing from our lead guide, Steve Sertis, and two of the other end-to-end walkers.

Steve, Karen Gurry and Erica Anderton shared their memorable moments, personal reflections and motivations for taking part in the journey which became an unforgettable experience.

We then heard from Mark Pybus, also known as 'Life of Py,' who introduced his excellent book 'Best Walks of South West WA' which is a true treasure trove of information.

A big thank you to everyone who joined us – it was a wonderful evening filled with shared memories, exciting adventures, and the warmth of our Bibbulmun Track community.

Honorary Life Memberships

An Honorary Life Membership of the Bibbulmun Track Foundation is a special recognition bestowed upon individuals who have made significant contributions to the Bibbulmun Track and to the Foundation.

As part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations, we were delighted to recognise the following people.

- Jim Baker
- Peter Bidwell
- Jesse Brampton
- Isabel Busch
- Wes Fokkema
- Jim Freeman
- Colin Gee
- Elsie Grygiel
- Charmaine Harris
- Simon Holthouse
- Bruce Manning
- Graham Murdoch
- Patrick Tremlett

The citations for our Honorary Life Members will be available on our website.



Erica Anderton and Sue Lee.



Michelle Wilson and Paul McNamara.



Terry O'Hara and Daphne Bastow.

Get Festive
with Our
Merry Merch!



SCAN the QR Code
to buy online.





FROM MY Desk

Welcome to the summer edition of Bibbulmun News.

On 13 September, over 140 people attended the final 25th Anniversary event in Albany to recognise and thank the many organisations and individuals who contributed to the development of the Track and those who continue to support and maintain it.

A last-minute downpour couldn't dampen their spirits as the end-to-enders walked up York Street accompanied by the Albany Pipe Band and around fifty other walkers who joined them for the last leg.

The end-to-enders took a moment to celebrate their achievement with family and friends at the Southern Terminus before the official celebrations began at the Town Hall.

This event was the culmination of two months of celebrations including ten community events, a school challenge, and a virtual hike. We are indebted to an army of volunteers who helped to make the walk and celebrations a success (see page 26).

The 25-year milestone also gave us cause to reflect on the people who have made a significant contribution to the Bibbulmun Track and to the Foundation over the years and to present them with Honorary Life Memberships (see list on page 2). From Jesse Brampton and Peter Bidwell who were involved with building the Track, to long-standing Board Members, guides, office and maintenance volunteers, these people all made, or continue to make, invaluable contributions in a multitude of ways. Neither the Track or the Foundation would be what they are today without them. Their profiles will be added to our website in due course.

It has been wonderful to catch up with members and volunteers at the various events throughout the year. The half-way party at Donnelly River Village was a particular highlight and I think one of our members' events next year might have to be a dance party!

We are wrapping up the year with the annual volunteer thank you events and, with the 25th Anniversary and office move now behind us, looking forward to a break over the summer months.

I wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for 2024.

Linda Daniels
Executive Director

Join us on



Help us raise **\$25,000 for Track maintenance** for our 25th Anniversary! 10% of this campaign is being donated to **Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre**, helping save WA's Black Cockatoos.

Give back to the Track and donate today.



Thank you! Thank you! THANK YOU!

A sincere thank you to the following walkers who have generously made donations to the Foundation.

Alison Siciliano	Julie McAllister
Angela Loucaides	Karen and Phillip Buckner
Anne Murphy	Katherine George
Barbara Wiche	Kathryn Tweddle
Brian Dearle	Laurence Leroux
Carmel James	Lothar & Maray Burck
Cassandra Ryan	Louise Hinkley
Cathy Burbridge	Lukas Winkler
Daniel Marsh	Marcus Harris
David Wrigley	Mat Dalby
Dawn James	Mel Browne
Didier Monot (Didier Walks)	Niklaus Staeheli
Donna Rowell	Nina Pilgrim
Dr Susan van Leeuwen	Peter McCafferty
Dr. Graham Zemunik	Phillip Barker
Dr. Brenda Hamlett	Phillippa Bennett
Enid Gardner	Prof. David Hill
Glenn Smith	Ray Cooper
J Sayer	Salvatore Prestianni
Janet Morris	Stephanie Chew
Jody Prime	Stephen Harber
Judy Gauci	Trudy Chick

Donations are tax deductible!

Through the National Trust, donations to the Foundation are deposited in a special account and assigned specifically to projects that enhance the Bibbulmun Track's environmental sustainability. The National Trust provides this service for free so you can be sure that 100% of your donation will go to Track projects.

Tax deductible donations can be made online, in person by cash or credit card, or by cheque which can be made out to the Bibbulmun Track Foundation with your name and address. 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, regardless of the amount, are gratefully received and all help to preserve our beautiful Bibbulmun Track.

Season's Greetings

The office will be closed from:

12noon Thurs 14th December
until
10am Mon 22nd January 2024



YOUR Letters

Dear Linda

A note to highlight the effectiveness of recent work on the Track around Boat Harbour.

As one part of 25th Anniversary Walk, I recently joined others on the Peaceful Bay to Denmark section of the Track and experienced first-hand the exceptional work which has been completed by our Support Volunteers in partnership with DBCA Frankland District staff.

In particular, the construction and/or reconstruction of timber steps and stabilisation on the steeper sand hills is of a high standard and of great assistance. I last walked the Peaceful Bay section in 2014 and recall well the difficulty in negotiating some of the steeper hills and the erosion which was quite significant in some areas.

Given its comparatively remote aspect, it is appropriate to highlight the logistics/organisational effort required to successfully complete this type of construction. For example, I understand there is need in certain circumstances, to co-ordinate helicopter lifts for the heavier materials, apart from the effort required in getting people on site with the right tools and other resources.

The results are clearly there for all Track walkers to see and use and this work will no doubt positively enhance the overall Track experience.

Sincere appreciation to all those involved!

B Manning
BTF member

"The Perth Magistrates Court (PMC) embarked on an exhilarating journey through the Bibbulmun Track Virtual Hike Challenge, featuring 14 enthusiastic teams vying for the coveted top position!"

This spirited competition sparked an unprecedented surge of activity within the courthouse stairwells as participants eagerly climbed stairs instead of taking the lift, in the hopes of climbing the leaderboard ranks.

For the dedicated staff at the PMC, keeping an eye on the Big Team Challenge leaderboards became an engrossing, borderline obsessive hourly ritual.

Many employees integrated 'lunchtime walks' into their daily routines, a rewarding habit that has persevered past the challenge for many, exemplifying the positive outcomes this challenge has brought to the organisation and its staff.

The triumphant team, 'The Bibbulmen,' attested that while the competition was fierce, it fostered a remarkable sense of camaraderie among their own members and even with their rivals. Late-night messages exchanged among teammates and competitors often playfully boasted about the day's step count achievements.

In summary, the Bibbulmun Track Virtual Hike Challenge proved to be an extraordinary triumph at the PMC. Anticipation is already building for next year's competition, as everyone eagerly awaits another exhilarating journey."

Vidiyan Ravindran | A/ Manager, Judicial Support
Perth Magistrates Court



The Bibbulmen topped the leaderboard out of the 14 teams from Perth Magistrates Court.

**We can set up the
Bibbulmun Track Virtual
Hike Challenge for your
own organisation!**

Contact Justin at
marketing@bibbulmuntrack.org.au
for details.

Walker Story - Barry the Shearer

BTF members and Maintenance Volunteers Ken and Carol Brownlie were on the Track when they encountered another, interesting walker. Now most walkers are organised folk who eat, drink and live healthily and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the bush—and some aren't! Read on...

May 2002. My wife and I were on our fifth and last full day of a trek on the Track and had reached Yabberup shelter, south of Collie, early in the afternoon, expecting to be alone for the night.

Around tea time we were sitting on the front walls of the shelter, facing each other, with Carol looking back towards

Collie, when her eyes widened and she hissed, "someone's coming".

A short, stocky guy in a black singlet, footy shorts and runners appeared. He wore a sports bag like a backpack, with his arms through the handles, and carried a bulging plastic supermarket bag in each hand.



Ken and Carol Brownlie on the Track.

He slumped down on the vacant sleeping platform, poured himself a generous mug of port from a cardboard cask, turned on his transistor radio, lit a cigarette and declared "You don't mind, do you?"

It turned out Barry was an itinerant shearer who had been off work for some time after a ram had injured his knee and he'd decided to get fit again by walking some of the Track. This was his first night out.

"Gee, these sleeping bag things are great," he enthused. "Do you know about them?" More port and a tin of spam were his dinner. We offered some dried beans, excess to us because we were to be taken home by a friend the next day from the Mumballup Tavern, some twelve kilometres further on.

Barry's eyes lit up. "Tavern?" he said happily. "I'd better get down there and phone me Mum tomorrow 'cos that's Mother's Day."

It was no real surprise that Barry was still snoring the next morning when we left.

Ken Brownlie

PHOTO COMPETITION WINNER

This photo of office volunteer, and Bibb News editor, Jim Baker helping with the office move inspired many entries including:

"Walking the Bibb was easier than using this trolley"

Jon Bentley

"I knew I shouldn't have stayed up all night finishing the article for the Bibbulmun News!"

Jane Greenwood

"Seriously!.....we're not taking that are we?"

Stephen Anstee

"Without Jim's backpack on, he has run out of his lithium power!"

Maria Binks

"I've done this so often now I can do it in my sleep."

Ce Kealley

And the winner (as judged by our office volunteers) is...!

"I am not asleep on the job!!!! It is just a long blink!"

Mar Knox

Well done Mar... a prize is in the post!



Before you go...

CHECK THE LATEST TRACK CONDITIONS

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 Section by Section guide on www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au or contact the appropriate Parks and Wildlife Services District (see contact details opposite).

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. Diversions are usually marked with Waugal trail markers attached to yellow metal posts. If you encounter these when walking, follow these temporary markers, not your map. The diversion will eventually return you to the main trail.

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

Parks and Wildlife 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 dependent on appropriate weather conditions and for this reason dates of burns are not available in advance. For information regarding prescribed burns, please contact the District offices.

Groups on the Track

Groups of walkers with eight or more members that are staying overnight on the Track are requested to complete a Group Notification online at www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au/trip-planner/notice-of-intent-for-groups.

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 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.

LEAVE NO TRACE TIP: MINIMISE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

A reminder during summer (generally December to April) all campfires are prohibited.

Campfires are never allowed at the Yourdamung and Blackwood Campsites or any campsites south of Pingerup Road as these are in high fire risk areas.

If you must have a fire during the cooler months...

- Light only in fireplace provided.
- Make sure your fire is completely out before leaving.
- Use only dead fallen wood.
- Extinguish embers with soil
- Never leave a fire unattended.

Parks and Wildlife Contacts:

Recreation and Trails Unit

recreationandtrails@dbca.wa.gov.au
Ph: (08) 9219 8265

District Offices

Perth Hills District (Mundaring and Dwellingup)

Perth Hills District (Mundaring and Dwellingup)
Kalamunda to the Harvey-Quindanning Road
Map 1 & 2 and Guidebooks 1 & 2
Contact Rebecca Hamilton on (08) 9290 6100 or mundaring@dbca.wa.gov.au

Wellington District (Collie)

The Harvey-Quindanning Road to Mumballup
(Donnybrook-Boyup Brook Rd)
Map 3 and Guidebook 3
Contact Nick Evans on (08) 9735 1988 or wellington@dbca.wa.gov.au

Blackwood District (Balingup)

Blackwood District (Balingup)
Mumballup (Donnybrook-Boyup Brook Rd) to Willow Springs
(Gold Gully Rd)
Map 4 and Guidebook 4
Contact Crystelle Evangelista on (08) 9731 6232 or blackwood@dbca.wa.gov.au

Donnelly District (Pemberton and Northcliffe)

Willow Springs (Gold Gully Rd) to Pingerup Rd
Map 5 and Guidebook 5
Contact John McKenzie on (08) 9776 1207 or donnelyd@dbca.wa.gov.au

Frankland District (Walpole)

Pingerup Rd to Denmark River mouth
Map 6, 7 and 8 and Guidebooks 6, 7 and 8
Contact Christie Bentink on (08) 9840 0400 or frankland.district@dbca.wa.gov.au

Albany District (Denmark and Albany)

Denmark River mouth to Albany
Map 8 and Guidebook 8
Contact Luke Coney on (08) 9842 4500 or albany@dbca.wa.gov.au





Stephen King

TRAILS COORDINATOR, RECREATION AND TRAILS UNIT

TEL: (08) 9219 8265

EMAIL: RECREATIONANDTRAILS@DBCA.WA.GOV.AU



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Recreation & Trails UNIT

Dear Readers,

It was wonderful to be part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations and witness the collective enthusiasm and interest in the Bibbulmun Track. The work of the Foundation, including numerous volunteers, in arranging and supporting the various celebration events was impressive and to be commended. The celebrations certainly helped lift the profile and awareness of the Bibbulmun Track, and that will no doubt have positive outcomes for the Track into the future. Meanwhile, we have been forging ahead with a steady program of improvements to the Track.

Good progress has been made on a major realignment of the track between Dookanelly and Possum Springs Campsites, south of Dwellingup. The realignment involves approximately 14km of new trail construction, and about half has been constructed to date. A group of dedicated Support Volunteers undertook a trail construction campaign in August, and trail building contractor Loztrails constructed two sections. The intent is to implement the southern half of the realignment toward the end of 2023, following completion of the spring burning program. Work will commence on the northern half in 2024. When completed the realignment will represent a significant improvement to this section of the Track, avoiding a section that is prone to flooding and taking it off vehicle tracks. The new alignment passes through scenic and varied forest, including some patches recognised as old growth forest.

Several smaller scale realignments are in various stages of planning, including proposals near Mt Cooke, Mt Dale, and the crossing of Albany Highway. Further campsite upgrades are also in the pipeline, to be rolled out as resources allow. An upgrade of the toilet at Yourdamung Campsite is the next priority.

The link trail connecting Chadoora and Swamp Oak Campsites near Dwellingup has been completed and is now open. The trail has been named Nyingarn Bidi (Echidna Trail/Path) and is marked using the Waugal symbol on a tangerine

background. Combined with the existing Bibbulmun Track, it creates a three-day hiking loop that will no doubt be very popular, particularly as an introduction to multi-day hiking. An A4 brochure has been produced for the trail, to be inserted into Bibbulmun Track map #2 and offered as a free brochure until the map is updated to include the Nyingarn Bidi.

As part of the project upgrades were completed at Chadoora and Swamp Oak Campsites, including second water tanks and new roof plumbing, additional tent sites at Chadoora and relocation and upgrade of the toilet at Swamp Oak.

As we move into summer it's timely to remind hikers of the dangers associated with exposure to the heat, and the very serious danger posed by bushfires. Our standing advice is to avoid any extended walks on the track from December through to March, regardless of the short-term weather forecast. If planning a day walk, check the forecast and do not go out if the forecast fire danger rating is extreme or catastrophic. You should also check the Park Alerts and Emergency WA websites to check for any warnings or closures in the area you plan to visit. It is also critical to abide by any trail closures or diversions that you come across, regardless of whether you see any indications of fire activity. Further details and advice can be found on the Health, Hygiene and Safety page on the Bibbulmun Track Foundation website.

As always, I'd like to thank and congratulate the Foundation's staff and volunteers on another very active and productive period. Of note were another week-long campaign on the south coast in October, working on track stabilisation and erosion control, and the trail construction campaign for the realignment south of Dwellingup. Keep up the great work!

Stephen King
Trails Coordinator

Walk the Nyingarn Bidi



The Nyingarn Bidi is a trail that links to the Bibbulmun Track to provide a three-day, two-night loop walk that starts and finishes in Dwellingup. Nyingarn is the Noongar word for echidna and Bidi means path or trail.

Walking the loop

Commencing in Dwellingup, walkers can undertake this Class 4 loop in either direction covering a total of 49.5km. This walk connects the Bibbulmun Track Chadoora Campsite with the Swamp Oak Campsite, providing a three-day, two-night loop walk.

Follow the Waugal

The Bibbulmun Track is one of the world's great long-distance walks stretching 1000km from the outskirts of Perth to the historic town of Albany on the south coast. The track is signposted with yellow triangular markers symbolising the Waugal, the rainbow serpent of the Noongar Dreaming. The Nyingarn Bidi also uses the Bibbulmun Track Waugal symbol but in a rich tangerine colour.



Pick up a brochure for the trail from the Bibbulmun Track Foundation or Dwellingup Visitor Centre.

**Walk the Nyingarn Bidi at
Easter with us! – see our
Calendar of Events online**

Eyes on the GROUND

With the summer months fast approaching, maintenance efforts are starting to ebb.

I'd like to offer my personal thanks to all volunteers for their outstanding effort over the last 6-8 months, preparing the Track for our 25th Anniversary walkers. As I've been working along the Track in recent months, I've been continually approached by walkers saying they have never seen it looking so good.

The Donnelly Field Day was held in September with 13 volunteers descending on Tom Road Campsite. In addition to the normal tasks around the shelter, a new step and retaining wall was constructed to minimize the risk of slipping in front of the shelter. One team member also decided to fashion a seat on the step next to the firepit! A small team also broke off to assist John McKenzie (DBCA District Parks and Visitor Services Operations Officer) repair some nearby bridges.

The Support Volunteers have also been busy, with works on a major realignment south of Dookanelly Campsite which will open in 2024, construction of the new Nyingarn Bidi Trail for DBCA creating a 3-day loop trail connecting Dwellingup, and the Swamp Oak and Chadoora Campsites, plus track re-marking following prescribed burns at Mt Cooke and Ball Creek.

They also carried out a major erosion-control campaign in Frankland district in October, repaired wind fences near Parry Beach, built a canoe ramp on the east side of Irwin Inlet and inspected earlier control measures built at Conspicuous Cliffs.



Andrew Chiswell



Volunteers constructing the new step at Tom Road Campsite.

Day 1: 30 degrees of stairs!

Working in the open coastal scrub with temperatures hitting 30 degrees, the team embarked on completing a final section of steps south of Boat Harbour, near the sand blow section where the Support Volunteers were working. The team quickly settled into a rhythm, meticulously building each tread up the slope, while my role was to collect trackpad from the cache nearby in the bush – largely because it housed a 50cm dugite and they obviously thought I was expendable.



The Binalup Rangers constructing the new stairs.

Continuing Collaboration with Binalup Rangers

During the recent Frankland Campaign by Support Volunteers, we were pleased to gain the assistance of members of the Binalup Rangers over the four days of the campaign. I joined Shawn, Errol, Bryan, Steven and Jason each day, completing a range of maintenance tasks along the south coast.

Steve, Kerry & Macca working on bridge repairs.



Volunteers gathered for the Donnelly Field Day.





Installing track pad.

Day 2: Last steps!

The Rangers returned to complete the final two steps, quickly knocking these off allowing us to assist the Support Volunteers repairing the wind fences nearby. They assisted in fixing new lengths of coir mesh to the fences.

Following a quick bite to eat, and with formal tasks complete on the section, the team agreed to assist with walking our equipment out to the cars, allowing us to carry everything out in a single trip.



The Binalup Rangers sitting on the new steps (from Left Front: Bryan, Jason, Steven & Errol. Absent: Shawn)

Repairing the wind fences.



Day 3: Erosion Control at Mutton Bird

Wednesday saw us break away from the other volunteers, targeting the repair of waterbars between Muttonbird carpark and the rifle range. While the mosquitoes were particularly troublesome within the peppermint trees, the team attacked the waterbars marked for remediation, ensuring they will function much more efficiently in future.

Day 4: More Waterbars...are we there yet?

Deciding the Rangers enjoyed the previous day, I decided to schedule another day of waterbar repair, this time between Sandpatch Beach carpark and Sandpatch Campsite. Starting with a team of four, we managed to get halfway to the campsite by 10:30am when Errol and Jason had to leave. Not sure about how far we had left, Bryan, Steven and I walked through to the campsite to quantify the number of waterbars remaining. That was a mistake as it quickly dawned on us that a significant number of waterbars were still to be completed.

To their credit, Bryan and Steven attacked the remaining waterbars with vigour, finally finishing the section around 2.00pm.

Andrew Chiswell
Maintenance Manager

NewmontTM

The Eyes on the Ground maintenance program is generously supported by our premier partner, Newmont Boddington Gold.

The Binalup Rangers hard at work repairing a waterbar.



Rangers repair a waterbar.



Waterbars restored.

Steven and Bryan enjoying a well-earned rest.



25th Anniversary Highlights



Steve Sertis led the parade to the Northern Terminus.
Photo: Justin Macatangay



Amazing views from White Horse Hills. What a day! So lucky with the weather. Photo: Steve Sertis



End-to-end walkers with sectional and day walkers at Holyoake Townsite before arriving in Dwellingup, the first Track town on the journey. Photo: Justin Macatangay



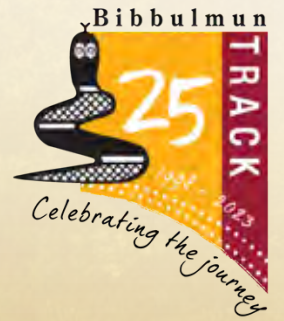
Team Dee Mac's Pack finished the Bibbulmun Track Virtual Hike Challenge in 12.5 days.
Photo: Paul McNammara



Half-way party at Donnelly River Village.
Photo: Linda Daniels

Left: Scott from Daddy Dallyn was one of the many Trail Angels who popped up along the way during the walk.
Photo: Steve Sertis.

14th July to 13th September 2023



Primary School students and Medieval Knights welcomed our end-to-end walkers in Balingup. Photo: Michelle Wilson



Spring wildflowers bloomed as we walked toward Walpole. Photo: Naomi Flanna



Morning yoga and sunrise at Warren Campsite. Photo: Steve Sertis



Last sunrise on the Track. Photo: Steve Sertis



North Albany Senior High School students joined our end-to-end walkers for the last 12.5 km into Albany. Photo: Justin Macatangay



The elated end-to-enders at the Southern Terminus in Albany. Photo: Justin Macatangay

Yes, they did it!

Note: To see full comments from each individual - visit the End-to-Enders Gallery on our website under News.

Not surprisingly the Track was popular during the wildflower season!

All these End-to-Enders completed their remarkable journey walking along stretches of the Track which seemed like flower arrangements in someone's private garden. The Noongar season of Birak seems to have arrived early this year with dry and warm weather already upon us - many days out on the Track would have been uncomfortably hot in the last few weeks.

Now the walking season has come to an end and the wait for cooler weather has begun - see you all out on the Track next year.

General Comments

It's a pilgrimage into the heart of nature, where the rhythm of each step mirrors the pulse of life itself. In the wilderness, one is reminded of that child within a man, the innocence and wonder often buried beneath the demands of modern life. Here, among towering trees (Jarrahs, Marris, Karris, Tingles, etc.), and winding trails, we find the freedom, getting rid of the constraints of our daily routines.

Bruno Benaise, Roleystone WA

An amazing experience, every day on the track was a privilege I will always be grateful for. Thanks to the Bibbulmun Track Foundation and Volunteers for all the work they do. I met some amazing people from all around Australia and the world - all were in awe of the track facilities, ease and infrastructure.

Jen, Attadale WA

So glad we did it, after 25 years of our dream of walking the Bibbulmun Track becoming a reality.

Gaye, Yanchep WA

Beautifully maintained track with clear signage. Wonderful diversity of landscapes and flora. Loved all my interactions with fellow hikers. Glorious autumn weather most of the time.

Ursula, Wembley Downs WA

WA can be very proud of this one - so much more than a line drawn on a map! I was impressed with the vision and the audacity needed to get such a project off the ground,

as well as the commitment and constant effort required to maintain and upgrade a track of this length. A huge thanks to everyone who has played a part in making the Bibb a reality and a continuing success.

Ben, Cowwarr VIC

Food Supplies

We prepared most of our own food, did our own food drops on the drive to Albany. We topped up with fresh food in the track towns!

Jessica, Halls Gap VIC

Highly recommend dehydrating your own food and using cold soak for lunches. Towns are great for restocking, especially fresh fruit.

Trudie, Narrogin WA

We had no food drops and did all our resupply from the track towns. Had no problem getting everything we needed.

Lorraine, Palmwoods QLD

If you are used to standard long-distance hiking fare, resupplying in towns is easy with the added benefit of improving the local economies and hence the experience for future hikers!

Jon, Randwick NSW

Favourite Section

Hard to split the difference between Balingup to Donnelly River Village and Walpole to Denmark. The magnificent towering trees and the coastal views were spectacular.

Ryan, Halls Gap VIC

Probably Dwellingup to Kalamunda. Varied scenery most days, nicely spaced shelters, and some parts that felt very remote.

Cosmo, Sydney NSW

Northcliffe to Walpole. I was dreading wading across the Pingerup Plains but easily my favourite section - isolated and very beautiful (and mostly flat).

Lachlann, Watson ACT

Highlights

The harder elements of the trail will form lasting memories for me, particularly crossing the flooded plains and wading the inlets. Seeing the coast for the first time, including sightings of whales and dolphins, was fantastic. Meeting different folks with different walks of life.

Ryan, Halls Gap VIC

Eating lunch on a fallen log near Mt Wells and being circled by a trio of curious emus. Sharing a campfire at Beraking with a northbound end to ender and maintenance volunteers who fed us chocolate, marshmallows and wine! Being in awe of the power of nature while walking through strong winds, relentless rain, hail and sand on the coast.

Jen, Attadale WA

Part of the track I completed solo. My husband joined me for the first third and final third of the track. The middle section from Collie to Northcliffe, I completed solo, and I am very proud of myself doing this. I love hiking with him the best, but it was an achievement for me to know that I could do it on my own.

Southern Ocean fronts, enormous winds, being blown around like a drunken woman, crashing waves, inundated beaches, uncrossable inlets, sideways rain, hail, thunder and lightning and a cozy hut at days end that didn't quiver at all in the ferocious weather. The lovely, varied terrain such as The Pingerup Plains, the coastal sections and the Tingle tree forest. It was stunning all the way.

Kathy, Albany WA

Personal Reactions

"There's the hut"!!!

Antonija, Buderim QLD

Sitting on the platform at Sandpatch, watching the sunset with my track family (Jase, Leah and Bart) - I seriously contemplated the logistics of turning around and walking back. The Simplicity is what I miss most.

Jen, Attadale WA

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. This is particularly popular with our interstate and international visitors.

**Our CONGRATULATIONS to the following 82 walkers
on completing an end-to-end, 48 from WA, 27 from interstate
and 7 from other countries.**

77 people completed a continuous end-to-end and 5 a sectional.



Name	Track Name	Age	Started	Ended	DOT	Direction	From
Lachlann Paterson		59	5/06/2023	29/07/2023	51	N-S	Watson, ACT
Susanne Holste	<i>Sunrise</i>	58	13/04/2023	13/06/2023	51	N-S	List, Germany
Gustav Erlank			13/04/2023	13/06/2023	51	N-S	List, Germany
Stefan Luplow	<i>Lupi</i>	34	12/08/2023	9/10/2023	54	N-S	Bavaria, Germany
Kandace Tang	<i>Kandase (Mouse)</i>	29	7/08/2023	21/09/2023	41	N-S	Lantau, HONG KONG
Cosmo Petrich		37	1/06/2023	8/07/2023	37	S-N	Sydney, NSW
Kim McIlveen	<i>Rainbow Dave</i>	DNP	31/03/2023	24/05/2023	50	S-N	Macksville, NSW
Josh Wise	<i>Wise Cracks</i>	48	27/02/2023	17/04/2023	42	S-N	Gunnedah, NSW
John Colby	<i>John C</i>	78	20/04/2023	21/06/2023	58	S-N	Banora Point, NSW
Ruby Cornish		31	17/04/2023	27/05/2023	40	S-N	Earlwood, NSW
Karen Buckner		55	1/08/2022	27/08/2023	48	N-S	Dudley Park, NSW
Phillip Buckner		71	1/08/2022	27/08/2023	48	N-S	Dudley Park, NSW
Jon Page	<i>Gone Boy</i>	30	10/08/2023	17/09/2023	38	N-S	Randwick, NSW
Tracey Monro	<i>TIL</i>	61	14/07/2023	27/09/2023	68	N-S	Orange East, NSW
Laura Waddell		23	30/08/2023	3/10/2023	35	N-S	Woodburn, NSW
Jessica Bradley		31	24/05/2023	9/07/2023	41	N-S	Girards Hill, NWS
Neil McKellar		DNP	24/08/2022	3/10/2022	44	N-S	Auckland, NZ
Elizabeth Bridges		68	25/05/2023	22/07/2023	53	N-S	Wellington, NZ
Amanda Douglas		52	15/04/2023	14/06/2023	52	N-S	Northland, NZ
Mark Anderson		61	21/05/2023	30/06/2023	39	S-N	Buderim, QLD
Antonija Anderson		58	21/05/2023	30/06/2023	39	S-N	Buderim, QLD
Lorraine Horn	<i>2 birds walking</i>	58	29/03/2023	13/05/2023	42	S-N	Palmwoods, QLD
Colin Konemann	<i>Motley1</i>	68	21/05/2023	14/07/2023	48	S-N	Sippy Downs, QLD
Kelly de Soyres			30/09/2022	20/11/2022	41	S-N	Buderim, QLD
Mark Jeffries		32	26/08/2023	26/09/2023	32	N-S	Wynn Vale, SA
Jillian Miller		DNP	5/09/2022	30/10/2022	51	N-S	Hobart, TAS
Jon Bentley	<i>Canoe</i>	50	19/07/2023	6/09/2023	47	S-N	Rosetta, TAS
Stephen Anstee		53	30/08/2023	27/10/2023	52	N-S	Hobart, TAS
Heidi Krajewsky		46	30/08/2023	27/10/2023	52	N-S	Hobart, TAS
Ryan Siaci		37	24/05/2023	9/07/2023	41	N-S	Halls Gap, VIC
Jacinta Gibson			1/05/2022	9/06/2022	39	S-N	Montrose, VIC
Ben Trevorrow		46	4/08/2023	24/08/2023	20	N-S	Cowwarr, VIC
Lisa Leung		42	12/07/2023	30/08/2023	49	N-S	North Fitzroy, VIC
Trudie Dwyer		47	1/04/2023	3/06/2023	56	S-N	Narrogin, WA
Jen Winterbottom		NFP	3/05/2023	1/07/2023	54	N-S	Attadale, WA
Lewis Winter		DNP	22/08/2022	21/05/2023	49	S-N	Bunbury, WA
Susan Woodbridge		48	5/05/2023	2/07/2023	52	S-N	Dalyellup, WA
Olivia Swan		27	1/10/2022	12/11/2022	42	N-S	Witchcliffe, WA
Kathy Pangler	<i>Kpang</i>	53	20/05/2023	21/07/2023	51	N-S	Albany, WA
Timothy Pilbeam		18	17/06/2023	13/07/2023	27	N-S	Eaton, WA
John Schultz		59	29/05/2022	29/07/2022	54	N-S	Kingsley, WA
Bronwyn Schultz			29/05/2022	29/07/2022	54	N-S	Kingsley, WA
Richard Affleck		73	1/09/2019	28/05/2023		N-S	Bayswater, WA
Marian Affleck		70	1/09/2019	28/05/2023		N-S	Bayswater, WA
Sean Goodridge			1/04/2023	17/05/2023	46	S-N	Waroona, WA
Pamela Thonell		53	15/04/2023	3/06/2023	49	S-N	Roleystone, WA
Lauren Armitage	<i>Sea Monster</i>	43	4/06/2023	28/07/2023	51	S-N	Kensington, WA

Yes, they did it! (cont'd)

Name	Track Name	Age	Started	Ended	DOT	Direction	From
Gay Verhoogt		71	2/06/2023	5/08/2023	54	S-N	Yanchep, WA
Mike Verhoogt		69	2/06/2023	5/08/2023	54	S-N	Yanchep, WA
Richard Affleck		73	1/09/2019	28/05/2023	44	N-S	Bayswater, WA
Marian Affleck		70	1/09/2019	28/05/2023	44	N-S	Bayswater, WA
Krystal Shinnars		37	24/08/2021	22/09/2021	29	N-S	Mundijong, WA
Ursula Kretzer		57	10/04/2023	8/06/2023	52	N-S	Wembley Downs, WA
Kaye Lancaster		45	19/03/2023	16/09/2023	65	Sectional	Wilson, WA
Mike Lancaster		51	19/03/2023	16/09/2023	65	Sectional	Wilson, WA
Clive Smith		58	14/04/2019	1/09/2023	47	N-S	Ballajura, WA
Ben Veale		41	9/07/1905	11/07/1905		Sectional	Bayswater, WA
Tammy Goodridge		50	1/04/2023	17/05/2023	46	S-N	Waroona, WA
Andrew MacGregor	<i>Nyami Nyami</i>	51	26/07/2023	13/09/2023	44	N-S	Currambine, WA
Debbie Pickering		58	24/08/2020	9/11/2020	55	N-S	Safety Bay, WA
Clive Pickering		63	24/08/2020	9/11/2020	55	N-S	Safety Bay, WA
Cathy Wallace		62	26/10/2003	23/10/2021	55	N-S	City Beach, WA
Stewart Carter	<i>Aussie-Stew</i>	52	14/07/2023	13/09/2023	54	N-S	South Yunderup, WA
Naomi Hanna	<i>Sweet Gnomes</i>	48	14/07/2023	13/09/2023	54	N-S	Yokine, WA
Annie Smith	<i>annielovesadventures</i>	56	14/07/2023	13/09/2023	54	N-S	Esperance, WA
Steve Sertis	<i>Pseudo Solo Steve</i>	52	14/07/2023	13/09/2023	54	N-S	Hilton, WA
Kim Holmes	<i>Gator Girl</i>	57	29/09/2020	26/09/2023	54	Sectional	Chidlow, WA
Mike Filer		41	9/05/2020	2/10/2023	51	Sectional	South Perth, WA
Terry Koziniec	<i>BIT</i>	57	14/07/2023	13/09/2023	54	N-S	Spearwood, WA
Karen Gurry	<i>Kalgirlie</i>	60	14/07/2023	13/09/2023	54	N-S	Kalgoorlie, WA
Steve Clark			14/07/2023	13/09/2023	54	N-S	Hilton, WA
Andrea Heiartz		63	25/09/2021	10/10/2023	53	N-S	Australind, WA
Abigail Marsh		24	18/02/2023	6/04/2023	44	S-N	Mt Barker, WA
Susan Kuhl		62	6/08/2023	7/10/2023	58	N-S	North Beach, WA
Helen Clifton	<i>Wildflower Wanderers</i>	72	19/07/2023	21/09/2023	57	N-S	Shenton Park, WA
John Vos	<i>Jim and John</i>	66	29/10/2019	18/10/2023	58	S-N	Connolly, WA
Benjamin Lechat		24	6/09/2023	25/10/2023	39	N-S	East Fremantle, WA
Bruno Benaise		58	5/09/2023	19/10/2023	43	S-N	Roleystone, WA
Ivaylo Todorov		51	7/08/2023	19/10/2023	49	N-S	High Wycombe, WA
Tracy O'Brien		57	2/09/2023	27/10/2023	54	N-S	Warrenup, WA

Loved the solitude, peace and quiet. Tried to engage with nature by not listening to audio.

Ursula, Wembley Downs WA

Loved being outside for weeks. Amazed at all the experiences you can fit into a day when walking. The shelters began to feel like home every night. They saved us from many a storm.

Karen, Dudley NSW

Amazed at how far you can push yourself. how you start with self-doubt and finish with confidence. How that self-confidence spreads out into other aspects of your life

Tammy, Waroona WA



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Wildlife

Beautiful spiders / webs and sleepy tiger snakes. Red tailed black cockatoos and feral pigs.

Susan, Dalyellup WA

No ticks and only one live snake (a python). Got charged by an emu and the pigs I surprised, they ran one way, and I ran the other.

Lachlann, Watson ACT

That big kangaroo (boomer) that stood between me and the toilet at 2:00AM and looked me in the eye.

Terry, Spearwood WA

Comparison with other walks

Spectacular walk in our own backyard. Fantastic facilities - always loved to see the hut at the end of each day. Shelters, water and toilets were great. Have hiked in Nepal and NZ and both were quite different to Bibbulmun Track. Best thing of course, is that it is free for all. Volunteers, BTF and DBCA workers do such a great job maintaining the track. A truly wonderful hike.

Kathy, Albany WA

The walks I have done in Canada, New Zealand and Tasmania were all very scenic. The Bibb had a lot more variety (it is the longest walk I have done).

Lachlann, Watson ACT

More varied. Very well signposted. The shelters are excellent. Well done WA and volunteers.

Karen, Dudley NSW

I recently walked Hadrian's Wall Walk which is quite different and also a week on the Heysen Trail in SA and there is no doubt that the Bibbulmun offers so much more in huts, quality of trail and directional markings.

Cathy, City Beach WA

Best Equipment

My Topo trail runners! Light weight, comfortable and quick drying! My \$10 pink plastic rain poncho purchased from a visitor center.

Jessica, Halls Gap VIC

Merino clothing - anti-microbial - used day after day and no smell.

Krystal, Mundijong WA

The best hiking hack from fellow hiker Karen, is a reflective windscreen mat under my sleep pad. This not only insulated, but also kept my mat dry and safe from sharp sticks and stones so no punctures! Love it!

Annie, Esperance WA

Would have to be my buff, so many uses. Eye mask, sweat band, kept the head warm, filtered water when needed and a wash cloth.

Tracey O'Brien, Warrenup WA

Worst Equipment

My noisy mattress

Sean, Waroona WA

Water bladder, which I didn't use once.

Ruby, Earkwood NSW

Solar charger - hardly saw the sun!

Amanda, Kerikeri NZ

My Feet, but due to my own neglect.

Mark, Wynn Vale SA

The toothbrush I cut in half to save weight. (Ed: Did he take the wrong half?)

Ben, Cowwarr VIC

Advice for others

Hike your own hike, take time to stop and appreciate your surroundings, stop and hug a tree, keep a journal, take the photos, enjoy every moment!

Jon, Randwick NSW

The happiest people I met on track were warm, well fed and doing comfortable distances for their fitness and pack weight. A little bit of research, planning and testing will make it easier to just enjoy the journey. Everyone walks the same track but we each have a different journey and experience of it - one person's worst day on the track might actually be your best.

Jon, Attadale WA

Don't carry "Just in case" items.

John, Banora Point NSW

Prepare well. Test your gear. Test your body. Test your menu. Plan your route and stick to the schedule. Plan rest days and rest on rest days. Do not rush this special experience - enjoy the journey, savor the bush, embrace the weather and eat well.

Helen, Shenton Park WA

Do you have a passion or expertise to share?

We're expanding our event offerings and are eager to find volunteers to share their expertise and passion with others. Whether you're skilled in natural sciences, nutrition, fitness, photography or playing a musical instrument - we'd love to hear from you!

Our events range from scenic hikes to off-Track seminars and workshops and are usually held after hours or on weekends depending on the topic and age range of the participants. From young children to seniors, newbies to experienced hikers our events are designed to appeal to a wide audience. BTF volunteer guides and/or staff will lead the event.

Interested?

Email Steve at events@bibbulmuntrack.org.au to find out more and become part of our exciting events program for 2024.

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Jarra Forest Lodge	DWELLINGUP		0491 276 028	forestdiscoverycentre.com.au
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Inspiration Outdoors	(08) 6219 5164	inspirationoutdoors.com.au
Off The Beaten Track	0417 128 896	offthebeatenttrackwa.com.au
Simply Trekking	0427 058 866	simplytrekking.com.au
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Caring for a Treasure The Early Days of the Bibbulmun Track Volunteer Maintenance Program

Annie Keating joined the **Building a Better Bibbulmun Track project** in 1996 as Special Projects Coordinator. Through 1997-8, she worked within the Parks and Visitor Services (PVS) division of the Department of Conservation and Land management (CALM) as the Bibbulmun Track Project Officer. After the new Track opened, she was the Bibbulmun Track Coordinator within PVS until 2003.

These are her recollections:

An integral component of building a better Bibbulmun Track was the key role the community would play in making the new Track successful and sustainable into the future. Everyone in the project believed that a strong sense of ownership of the Track by walkers and communities along the way would grow naturally, given sufficient support. Jesse Brampton, the Project Co-ordinator, had been inspired by the Appalachian Trail in the USA, which had proved to him that when walkers and communities "own" their trail they will want to maintain it.

Jesse's enthusiasm and passion for the Track ignited a groundswell of support; he built connections within the media that were crucial to inspiring a much larger audience, at a time when the internet was in its infancy and social media didn't exist. By 1996 we had a small but rapidly expanding base of people eager to get out and maintain the future Bibbulmun Track.

We shamelessly harvested contact details of anyone who showed any interest in the Track. No source of support was left untapped—local Government and Tourism, outdoor equipment suppliers, MPs, service clubs, the media, contacts in other government departments.

As early as 1995, when the first 70km and three campsites opened, there were already a few dozen early adopters, among them the Federation of WA Bushwalking Clubs, the Perth Bushwalkers, and of course our own indefatigable Mad Axeman, Jim Freeman. Our list of interested people grew to over 500 after the northern half of the Track opened in August 1997 and more than doubled the following year.

It was no accident that the establishment of the Friends of the Bibbulmun Track, now the Bibbulmun Track Foundation (BTF) and the volunteer maintenance program went hand in hand. Jesse became Executive Officer of the Friends in mid-1997; there was a free flow of information between the Friends' office in Hay Street and the Project office at CALM.

We were a collective endeavour that changed over the years, but which always had one aim—the flourishing of the Bibbulmun Track and its community. As well as Jesse at the Friends the group included Raelene Hick and myself at Project office, the original volunteers, and CALM District officers Jamie Ridley in Mundaring, Mark Humble in Dwellingup, Peter Morris in Collie and Dave Lathwell in Kirup. We started off with a basic plan, lots of ideas, great goodwill and no budget to speak of. We had a lot to do!



Helen Grimm

Jamie Ridley got the maintenance ball rolling. In 1997, via an ad in the Bibbulmun Newsletter, he called for volunteers to look after the Trailhead in Kalamunda. The Plunketts and the Jowetts offered and so became the first new Bibbulmun Track Maintenance Volunteers.

Late that year we identified maintenance sections for the northern half of the Track. Bringing all the required information together was not straightforward in the age before smart devices and GPSs in vehicles and on phones. My knowledge of GIS systems and IT background was useful in dealing with the data supplied by Mark Laming in CALM's excellent mapping and GIS section.

In early 1998, we launched the volunteer maintenance program in the northern half. Using the ever-growing supporters list the Friends reached out for volunteers willing to adopt a section, priority being given to members of the Friends. Some CALM District people had misgivings about volunteers driving and working in remote and dieback risk areas. They agreed, however, that without a massive effort from outside the Department the new Track would quickly fall into disrepair.

One hot Sunday in February 1998, a small group of new volunteers gathered at the Hills Forest Discovery Centre. Here's Gwen Plunkett's account:

"We watched a presentation about the Bibb Track. Jesse spoke about volunteers on the Appalachian Trail and how the Bibb Track maintenance programme would work. Each team was given a rake hoe and everyone filled in a Volunteer Registration Form. We had paper Track and Campsite Maintenance forms which were to be completed and sent in to FOBT with Time Sheets after each visit. We were also given a schedule of Track visits that was abandoned early on as it was unrealistic and caused great concern for some volunteers when they were unable to visit their section on the specified date."

Annie Keating carrying out some repairs at Yourdamung campsite.



The new program generated a lot of forms, involved a handful of people with a lot of ground to cover, six different offices and nearly as many aspirations and expectations as there were folk involved. Despite, or perhaps because of it not being perfect, it worked very well. The whole enterprise was driven by enthusiasm and goodwill on all sides, the dedication and energy of the volunteers, plus a big dose of love for the forests and the Bibbulmun Track.

In early 1999, Gwen Plunkett started volunteering in the Friends office and began coordinating volunteer recruitment. Most of the northern half of the Track had dedicated maintenance volunteers through steady recruitment. Track and campsite maintenance tasks and routines were established. As well as their work maintaining the Track and campsites the volunteers had an important role in being the Eyes on the Ground, reporting the conditions and problems they found. CALM (now DBCA) had the ultimate responsibility for the Track, but their job would have been impossible without monitoring by the maintenance volunteers. (Ed. Still the case!)

Maintenance sections in the southern half of the Track were decided by early 1999, but their adoption was slower than in the north, mostly due to distances from Perth and the trickier logistics of more remote locations. We hoped to recruit locals along the south coast to help to overcome these difficulties. We had strong support with this effort from CALM; Tim Foley in Manjimup, John MacKenzie in Pemberton, Howard Manning in Walpole and Martin Lloyd in Albany.

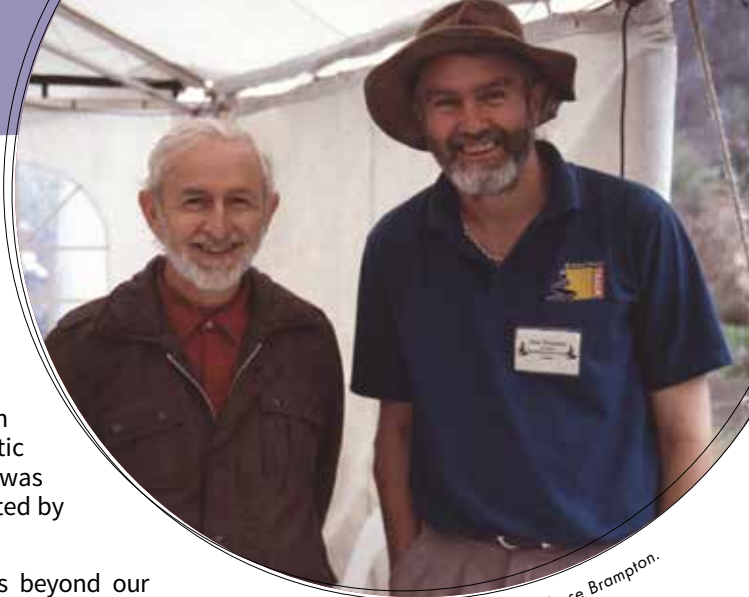
In November 1999 Gwen and I visited Frankland district with its 198km of remote beaches, forests, woodlands and wetlands. We had a meeting at the

Walpole office with Howard Manning from CALM and some of the new volunteers, followed by allocation of sections. Next day we had a training day at Giants Campsite with around 10 enthusiastic novice volunteers. This was the first training conducted by the Friends.

In the early years it was beyond our means to digitally capture the wealth of information provided by our maintenance volunteers. It was therefore imperative that there was excellent communication between CALM district officers, the volunteers and the Friends. Part of my role as Bibbulmun Track Coordinator within CALM was to facilitate this communication.

For over ten years I checked every maintenance report that came in. This enabled me, with the help of District colleagues, to respond quickly to immediate problems and to prioritise future works. The volunteers' reports were invaluable in building up a picture of where problems were developing over time and where to focus resources. Our budgets were extremely tight, and resources were very thinly spread so sadly many worthwhile and even critical improvements had to wait for years.

I got a lot of joy out of reading these volunteer reports. They painted a picture of a lively bunch of folk deriving a great deal of pleasure, solace, peace and satisfaction from their experiences—I laughed aloud reading of prickly trailside vegetation meticulously trimmed between knee and waist height by an au naturelle naturalist, male Track volunteer. Thoughtful additions of little walker comforts and modest improvements at campsites and along the Track started



Geoff Schafer and Jesse Bampton.

to appear such as Colin and Jan Read's picnic table and bench, tucked under a shady tree between Mt Dale and Brookton campsites.

The maintenance reports and volunteer registration forms were filed away by a BTF volunteer June Wishart. Luckily for me, June worked in the CALM office at Kensington. She had mobility problems and couldn't handle the steps to the first floor BTF office, but CALM had a lift – the deal maker!

Little by little, over the years, more efficient systems have been developed to administer the Maintenance Program. After 2012, when the new BTF website was launched, volunteers could submit their hours and maintenance volunteers could enter their Track or campsite maintenance reports online.

Up until early 2000 we had no formalised induction or training program for the maintenance volunteers. With the active support of our CALM district contacts, Gwen and I hatched a plan to conduct training sessions for volunteers once a year in each district, to be called Field Days. As well as the basics they covered additional topics, and training that might be quite general or relevant for a particular place at a particular time. For example, an invited guest might talk about fire or safety or weeds. Gwen, who did most of the organisation for the Field Days, recalls that, "Over time we changed the program to include physical projects, rather than just talking, which was more enjoyable and useful".

Now, more than 25 years on, all of the initiatives developed in those early years have been expanded and streamlined into a highly efficient maintenance program that ensures the Track remains in the best possible condition for walkers to enjoy.

Annie Keating



Jesse Bampton conducting training for new volunteers.

Getting into Gear

Check out Ben's gear
at our next **Getting
into Gear workshop**.
Book online!

Lightening your load

- Does it sometimes feel like the weight of the world is on your shoulders?
- Do you struggle to summon the energy to go about your day?
- Do friends and family tell you to lighten up?
- These may all be signs that your backpack is too heavy.
- When it comes to shedding weight, hikers often talk about the items inside their backpacks:
- Do I really need these camp shoes?
- Should I buy a lighter sleeping bag?

But the backpack itself is often the heaviest component of a hiker's gear, which is why it's so important to buy one that does the job you need it to for the lowest possible weight.

One of the most common mistakes new hikers make is to buy their pack first, before all their overnight gear.

Without knowing what equipment you plan on taking, it can be hard to estimate how much space you need in a backpack and what load you need to carry it comfortably.

My advice:

Buy your backpack last.

Once you've bought your tent, sleeping bag, sleeping mat and so on, take all your gear into a good hiking shop and put it in the pack you plan on buying.

Most good packs will carry the load comfortably on your hips and put only a light pressure on your shoulders.

Pack sizing is based on torso length, so it pays to get measured and get the harnesses properly fitted to your frame.

I'd consider a pack to be lightweight if it's between 900 grams and 1.5 kilograms when empty.

Lightweight packs are designed to carry relatively lightweight loads, so I wouldn't venture much heavier than 13kgs.

The Osprey Exos and Osprey Eja are great options in this category, as is the ULA Circuit – although the latter is only available online from the US.

If your gear is older and heavier, you may find you need to choose a heavier but more supportive pack that is rated for heavier loads.

The Osprey Atmos and Osprey Aura, both weighing a smidge over two kilograms for their 65-litre versions are solid performers in the mid-weight bracket.

Handy features to look out for include hip belt pockets, deep water bottle holsters, a removable top compartment – also known as a brain, and my personal favourite: a big stretchy mesh pocket on the back panel, ideal for storing your rain jacket, med kit, and other items you might need in a hurry.

When it comes to choosing volume, you want to pick a size that's just enough for all your gear and a week's worth of food.

Packs need to be filled to take their designed shape and comfortably distribute their weight.

Buying a pack that has more space than you need will leave your gear rattling around while you hike and tempt you to fill that remaining space with unnecessary stuff.

60 litres is a reasonable capacity for an average-height man with modern gear, but you can get away with a 50-litre or even 40-litre pack if your equipment is ultralight and you're conservative about what you take.

A 65-litre pack should be big enough for older and bulkier gear. If you think you need more than that, I suggest re-evaluating your packing list first.

Lighterpack.com is a great resource for tallying your gear's weight and identifying weight savings.

On the other hand, if you can easily fit your gear into a 40-litre pack, you might be ready for the final frontier of ultralight backpacking: the frameless pack.

These packs often weigh less than 700 grams, which they achieve by cutting out the solid frame that gives all other backpacks their shape.

Instead, they rely on proper packing to form their shape.

Frameless packs are designed for the lightest possible loads, so they're only for those who are looking to shed those final few grams.

Stay tuned for the next edition, when I'll explore another aspect of lightweight gear.

Ben Dickinson



TRACK TOWN - COLLIE

Take the time to explore Collie and discover for yourself what makes this a fascinating, diverse and beautiful area in which to spend a few days. Whether it's relaxation or adventure, Collie has something for everyone.

The Collie Art Gallery on Throssell Street is the first purpose-built art gallery outside of Perth and well worth a visit. The Gallery features a different exhibition every six weeks or so and now Collie has an expansive outdoor art gallery, the Collie Mural Trail.

Comprising of over 40 murals, mostly painted by local artists, the Mural Trail is a contemporary collection of artwork spread throughout the town. Artworks range from those painted early in the town's history such as the Anglican Church mural painted in 1922 by Artist Philip Goatcher, to recent works by Western Australian artists added in 2020/2021.

The highlight of the collection is the dam wall painting, which covers 8000 sqm. of the wall of the Wellington Dam, painted by Australian artist Guido van Helten. Take half a day and follow the murals from the dam wall to Collie town centre. For more information go to: colliemuraltrail.com.

Collie has a long European history, having been declared a township in 1896 following the discovery of coal in nearby Allanson. The Coalfields Museum, Old Railway Station, Replica Underground

Mine, and the Rail Heritage Centre all provide a fascinating insight into the town's rich history.

Whether you're stopping through for a quick resupply whilst hiking the Bibbulmun Track or basing yourself in Collie for a weekend of exploring, there are plenty of activities, sites and events for the whole family.

Walkers are well catered for in Collie with supermarkets, hardware and camping stores available to supply their every need. The Bibbulmun Track passes through the centre of the town and there is a wide variety of accommodation to select from, ranging from budget hotels to luxurious B&Bs.

And walkers are not the only ones, with waterskiing, canoeing, fishing, swimming, camping, cycling and 4WD tracks, Collie has plenty for those looking for action and adventure. Staff at the Visitor Centre can provide plenty of local knowledge and up-to-date advice on the best locations for the wide range of activities on offer.

The Visitor Centre is also where you will find the Bibbulmun Track trailhead, register and logbook, so remember to stop in and fill them out when you visit. They also provide complimentary parcel and pack storage for walkers, stock a range of Bibbulmun Track maps, and guidebooks and can even offer a shower and real coffee for walkers to freshen up before getting back on trail or heading back home.



Collie Mural Trail artwork "The Endless Adventure" by the Collie Community and Andrew Frazer.
Photo: Russell Ord.

Collie Visitor Centre

156 Throssell Street

Email: info@collierivervalley.com.au

Phone: (08) 9734 2051

www.collierivervalley.com.au

Open 7 days a week:

Monday to Friday - 9am to 4pm

Saturday - 10am to 3pm

Sunday - 10am to 2pm

Public Holidays - 10am to 3pm

Closed Christmas Day

**Please support our
Walker Friendly Businesses
in the area.**

Black Diamond Lodge B&B
(08) 9734 4439

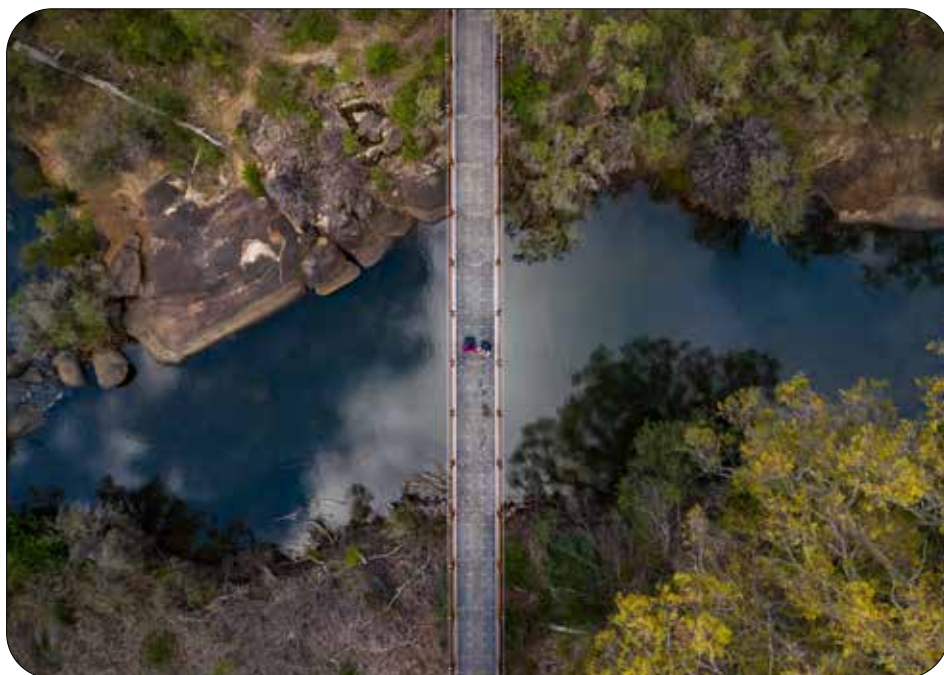
Collie Canvas & Camping World
(08) 9734 2866

Forest Explorers
0427 981 187

Mandia B&B
0417 179 260

TraaVerse Tour Operator
0417 654 426

Whispering Pines B&B
(08) 9734 3883



Hikers walking along the Kaniyung Wilman pedestrian bridge across the Collie River.
Photo: Jarrad Seng.

Naturalist on the Bibbulmun

As the days become increasingly hot and the landscape begins to dry, the flowering of the mooja signals the onset of Birak. The heat intensifies through Bunuru, and the risk of fire builds. Few would consider walking the northern sections of the Bibbulmun Track this time of year, yet a well-timed day walk can still offer rich rewards for the naturalist.

The mooja is known to many of us as the West Australian Christmas Tree. It holds great significance to the Noongar, because the spirits of the recently departed are thought to rest in its branches on their journey to the land of ancestors. The tree is unlike any other, as it is a member of the mistletoe family. The mooja's roots fuse with those of surrounding shrubs and trees, sucking water from their hosts and so protecting themselves from the searing heat and dryness of birak and bunuru.

A particularly rewarding early morning hike is the section of track that runs from Sullivan's Rock, over Mount Vincent and Mount Cuthbert to Monadnocks campground. The views across the jarrah forests from the peak of Mount Cuthbert to Mount Dale are breathtaking, and if lucky one can see waalitj (wedge-tailed eagles) riding the thermals. Ornate dragons are often seen on these granite outcrops during birak and bunuru. Mostly they run

at break-neck speed across the granite only to disappear beneath a rock or exfoliated granite slab. However, if you wait patiently they will emerge again and go about their business of defending their territories and attracting mates. The lizards bob their heads up and down, performing pushups with their front legs. These displays, conducted predominantly by males, serve both as a warning to rival males to keep out of the individual's territory and as a signal to females to attract them for mating. Females are discriminating of their mates, and choose males that have the widest heads. Perhaps males with wider heads are easier to see from afar? Whatever the reason might be, the mating bias toward males with wider heads has resulted in the evolution of sex differences in head width that readily allow one to distinguish between male and female lizards. Other aspects of the ornate dragon's appearance that are finely tuned by natural selection are the flattened body shape and the colour and markings of their dorsal surface. From above, the lizards markings allow it to blend almost seamlessly into the rock surface and thereby avoid detection from aerial predators, such as waalitj, djarbarn (currawong) and kaa-kaa (kookaburra) that would make a ready meal of them. A dragon's appearance and ability to disappear almost instantly beneath a rock when disturbed affords it effective protection from predators.

The cracks and crevices beneath rocks and exfoliated granite are critical habitats for lizards. They not only afford protection from predators, but are essential microhabitats that remain cool and retain moisture. Rocks and slabs thereby serve as resting sites during the hottest periods of the day, or for the entire day in the case of thick-tailed geckos that are common on the slopes of Mount Vincent. At night, thick-tailed geckos emerge from their shelters and forage for insects and other invertebrates on which to feed, returning to their under-slab shelters at daybreak where they are protected from the scorching heat of bunuru. Without these shelters ornate dragons and thick-tailed geckos would perish.



There is a habitual tendency for humans to construct cairns, collecting up rocks and exfoliated granite slabs and piling them one on another, perhaps to leave some evidence of their presence at a particular location. It seems harmless enough, but alas it is not. By building cairns we remove the habitats that are critical to the health, protection and survival of reptiles, and many other animals besides. If we must leave something other than a footprint, how about removing a rock from a cairn and placing it back onto the ground where it belongs. Such a simple act would contribute to conserving our increasingly endangered wildlife

Leigh W. Simmons



Ornate dragon.

A family of thick-tailed geckos.



Leigh's fascinating book *Naturalist on the Bibbulmun* is available from the BTF.

All royalties are donated to the Track.

Mooja or West Australian Christmas Tree.



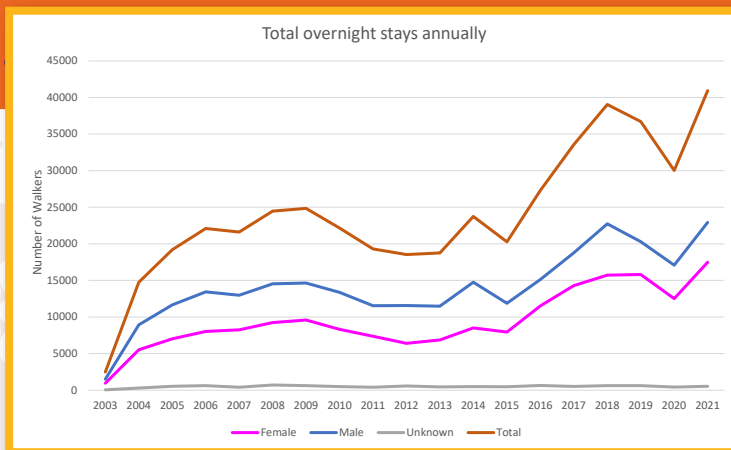
Overnight Stays

With the recent 25th Anniversary of the opening of the Bibbulmun Track on 13 September 13, it is interesting to look at how the use of the Track has grown.

In 2006 the Bibbulmun Track Foundation took over the data entry from the logbooks. Prior to then the collection and maintaining of the logbook data was a little adhoc. Additionally, logbooks weren't replaced until they were full, so if a book was lost to bushfire or went missing a lot of data was lost with it.

Thanks to our campsite maintenance volunteers the books are now generally swapped over every six months, they are then allocated to a volunteer for the data entry and returned to the office for swapping over again. This process obviously takes time so we don't yet have all the data for the last couple of years.

The chart shows the result of over 492,000 overnight stays logged into the database.



Some key dates include the 10th Anniversary in 2008 where use increased slightly followed by a downward trend. Around 2012/13 the trend started upwards other than a dip in 2015.

The sharp decline in 2020 clearly shows the impact of Covid 19 restrictions followed by a strong upward trend as the popularity of hiking increased rapidly. Overnight stays peaked at over 40,000 in 2021. We expect the upward trend to continue for 2022 although it may well level off again.

Dr Barry Bastow

Bibb Track Birds - Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo

by Mark Davidson

The male Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, *calyptorhynchus banksia, naso*, has dull black plumage with bright red-orange panels in its tail visible when the bird flares at take-off and landing. The female and juveniles have white/yellow-spotted black plumage with bright yellow-orange panels.

Although there are other Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos in Australia, the Forest Red-tailed is the only one found in southwest Western Australia forests. They can be found from Albany to Perth and in some western parts of the wheatbelt region.

The family group, captured in a setting like many along the Track, comprises the adult male (note black bill) adult female (white bill) and juvenile male (black bill colour forming). In breeding season the male's eye ring is a bright red. They have a distinctive raucous call and can occur in gregarious noisy flocks most often late in the day.

The population of this cockatoo has declined because of habitat degradation. Trees with suitable breeding hollows are rapidly being cleared and are in short supply. In addition, food trees have also declined.



Walk the Track in comfort!

Join us and discover diverse landscapes on our all-inclusive, fully guided tours:

Bibbulmun & Beyond 9-Day Tour

6th to 14th May, 2024

8-Day Highlights Tour

2nd to 9th September, 2024



Notice board

FOR SALE

TYVEK TENT GROUND SHEET

Tyvek is widely used as a groundsheet for protecting the bottom of your tent. It is breathable, super light-weight, waterproof and very tough.

\$20 per metre for BTF members.
\$25 per metre for non-members.

For more information about this product see the notice on our website.

Contact: Steve
(08) 9481 0551

E: events@bibbulmuntrack.org.au

Garmin InReach Mini

Compact, lightweight hiking GPS and satellite communicator for off the grid contact. As new. \$350

Contact: Beverley West
0413 126 489

E: bevywalshwest@gmail.com

WANTED

WALKING PARTNER

I am planning to do the whole track in 2024 end to end. I have done the Overland Track (twice) and Larapinta Trail. I will be 60 (agghh) when I do this walk but like a Welsh Highland pony, I will be plodding along and making distance to the next hut. I am seeking a similar self-sufficient and minded person who wants to do the whole thing with a minimum of fuss! I am NSW based but happy to share the adventure with anyone who has same goals.

Contact: Louise
0401718521

E: fullerregulatory@gmail.com

Adverts are free for members &
\$5 for 3 months for non-members.

Find out more on our website.

FOUND

SUNGLASSES

Sunglasses found at Helena Campsite on the morning of 26th of September.

They are now at the BTF office awaiting collection by the owner.

Contact: BTF on 08 9481 0551
E: friends@bibbulmuntrack.org.au

LOST

HEAD TORCH

Torch with 2 lithium batteries in a case at the back of the headband.

Possibly dropped out at the Chadoora Hut or soon after on the track to Dwellingup. If you find it you can keep it!

Contact: John Cooke
0423 977 081
Email: cookejohn7@gmail.com

GREY JACKET

Lost a Jacket between Tingle Tree Carpark & Creek Road.

It is a grey Kathmandu jacket (long sleeve, size XXL). It is not waterproof and has no hood.

Contact: John Murphy
08 9641 2383
Email: jhm.york@gmail.com

MACPAC RAIN JACKET

Misplaced between Swamp Oak and Murray Campsites around the 11th October 2023

Contact: John Belton
0480 464 898
Email: beltonjohn@hotmail.com

SILVER & BLACK LEKI WALKING POLES

Left just off the track in the carpark at Big Brook Arboretum near Pemberton 30/7/23. Please email if found.

Contact: Liesl Rose
Email: lrose@bigpond.com

Prize WINNERS!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF OUR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP PRIZE DRAW

July

Geoffrey Jenkins received a x mug and a nano headnet.

August

Alison Bunker received a TPU Guide Map Case.

September

John Colby received an Xcup and a cutlery set.

Holly Fisher received a couple of items from our sponsor Sea to Summit for a member renewing as a life member in the first half of 2023

Congratulations to **Lyndall Boulos**, who as an event participant on the Ramble and Paddle, completed the Post-event evaluation and won a Seal'n'Go Xbowl.

All prizes generously donated by Sea to Summit unless otherwise noted.

Gear for hire!



For more information, simply **SCAN** the **QR code** or **visit us in person** at our new office, located at Unit 3, 62 Ord Street, West Perth.

BTF Member rates apply.

Favourite Short Walk

Route: **Conspicuous Beach To Rame Head Campsite**

Distance: **6.6km return**

Difficulty: **Grade 3**

Time: **Half-day**

Starting Point: **Conspicuous Beach Carpark**

To reach the carpark from Walpole, take the South Coast Highway east for 15km, turn right on to Conspicuous Beach Road and continue for 6km.

Take the boardwalk down to the beach from the car park, turn left along the beach and follow the Track markers to make a steep climb towards Conspicuous Cliff. Tough start, but the views across the Southern Ocean both to the east and west make it well worth the effort. The Track passes to within

50m of the crest, but don't get closer to the edge! The spectacular views continue as you walk along the ridge. The walk continues more gently through undulating heathland to Rame Head Campsite, which many walkers consider to be amongst the most picturesque on the whole of the Track. Have a rest, a drink and a bite to eat then enjoy the somewhat easier return journey.

This is one of the walks in the Clifftops to Treetops Itineraries covering Albany to Walpole. You can find this and other itineraries on our website.

Do you have a favourite short walk?

Send the details (around 200 words) and a photo if you have one to admin@bibbulmuntrack.org.au



Track Tucker North African Stew

Many walkers, especially those doing end-to-ends or protracted walks, prefer to dehydrate their own food. Not only is this much cheaper than relying on commercial freeze-dried food, it also means that you can make the food you personally prefer. The BTF is often asked for recipes for dehydrated food, and we do offer our Food in a Fuel Stove workshop in which Lead Guide Steve Sertis demonstrates the use of a fuel stove and gives many tips on how to dehydrate your own food. This is one recipe that I am particularly fond of.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg Lamb mince
- 1 eggplant finely diced
- 2 carrots, grated
- 2 onions finely chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 x 420 g crushed tomatoes
- ¾ cup couscous
- Salt & pepper
- 450 g canned beans, rinsed & drained
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp mint, finely chopped
- ¼ cup finely chopped dried apricots

Cook the mince, carrots, eggplant and onions with the olive oil in a casserole dish for 45 minutes, add the remaining ingredients and stir well, return the dish to the oven for 20 minutes, then let it stand for 15 minutes.

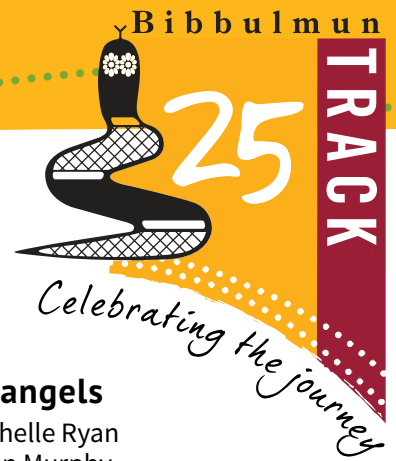
Dehydrate until dry to the touch

- ✓ Minced meats should be crumbled as much as possible
- ✓ This makes approximately six medium serves but walkers should assess at the cooked stage, before dehydrating, what constitutes a satisfactory serve for them prior to dehydrating.
- ✓ To reconstitute, cover with boiling water, let stand 1-2 hours, reheat, stirring constantly, serve and enjoy. This is an especially satisfying dish on a cold, rainy evening!
- ✓ Vegies should be chopped as finely as possible to allow for more even rehydration

Book a spot in our next Food in a Fuel Stove workshop on 28 February 2024.



25th Anniversary - Thank you!



The 25th Anniversary Celebrations would not have been possible without the assistance of our BTF volunteers. We would like to thank everyone involved. There were so many of you and we have tried to include everyone in the list below. If we missed you, please accept our sincere thanks.

Community event volunteers

- Michelle Wilson
- Corinne Mercer
- Mark Davidson
- Gary Payne
- David Broughton
- Mar Knox
- Scott Vawser
- Jim Baker
- Jim Freeman
- John Murphy
- Michael & Hanneke Spragg
- Helen Turner
- Rebecca Leigh
- Rosemarie Arnephie
- Henry Milner
- Michael Paterson
- Terry O'Hara
- Chris Bartlem

Sincere thank you to the following organisations for supporting the Bibbulmun Track's 25th Anniversary.

Major Supporters:



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

Community event partners:



Sectional volunteer guides

- Karen Boyce
- Mike Wood
- Claudia Payne
- Ce Kealley
- Tony Jennings
- Graham Murdoch
- Sue Lee
- Chris Lee
- Patrick Tremlett
- Valerie Preston
- Charmaine Harris

Logistical volunteers

- Chris and Sue Lee
- Ce Kealley
- Jenny and Greg Arnold
- Charlie and Sue Soord
- Isabel Busch
- Ian Rae
- Nigel Pilgrim
- Shendelle Mullane
- Steve Clark
- Mike Sampon
- Ian Freeman

Trail angels

- Michelle Ryan
- John Murphy
- Scott Drysdale
- Deb Mickle
- Kerry Castles
- Jenny Cauldwell
- Hal Levison
- Hedley Amos
- Lari McDonald
- Carter family and friends
- Jen Frazer and maintenance team
- Jessie Wolff and Sciona Browne
- Mark Pybus
- Sue Hennessey
- David James
- Pauline Overington
- Pat O'Leary
- Wendy McIntosh
- Raelene and Terry Bailey
- Tim Larkin
- Peter and Muriel Leclercq
- Ce Kealley
- Mar Knox
- Ray and Naomi Arthurs
- Chris and Sue Lee
- Arthur Wright
- Chris Goodsell
- Bev and Rob
(Parry Beach volunteer caretakers)
- Charlie and Sue Soord
- Bruce Manning
- ..and of course the BTF staff



Upcoming Events

End-to-Ender Online Workshop

This online workshop takes you through what you need to begin planning your epic journey. Learn how to develop your own itinerary, organise food and food drops, plan effective rest days, cross the various inlets and consider the various emergency options available to you. You will move one giant step closer to completing one of the biggest achievements in your life! Places are limited and participants will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Date: Wed 24th Jan 2024 at 4pm
Cost: Members \$55,
 Non-Members \$70



Do YOU have the skills and experience to become a Bibbulmun Track Guide?

The Foundation is looking for volunteers who have:

- enthusiasm and an outgoing personality
- good knowledge of the Bibbulmun Track and the Foundation
- strong organizational skills
- computer skills
- own transport
- current first aid qualification
- be hiking fit and healthy
- weekends available to progress through the training program and then guiding events
- availability to lead at least three day walks (or two day walks plus one overnight walk) a year once qualified
- above all – the desire to share their love of bushwalking and the Track with others!

If you think you fit this description and you are available to assist with events please contact Steve for application details and information on training on events@bibbulmuntrack.org.au.

Food In A Fuel Stove

Tired of eating the same old food when out on the Track? Learn some interesting tips and recipes. This workshop is suitable for all levels of experience.

When: Wed 28th Feb 2024 at 6pm
Where: West Perth
Cost: Members \$95,
 Non-Members \$115

Moon Walk

It's the start of the walking season and this is a great way to get back onto the Bibbulmun Track. Unwind on a serene, warm evening by the light of a full moon. Join us on a casual 9km return walk through beautiful mixed jarrah forest to a massive granite outcrop, the perfect location to enjoy a picnic, a glass of wine and watch the setting sun and the rising full moon.

Date: Sat 23rd March 2024 at 4:30pm
Where: East of Armadale
Rating: Beginners
Cost: Members \$30,
 Non-Members \$70

PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION

Send us a caption!

One of our volunteer guides, Neil Gibson, in action out on the Track.

The most popular caption will win a prize (judged by our office volunteers!)

Email to:
friends@bibbulmuntrack.org.au
 or by post.



Send us your caption!

Social Sunday walks

Free for members. See booking conditions online.

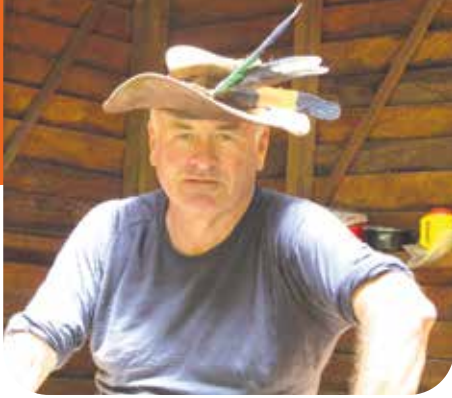
WALK RATINGS: BEGINNERS INTERMEDIATE EXPERIENCED

DATE	DETAILS	RATING
24 March 4:00pm	6km return sunset walk from Trails Hub Café to Hewett's Hill	
14 April 9:00am	14km return walk from Albany Hwy to Boonering Hill	
28 April 9:30am	13km return from River Rd to the Murray River via Swamp Oak Campsite return (Dwellingup sth)	
12 May 8:30am	19km return walk from Dale Road to Beraking Campsite. (Fit and experienced walkers only!)	
19 May 9:00am	12km return walk from Kinsella Rd to Canning Campsite	
26 May 8:30am	20.4km return walk from Kalamunda to Hewett's Hill Campsite. (Fit and experienced walkers only!)	

Bookings for each walk will open one month prior to each walk.

Book online, or contact the BTF office for a booking form.

Bookings cannot be made over the phone.



Track Trivia

Hello Fellow Track Lovers,

Wow, 25 years old—nothing trivial about that!

I first set foot on the Track in 1999 and had the privilege of walking it end-to-end in 2001, an ignorant Pommie who got lost because he forgot the sun went round to the north in the Southern Hemisphere. Not that I've improved my navigational skills; I applied to go on the "Get lost with Steve" workshop last year and couldn't locate the venue.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. The more that changes, the more that stays the same. How very true of the Track and its walkers.

I've remained involved with the Track since my first walk and I've watched the development closely. Over the years much has changed in the management, marketing and especially the maintenance of the Track. The changes have all been positive and the Foundation has grown in its efforts to stay abreast of the requirements of the walkers.

But what hasn't changed? The attraction that the Track has and has always had for walkers and affection walkers have for the Track. The camaraderie of the walkers and same comments, echoed over the last 25 years in the Track registers about flies, floods, toilet paper (carry your own!) and the longing for hot showers, cold beer, steak and salad after a week or more in the wilderness. The dedication that the staff and volunteers show in their work for the Track—all of these things remain constant.

In particular the Track has remained walker friendly to all, from the family who take the kids out over the weekend to the hardy end-to-enders. The enthusiasm shown in the towns during the 25th Anniversary celebrations also

demonstrates the community spirit that exists along the Track. In acknowledging all this we should salute Geoff Schafer, whose concept of a long-distance trail in WA that would "be walkable by all and draw town dwellers into the bush" back in 1972 led to the Track as we know it today.

Looking back through some earlier issues of the Bibb News magazine I was astonished to realise that I wrote the first one of these missives in 2007. Sixteen years of writing rubbish and they still let me do it! I did a bit of reminiscing this year in returning to the UK on a visit after a four-year absence to catch up with family and friends for what will almost certainly be the last time. One of my friends gave me a copy of the cartoon shown below that somewhat epitomised my feelings:

It reminded me also of an incident years ago on the notoriously badly signposted Coast to Coast Walk in England. I was walking with a couple from Canada, the

husband being originally of Swiss origin. He told me he had been an Alpine guide, so I felt very confident in his leadership—until we got hopelessly lost in a meadow full of gigantic buttercup plants. Honestly!

His wife was exasperated. "Ed, you told me you used to be an Alpine guide!"

"Ya."

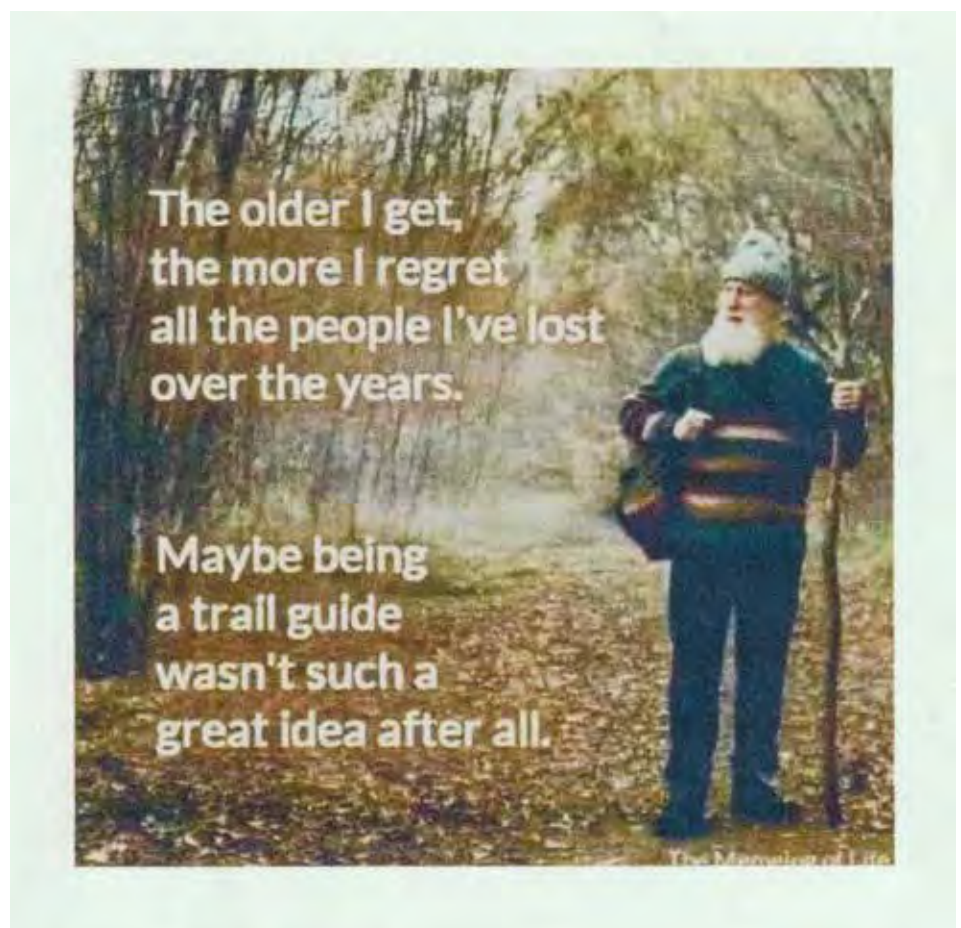
"So why are we lost?"

He looked at her for a long moment.

"I did not say I was a good Alpine guide."

One final point. For those who may have seen the Funny Photo competition, I would just like to point out that I was merely demonstrating my ability to sleep standing up. This can be very useful if you encounter an overcrowded shelter on the Track.

Happy walking!
Wrong Way Jim



REFLECTIONS FROM THE REGISTERS

WAALEGH (PRONOUNCED WALLICH):

When we got to the hut we were soo, soo tired 'cos the walk was soo exhausting and hot. We instantly took off our gators and put on our crocs. (Ed: sounds like the Florida Everglades!)

And we took off our hats and head socks as well. Mum made tuna and crackers and olives soo yummy! The walk from Beraking to Waalegh was soo, soo hilly the hills were awful but the views were beautiful and there was a big spider in the top bunk with me and toilet is too far away. I'm definitely coming back!

Blue Bird 27/09/2019

MOUNT COOKE:

We came from Sullivan Rock carpark and immediately realised we had forgotten stuff. After retrieving the forgotten item we went the wrong way. Then we both fell over and went the wrong way again, so we did some bush bashing to get back on the Track. When we got to the hut we set up for stargazing (the whole reason we came) and couldn't see the stars. Overall this was a complete disaster but a great bonding experience. We got to see some cool wildlife.

10 out of 10!

Pillowfarts and Ladyland 11/02/2023

SANDPATCH:

Mr. Snake, slither, slither

You make my knees knock and quiver

You have fangs, you like to chomp

For you we're all a playful romp

But though I know you love to bite

I wish to live to see tonight

So please don't bite me, Mr. Snake

Wriggle, wriggle, slither, shake!

Mrs. Waugal, twist and turn

I take a step, I look, I learn

The rainbow serpent sang this land

The waves, the rocks, the bush, the sand

So as you guide me while I roam

I promise to respect your home

Keep me safe for all my time

Mrs. Waugal, on the sign!

Maddy Mermaid 29/09/2022

SWAMP OAK:

Swamp Oak is a lovely campsite. We stayed there overnight. We started off making a spindle and starting a fire and then we made friends with a lovely bird called asparagus. We called him asparagus. Then we had dinner and went to bed. My only complaint is the amount of flies. March flies are included.

Samara Priest aged 10 21/11 2021

When coming downhill on an old vehicle track do you choose

- a) shiny mud/moss ice glide
- b) honky nut roller derby
- c) pea gravel slip and slide
- d) leaf litter (which may have any of the above lurking beneath?)

Anon 01/05/2023

Some Extracts from the 25th Anniversary Walkers' Diary:

"And so it begins..."

"Wow! What a send off!"

"Ice on the tents and on the ground until 10am"

"80km/hr winds on Mt Vincent, rain hitting sideways, slippery rocks. mud, freezing cold—so much fun!"

"Town day! Woo-hoo! Amazing welcome in Dwellingup and amazing food. We're so lucky and grateful"

"Best day ever! My first sighting of a gorgeous little echidna. So cute!"

"Love the group. So much laughter, makes it so much fun!"

"Balingup! What a welcome to the food festival complete with King and Knights!"

(More to come in future editions. Ed)

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY...

Include a gift for the Bibbulmun Track Foundation in your will and help ensure the Bibbulmun Track is maintained for generations to come.

Trailing around the World



Coffee break overlooking Lake Rittak

The Kungsleden Trail - Kvikkjokk to Abisko

The Kungsleden Trail showcases Sweden's wilderness. We elected to walk the most northerly section within the Arctic Circle, hiking south to north, starting in Kvikkjokk and ending in Abisko. We planned to wild camp, with the option of using the mountain cabins in wet weather.

The cabins—fjallstugas or fjallstations—are located every 10-20 km along most of the track. Facilities provided can be basic with just bunk beds and kitchen facilities or quite comprehensive with restaurant facilities, electricity, Wi-Fi, sauna and shop. Most of the cabins have a volunteer/host on site.

From Stockholm, we took the night train to Murjek (15 hrs; 1000 km) and then got a bus to Kvikkjokk (4hrs; 200 km).

On our first day the sun was shining and we were super excited to be on the track. Soon we came to a fork, left or right, red marker on the rock or the red cross on a stick? Which way? We were to follow the red markers, as the red cross on a stick marks the winter ski route.

The walking was slower than we expected as it was quite rocky underfoot. Also, our packs were heavy as we were carrying most of our food and only relying on the cabin shops for snacks. We

didn't need to carry much water as there was always a river or lake nearby. After walking about 20 km we found level ground close to a fast-running stream and set up camp. We soaked our feet in the ice-cold water, basked in the late afternoon sun and thought "we can do this".

Next day our walk began with an ascent that had us breathing hard for an hour or so until we got above the tree line onto open fell. We brewed coffee overlooking Lake Rittak and took the opportunity to dry our tent in the sun, totally enamoured by the reindeer on the ridge above checking us out. By early afternoon we got to our first boat crossing across Lake Lajtavrre. There was the option to wait for the motorised boat service or cross in the canoes provided. The conditions were ideal with

Bibbulmun Track End-to-Enders Mary Boyce and Matt Molloy hiked 170 km of the 467km Kungsleden Trail in Northern Sweden in August 2023.

This is Mary's account of the trip:



Singi Fjallstuga

blue skies and no wind, so we paddled—or rather Matt paddled, I was petrified we would tip the canoe, and I don't swim!

After collecting water we climbed the steeply ascending rocky track and an hour later we were above 800 metres and rewarded with stunning views of Lake Lajtavrre.

We camped in the open fell and woke to reindeer grazing nearby—what a way to start the day!

So, we were in the groove. The blue skies continued. We had another lake to cross; this time it was a mandatory motorised boat crossing. After crossing Sitojaure and passing the cabin we walked for a couple of hours and wild camped above Avtsusjjajka River. As the light faded the temperature dropped and we were soon wearing all our layers.

On day four we woke to a heavy mist and cooler temperatures. We walked across an open landscape, spying a moose in the distance. As we made our descent to the Saltoluokta cabin we had clear blue skies again, and the expansive views of Lake Langas lifted our spirits. A restaurant lunch at the fjallstation of carrot soup with dense fruit bread never tasted so good. We also drank copious amounts of freshly made lingonberry juice, red berries that are abundant in alpine regions.

We made our third boat trip mid-afternoon, crossing Lake Langas to Kebnats, where we took a bus to Vakkatovare. From there, to reach the open fell we had to make a steep ascent to 800-900m. The low growing alpine shrubs and the elevated position gave us panoramic views of distant snow-capped mountains as we walked in the late afternoon sun and camped by a river.

Next day we were up by 3.30 am as we wanted to make the early morning boat crossing. One of the highlights of the hike was this early morning walk; as the sun rose we saw every colour of purple and orange along the horizon, and we soon forgot our tiredness! The reindeer were up and out early too. After the boat crossing, we continued to Kaitumjaure fjallstuga and camped nearby. We were glad to pay an amenities fee to access the facilities—kitchen and sauna, where I experienced my first Swedish sauna.



Signage on the track.



Sauna at Alesjaure.

On day six we walked along the characteristic u-shaped glacial valley floor of the Tjaktjajakka River, where we got our first misty rain, with the mountains on both sides of the valley shrouded in low hanging clouds. The track was still relatively quiet; we met only about five to ten people per day. Tessa, a young Dutch woman was walking the entire track north to south with her dog. The track is well set up for dogs, with dedicated rooms at the fjallstugas for dogs and their owners.

As the mist did not let up, we stopped at Singi fjallstuga for lunch. For a fee, you can access the kitchen facilities during the day. The wooden cabin sits in the valley floor and is surrounded by imposing mountains. On this day, with the mist and low hanging cloud, the lone hut set against the magnitude of this pristine landscape was breathtakingly beautiful.

After a hot meal we continued towards Salka and passed a Sami village, which is occupied during reindeer herding season. The walking on this afternoon was unparalleled. The first five days of hiking were characterised by enormous lakes, big landscapes, distant snow-capped mountains and blue skies. Here we

were in a valley floor surrounded by high mountains with cascading waterfalls and swirling, shifting low cloud and mist. With water flowing everywhere there were many truly amazing spots to camp.

We woke to more mist and cloud. We had what was promised to be a tougher walk across the Tjaktja Pass at 1150m. As the day progressed the mist turned to rain; we had the full wet gear out for the first time. We had lunch at the emergency shelter at Tjaktja Pass – there must have been 15 of us squeezed into this tiny shelter! Then the blue skies returned and we camped south of Alesjaure.

The sun returned for the final two days. The walking was easy. We wild camped for the last time amongst the birch trees and walked jubilantly into Abisko!

Mary Boyce

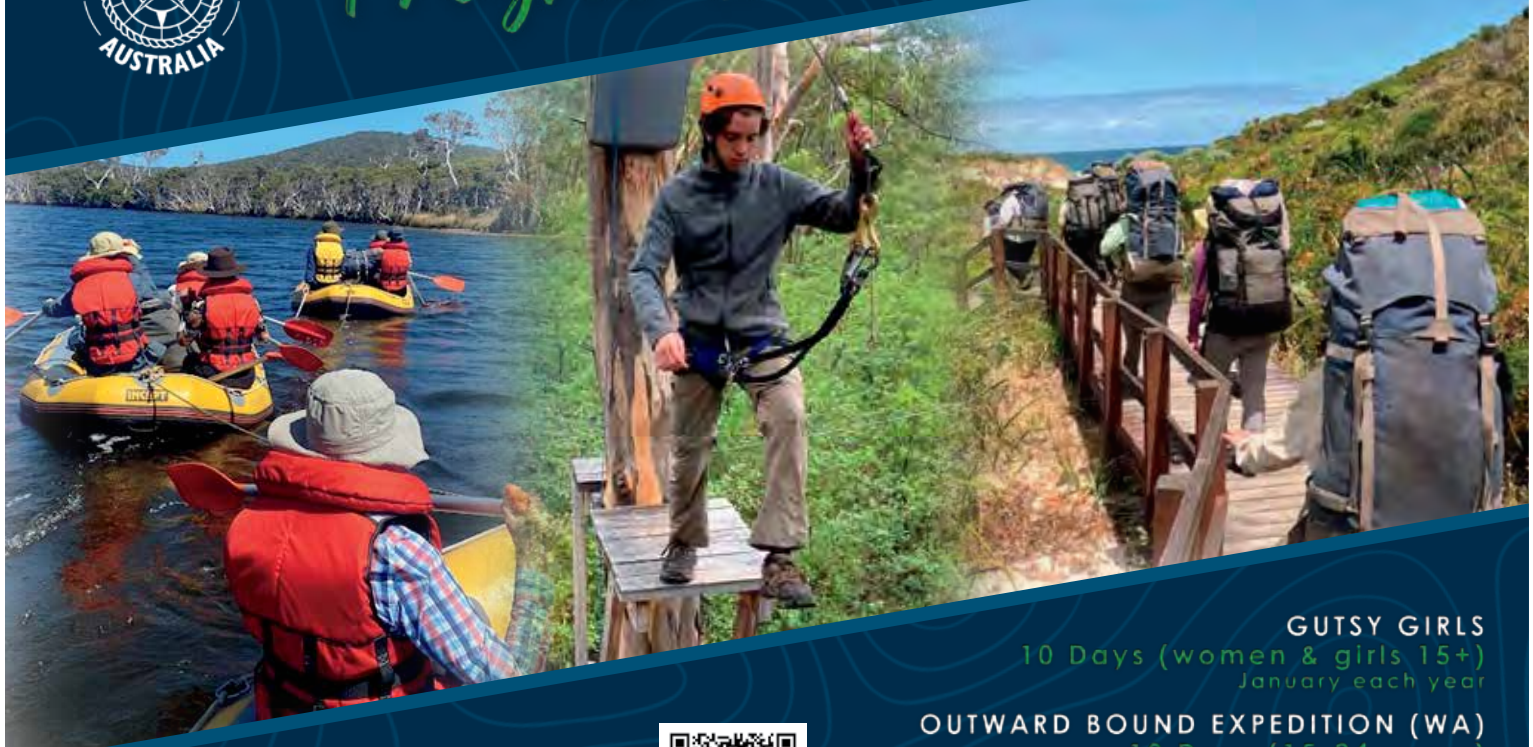


Leaving Kvikkjokk on day 1.



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