

FREE

TR↑ILWALKER

BAPTISM BY FIRE

From Gamer to
Robust Rambler

TWILIGHT WALK PROGRAMME

END-TO-END SEASON REPORTS

MEET THE NEW AMBASSADOR

WA'S CAPE TO CAPE TRACK

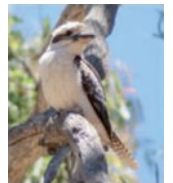
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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

SINGLE

\$25/year

FAMILY

\$40/year

SCHOOLS/ORGANISATIONS

\$60/year

Membership is valid for
12 months from the date
of payment.



Cover photo: Jonathan Vallario
on Day 1 of his 53-day Heysen
Trail hike from Cape Jervis
to Parachilna Gorge with his
brother Justin.

Photo: Justin Vallario

About the Friends

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VICE-PRESIDENT

Kate Greenhill

SECRETARY

Sally Fieldhouse

PUBLICITY OFFICERS

Sam Nichols &
Garry Fieldhouse

COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Wed 20 December 2019

Wed 15 January 2020

Wed 19 February 2020

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His Excellency
the Honourable
Hieu Van Le AC

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Thelma Anderson OAM
Kath Palyga
Richard Schmitz
Arthur Smith
Colin Edwards
Hugh Greenhill
Glen Dow
Barry Finn
Dean Killmier
John Wilson
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Jack Marcelis
Julian Monfries
Terry & Frances Gasson
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Kevin Liddiard

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Neville Southgate
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S2B John Newland

S3&4 Hermann Schmidt
(Wandergruppe Bushwalkers)

S5 John Babister

S6 Richard Webb

S7 Graham Loveday

S8 Ian Harding (WEA Ramblers)

S9 Jerry & Michelle Foster

S10 Wayne Turner,
Kevin Crawshaw, Peter Deacon

S11&12 Dom Henschke,
Colin Rozman, Rick Price

S13 Hugh Greenhill
(Mid North Branch)

S14 Daniel Jardine

S15 Ron Capel (ARPA),
Don McDonald

S16 Julie Starkey, Gary Wright

S17A Vacant

S17B Simon Cameron

S18 David Henery (Alpana
Station), Gavin Campbell

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MONDAYS

Graham Loveday
Neil Nosworthy
Elizabeth Rogers

TUESDAYS

Valerie Boundy
Judy McAdam
Chris Porter
David Rattray OAM

WEDNESDAYS

Robin Bodycomb
Vicki Cahalan
Gilbert Downs
Jack Marcelis

THURSDAYS

Eve Buckley
Erica Gordon
Julian Monfries
Judy Szekeres
Elayne Sanders

FRIDAYS

Cathy Bowditch
Erika Guess
Julia McLachlan
Suzanne Mausolf

RELIEF STAFF

Eve Buckley
Colin Edwards
Dom Henschke
Graham Loveday
Jack Marcelis
Robyn Quinn



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WILLUNGA BASIN TRAIL WINS WALKINGSA RECOGNITION AWARD

BILL VINE

Bill explains why Friends of the Willunga Basin Trail were recognised with WalkingSA special recognition.

Articles, reports and other submissions by members and interested parties are welcome and should be emailed to the *Trailwalker* Editor at trailwalker@heysentrail.asn.au

Deadline for the next issue (Autumn 2020):

FRIDAY 31 JANUARY 2020

The *Trailwalker* magazine is available by subscription or online at heysentrail.asn.au/trailwalker and is published and distributed quarterly:

- Autumn (March)
- Winter (June)
- Spring (September)
- Summer (December)

The *Trailwalker* magazine has a distribution of 1500, and an estimated readership of approximately twice that number.

Contributors are urged to contact the Editor to discuss their article prior to submission. The submission deadline is usually the first Friday of the month prior to the month of publication.

Views expressed in contributed articles are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the Friends of the Heysen Trail.

ADVERTISING RATES (EX. GST)

1/8 PAGE \$55 per issue
1/4 PAGE \$80 per issue
1/2 PAGE \$135 per issue
FULL PAGE \$200 per issue
FLYER (supplied for insertion) \$240 per issue

A commitment for 12 months advertising (four issues) would attract 10% saving.

Advertising specifications and article submission guidelines are available upon request or by visiting heysentrail.asn.au/trailwalker

Volunteers are essential ingredients for a Healthy Heysen

MELANIE SJOBERG



We've arrived at the end of our principle walk season and, of course, planning is underway for next year. However, there is a range of shorter walks over the warmer months to help you keep connected.

I think it's important as we conclude each year to recognise the dedication of our many volunteers who work on, walk along and talk about the Heysen Trail. For this reason, the Friends' Council organises a social event to thank everyone for their contribution, albeit appreciating that our volunteers are involved because they value the Heysen Trail itself.

On behalf of the Friends' Council, I would like to specifically acknowledge and thank David Rattray who is retiring after many dedicated years of service as Membership Secretary and Chair of the Office Committee. I also extend thanks from Council to Greg Martin who is stepping down as *Trailwalker* Editor after re-shaping it over the last couple of years.

IDEAS FOR SHAPING THE HEYSEN

Ending a year offers an opportunity to reflect and ponder what to do in the future. It's invigorating – and a healthy sign for the future of the Friends – to see our committees exploring ideas and experimenting with how we continue to shape the organisation and the trail.

WALKS

Our Walking Committee has attracted interest in some mid-week and Saturday walks this year. Planning for 2020 started early with walk leaders asked to nominate dates on a shared electronic calendar before the regular planning session in October. This meant leaders could work around logged dates and locations, making for a smoother final programme. We continue to benefit from the commitment of our experienced walkers with a new team volunteering to launch End-to-End 15 and trialling a Saturday schedule. There's also an End-to-End Minus 2 starting in the Flinders next year.

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

This year has seen success with regular weekly work at the Friends' Shed, led by Colin Edwards. Teams have renovated a cabin, built platforms, cut posts and various other jobs to prepare for trail projects. Refurbishment of Hallett Railway Station and installation of a new cabin at Black Jack also have been big gains for infrastructure along the Trail.

MARKETING

The Marketing & Membership Committee has enhanced our promotion by organising a significant improvement in our social media that generally reaches a wider audience. The team also has travelled to country areas for events and placed *Trailwalkers* in more locations. While these take some effort, it is boosting our regional connections with a bit of fun thrown in, so get in touch if you'd like to help out.

WE NEED YOU TO GET INVOLVED

The Friends' Council is elected to oversight the activity, finances and direction of the organisation. Like the committees, it's important for generating ideas to continue building the Friends and developing the Heysen Trail for the next generation of walkers.

I encourage newer members to consider nominating for Council or joining a committee to bring fresh views and energy into the organisation. The most important criteria are enthusiasm for the Heysen and yet another way to enjoy the Friends and the Trail.

Enthusiastic volunteers provide the essential ingredients in our recipe for a successful Trail.

- › Start with a **long-distance adventure trail** marked with posts & stiles.
- › Insert **20 Section Leaders** to keep it pruned & signed.
- › Add a **Trail Development Committee** for coordination & installations.
- › Infuse with **End-to-Enders** to walk it up & down.
- › Shake around an **office** to fizz with information.
- › Pop in a bunch of **marketing marvels** to spread the profile wide.
- › Inject a bit of **order** so the coffers stay on course.
- › Season with **energy & enthusiasm**.
- › **Nurture & refresh** to guard against erosion.

Christmas/New Years Office Closure

The Friends of the Heysen Trail office in Pirie Street will be closed over the Christmas period from 2.30 pm on Friday 13 December.

The Office Volunteers will enjoy their Christmas break and return for an Office Volunteers Information/Training Day on Monday 3 February 2020. The office will reopen for business on the following day, Tuesday 4 February.



Heysen Trail 2020 Calendar

Due to the office closure, Friday 13 December will be your last chance to call into the office to purchase a copy of our new calendar. We will be open that day during our normal business hours of 10.30am-2.30pm. After that you will still be able to order the calendar through our online shop www.heidsentrail.asn.au/shop. The sale price remains at \$12 each (plus postage & handling).

Online Shop Sales

While the office is closed, our online shop will remain open for business. However, as many of our volunteers will be on holidays, it may take longer than normal to fill orders. We will endeavour to despatch shop orders within five business days.

If you want to shop for last minute Christmas gifts we will process and despatch any orders received by midday Wednesday 18 December on that day.



One Week of Walking the South Coast

Sunday 4 October to Saturday 10 October 2020 (seven days including a rest day)

The Friends of the Heysen Trail are offering the opportunity to walk the first six breathtaking sections of the Heysen Trail in one hit from the trailhead at Cape Jervis to the delightful little hamlet of Inman Valley, with six guided walks and buses to help facilitate the week.

The week of walking is designed to enable those from beyond Adelaide – whether from intrastate or interstate – the opportunity to complete these fantastic sections along the South Coast in a single block, rather than the normal schedule with an End-to-End group.

Those prospective walkers who register an **expression of interest** through the Friends' office (phone 82126299) will be offered an early link to register for the week's

walking on **Thursday 6th February 2020**, well prior to the opening of registrations on **Sunday 5th April 2020**.

Once you have registered, please consider booking accommodation in the Fleurieu Peninsula. Visit www.heidsentrail.asn.au/heidsent-trail/accommodation for accommodation ideas.

Please note this is an extended walk for people wanting to do the entire week of walking and not those only wishing to do selected walks.

All current walk leaders are leading End-to-End groups and have each completed the Trail at least twice.

Some of these walks are challenging so please ensure you come physically prepared for a memorable week on the Heysen Trail.

Do you have any questions? Please email John Babister if you have any questions regarding the South Coast Walk: jpbabister@internode.on.net



Heysen Trail Closure during the Fire Danger Season

The Heysen Trail is closed during the Fire Danger Season.

The Trail crosses four different Country Fire Service Fire Ban Districts so the closure dates vary slightly. However, as we are in December, all sections are now in Fire Danger Season.

Consequently, the Trail south of Wirrabara is now closed until **30 April 2020**. In the Flinders Fire Ban District the Trail is expected to re-open on **15 April 2020**. The region south of Tanunda to Cape Jervis is also closed.

Please check the CFS website for further updates as these dates are subject to change: www.cfs.sa.gov.au

The Trail closure times must be obeyed at all times, as the viability of the Heysen Trail is dependent on the continuing cooperation of private landholders. We all know it has been another dry winter – you only have to look at the low level of the farmers dams.

Some sections of the Trail are still open – depending on local fire ban conditions. During the Fire Danger Season there is still the opportunity to walk along the Trail in forest reserves, national and conservation parks, and along country roads. However, camping and the ability to cook with

a naked flame is restricted or banned in many areas.

Public reserves such as forests and national/conservation parks are open to the public over the Fire Danger Season. However, on days of Extreme or Catastrophic fire danger, they are closed. The closure information on these dangerous fire days is promoted through the media, via radio and television news bulletins. In addition, access gates to forests and parks are locked and have a sign informing people that the area is closed due to the fire danger.

You can find out more about the sections of the trail that remain open most of the year on the Fire Danger Season section of our website: www.heyseentrail.asn.au/heyseentrail/fire-danger-season

Access to huts on the Trail is also restricted. A number of the huts along the Trail are on private property and, therefore, are not accessible to the public (including walkers) during the Fire Danger Season. These include Marshalls, Huppatz, Hiskeys, Catninga and Mayo Huts.

Huts in national and conservation parks or forest reserves are accessible during the Fire Danger Season, provided it is not a day of Extreme or Catastrophic fire danger.

Another Record-Breaking Fire Season

The Country Fire Service is bracing for a prolonged Fire Danger Season in 2019/20 after the previous season lasted a record-breaking 7.5 months.

The latest Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook predicts an active 2019/20 fire season across Australia and South Australia, particularly in lower Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island.

CFS Director of Preparedness Operations, Brett Loughlin, said the dry start to the year resulted in less fuel load but drier vegetation which could burn quickly.

‘The key message is that there is no part of South Australia that has below average fire potential this season,’ he said.

‘The forecast we have for this year is very similar to that of last year, and last year we saw the fire danger season not only start early across SA, but extended later.’

‘That’s the kind of risk that the forecast we’re currently seeing presents for this fire season. It could be another long duration season.’

An increase in warmer and drier weather due to Climate Change means a higher number of days of high or extreme fire risk.



⤴ The remains of a marker from 2014 Wirrabara fires. Photo: Rodney Rees.

Nominations for Honorary Membership 2020

Nominations of members, including self-nominations, are invited to be submitted to Julian Monfries, Chairman, Honorary Membership sub-committee of the Council, including name, address, contact numbers, and qualifications.

Recommendations from the sub-committee will then be considered by the Council, before being presented to the full membership at the next AGM.

To be considered for the 2020 AGM, nominations should be received by the end of January.

Guidelines for Honorary Membership (Distinguished Service):

(i) *Normally at least 10 years of paid membership as an Ordinary, Family or Life Member;*

AND

(ii) *at least six years of substantial voluntary contributions to the Association, including especially one or more of Membership of Council Chair of the various sub-committees, regular Walk Leadership roles, Maintenance Section Leader or Volunteer office.*

Guidelines for Honorary Membership (Exceptional):

Substantial and sustained contributions to promotion, development and/or maintenance of the Heysen Trail, or the Association other than as a paid member or volunteer through, for example, public service support, media support, etc.

Friends of the Heysen Trail Obituary

Chris Caspar, a long time member of the Friends – a walker, council member and office volunteer passed away October 30th 2019. Vale.



End-to-End Completed? What Now?

Turn around and head back the other way! From Parachilna to Cape Jervis, it's all downhill.

Join End-to-End Minus 2 for a three year adventure – north to south – starting in May 2020.

Led by four End-to-End leaders – Dean Mortimer, Julian Monfries, Peter Solomon and Simon Cameron – with over 10 End-to-Ends behind them and a wealth of walking experience.

The adventure will start with a week, based at Willow Springs Station, north of Wilpena, on Saturday 16 May to Friday 22 May, walking from Parachilna to Moralana Drive.

This is to be followed by a week, Saturday 13 June to Sunday 21 June, walking from Wilpena Pound to Warren Gorge.

The final week for 2020 is Friday 26 July to Sunday 2 August, Warren Gorge to Melrose.

Register now on heysentrail.asn.au/walks and join the party.

BLINMAN, SA

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CAMEL TREKS

Join us in 2020 on a trek that completes the Heysen Trail's remote section 'Beyond Heysen'.

Explore hidden treasures of the Flinders Ranges with camels carrying your supplies. Trek through gum-lined creek beds, towering gorges, rare geological formations and sparkling dry lakes. See native flora and fauna in its natural habitat and enjoy a night sky laser show with astronomer Ryan.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

T: (08) 8648 3713

E: info@flindersandbeyondcamels.com.au

2020 WALKING TREKS JUNE 22 – JULY 8 | JULY 7 – JULY 23

2019/20 Summer Twilight Walk Programme

DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
THU 05 PATAWALONGA LOOP Robyn Quinn	NO WALK	WED 05 ONKAPARINGA Melanie Sjoberg	WED 04 MARION Leanne Bell
WED 11 ANSTEY HILL Julie Testi	WED 08 PT NOARLUNGA Melanie Sjoberg & Daniel Jardine	WED 12 KINGSTON PARK Carol Homewood THU 13 MAWSON LAKES Marlene Henschke	THU 12 MARINO LIGHTHOUSE Robyn Quinn
WED 18 BROWNHILL CREEK David Bowey	WED 15 TORRENS LOOP Jon Holbrook	WED 19 MITCHAM AREA Heather Thompson	WED 18 SUMMERTOWN John Babister THU 19 PARADISE TO ATHELSTONE Vas Dolman
NO WALK	WED 22 BROWNHILL CREEK Heather Thompson FRI 24 (7:30) BRIDGEWATER Bill Van Riet	WED 26 WILD DOG GLEN Peter Clark THU 27 (7:30) BELAIR Bill Van Riet	THU 26 WEST LAKES Marlene & Dom Henschke
N/A	WED 29 THREE BRIDGES WALK, PT ADEL Julian Monfries	N/A	N/A

Check the online Walk Programme for latest updates and to register
heysentrail.asn.au/walks

The Summer Twilight Walks begin at 6pm, are typically 1.5 to 2 hours long, and are within close proximity to Adelaide. Followed by an optional social dinner at a local restaurant.

Participants require only a modest degree of physical fitness.

Here's an example of the kinds of Twilight Walks on offer this summer:

PORT NOARLUNGA SUNSET STROLL

Wednesday 8 January 2020

Led by Daniel Jardine and Melanie Sjoberg, this Twilight Walk is a wander through Port Noarlunga, a location that retains a village feel. We then follow the Onkaparinga River, across a footbridge to its mouth, and end with a stroll along the beach.

Approx. 1.5hours. 4-6km that could be changed subject to weather. Please ensure you bring plenty of water, hat and sunscreen. Bathers and towel may also be useful. Optional meal available afterwards.

Registrations open Wednesday 18 December 2019.

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Photos: Julian Monfries

 Installing a platform in Wilmington.

Maintenance Report: Water Tanks, Platforms and Roof Repairs in the Southern Flinders

Julian Monfries reports on a maintenance trip to the Southern Flinders Ranges in September.

Early in September a small crew, consisting of Carl Greenstreet, Adrian Rogers and Julian Monfries, headed to the Southern Flinders to undertake remedial work at Stony Creek, investigate a possible placement for a platform at Wilmington, and repair the roof at Mount Elm Campsite.

Thursday morning saw us at Cobbler Creek, where Colin Edwards and his team had loaded the trailer with the makings of two platforms and a new water tank for Stony Creek. The existing tank had been reported as contaminated.

The team arrived at Wilmington, via the obligatory bakery, and met local farmer and End-to-End 10 walker, Peter Noll. They proceeded to Stony Creek campsite which lies at the northern end of Mount Remarkable National Park.

FIXING THE TANK

The tank was indeed foul. It was disappointing to drain a tank that was over 50 per cent full. As it was draining, the team proceeded to dig the holes and install the platform.

The old tank was removed, but in the process the rusted gutter and downpipe were destroyed. That left a new tank with no gutter or downpipe to facilitate filling! Damn.

A through-walker happened by, heading south. Unfortunately, he'd missed the turn up towards Lavender Peak. We put him right and relieved him of the three litres of water he was carrying in shopping bags; he had heard the water at Stony Creek was bad. We promised to deliver it just off Alligator Gorge Road after our work was done.

With Peter Noll in tow, we then moved on to survey a site on his land for another platform, choosing one that had a great view towards Horrocks Pass. Again, this went in pretty quickly as the hole digging was relatively easy.

Time was now getting on, so we farewelled Peter and headed to Hawker, our digs for the night, a pub meal and a beer.

HEADING FURTHER NORTH

On Friday, we went out to Mount Elm, via the Oaks, to say hello to long-time supporter of the Trail John Rowe. Here a sheet of iron had parted company with the roof and simply disappeared. Carl, our tallest volunteer, fitted the new tin and stabilised other sheets that were trying to make an escape.

“

Another north/south through-walker came past as we were at work. She confessed to missing human company, which prompted Adrian to give her a hug. It was much appreciated, well at least by Adrian!

”

With that job complete, we were off to Arkaba Station to meet the new managers, Charlie and Bradley. Both are strapping young men, who listened to our Red Range toilet options with interest.

Then out to Red Range to check the toilet, which though not foul was full! Exploratory digs suggested the ground may be suitable for a 10-metre sullage trench. ➤


 The new tank at Stony Creek.

That task complete, we headed off to Wilpena to investigate a realignment of the Trail past the Information Centre and shop, rather than its current route circuiting around the campground, effectively missing both. Currently, there are marked trails linking the Information Centre and the Heysen Trail as it exits Wilpena Pound, so it should be a no-brainer really. We simply await approval from the local managers.

Mayo Hut was then checked and found to be in good condition and the tanks about 50 per cent full. However, one is getting a bit old and rust is getting into the water. That's a job for another time.

BACK TO STONY CREEK

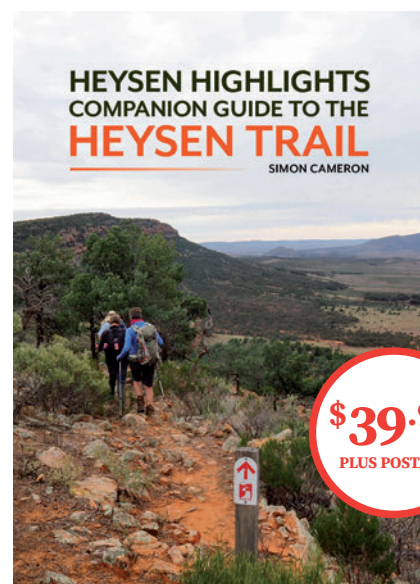
Saturday, we headed home, disappointed at our inability to complete the tank and gutter installation at Stony Creek. So we called into Wilmington Hardware

and managed to procure the readies to redeem ourselves. Subsequently, we managed to install a gutter and downpipe on the tank, but missed the overnight rain. Unfortunately, the piece we were given free was only 75 per cent the length we needed. Otherwise, we would have had to buy a three-metre length!

A broken stile near Horrocks Pass was inspected and repaired as best we could, considering the limited materials available to us.

On our way south, we called into Melrose and undertook a realignment of the Trail, now taking it past the large gum and the old brewery. Additionally, at Kapunda we also did some tweaking to the Trail through the town.

With all that done, the trailer went back to Cobbler Creek, and another successful trip was had thanks to Adrian Rogers and Carl Greenstreet.



The perfect Heysen Trail Companion Guide & Christmas gift

Heysen Highlights

Order on the Friends' website
heysentrail.asn.au/shop

TRAVELLING TO BLINMAN?

ALPANA STATION

EST. 1878

TRANSPORT SERVICE AND ACCOMMODATION

David and Sally Henery of Alpana Station Blinman offer a friendly, flexible and accredited **transport service** to the best end of the Heysen Trail: Wilpena, Blinman, Parachilna Gorge Trailhead, for individual walkers or groups. Transfers to the Mawson Trail and beyond also available.

Alpana Station offers:

- Quality self-contained guesthouses: **Alpana shearers quarters** (up to 14 guests) & **Nungawurtina Hut** bush retreat (up to 6 guests)
- **Powered sites** with ensuite bathroom facilities for caravans/campers
- Scenic **bush camping** areas



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IN THE FLINDERS RANGES**

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Contact David and Sally Henery
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T: 08 8648 4626
 E: alpanastation42@gmail.com
WWW.ALPANASTATION.COM



Meet the newest Heysen Trail Ambassador



In July, the Friends announced that Josh West, AKA Trekking West, had accepted the invitation to act as our Heysen Trail Ambassador. Meet our newest Ambassador and learn about his connection to the Trail.

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF

First and foremost, I'm a hiker – I simply love the whole lifestyle. I thrive off the simplicity, freedom and tranquillity that only a prolonged period in the great outdoors can provide.

My trekking adventures are supplemented by an appetite for blogging, vlogging, photographing and travelling. My international hiking adventures have taken me to Machu Picchu via the Salkantay Trek, above the clouds in the Swiss Alps, through Whistler's mountainous snow in Canada and, most recently, along the Camino Francés in northern Spain. Through all of these experiences, however, my heart remained in South Australia.

WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO THE HEYSEN TRAIL?

In August 2018, I began an adventure that changed my life. The 59-day solo hike from Parachilna Gorge to Cape Jervis challenged every fibre of my being, and has, ultimately, framed my decision-making ever since.

My Heysen Trail journey included drinking contaminated water, losing my rain jacket, ruining a bunch of technology, mangling my ankle, having my gear stolen and carrying an oafishly heavy bag for 1,200 kilometres. Though, through it all, my experience was unquestionably the most rewarding of my life to date.

Over the two-month jaunt, I strengthened my resilience, bolstered my physical conditioning, captured South Australia's stunning natural beauty, reconnected with lost mates, opened lines of communication for people suffering from mental health issues and, the pièce de résistance, raised an expectation-shattering \$11,939.03 for the Black Dog Institute.

I only left civilisation for eight weeks, but that comparatively short period triggered the most profound transformation of my life. I developed more in those eight weeks than the previous 800.



WHAT DOES A HEYSEN TRAIL AMBASSADORSHIP INVOLVE?

As an Ambassador for the Heysen, I will continue to promote walking the Trail through my blogging and hiking ventures, while supporting the Friends in expanding interest, knowledge and exposure of the Trail.

Meanwhile, a detailed description of my journey is available at www.trekkingwest.com/heysen to inspire and encourage others to walk the South Australian icon. For each of the 59 days, I blogged, snapped, recorded and video journaled all aspects of my journey – from the stunning rural landscapes to the mental and physical challenges that follow a long-distance hiker.

SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

I strongly believe in giving back to the events that form your life's journey; the Heysen Trail is right at the top of the list. So, on top of the Ambassador's position, I am honoured to join FoHT as *Trailwalker's* new Editor in 2020. I have spent the last decade as a designer, writer and content creator, and I look forward to implementing my knowledge to help promote South Australia's foremost outdoor publication.

Back in the wild, my short-term hiking goals include completing a long-distance trail in every Australian state and territory, ranging from WA's forest-filled Bibbulmun Track to NT's arid Larapinta Trail.

Volunteer Profile: Julie Testi

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE FRIENDS?

I joined in April 2017.

WHY DID YOU INITIALLY GET INVOLVED WITH THE FRIENDS?

I went to the Hiking Expo at Belair in April 2017 to find a hiking group so that I could explore more of the tracks, instead of the ones I always walked around Morialta. At the Friends' stand I learnt about the End-to-End, TrailStarter and TrailWalker programmes. My first walk through Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens and up the track to Mt Lofty was great. On this walk I met some of the walkers who were preparing for End-to-End 12 and a month later I was on my first End-to-End walk with them.

WHAT ARE SOME ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU'VE VOLUNTEERED WITH THE FRIENDS?

Last year I did a few weekends away in Burra, working on stile repairs, post replacements and signage along the way. These were great weekends to walk the hills of Burra and see what lies ahead on the Trail, as well as learn from the leaders of the maintenance weekends who shared so much history of the area and information about the Trail.

At the end of the year I went to walk leader training and since then have led Twilight and TrailStarter walks.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE WALK ON THE HEYSEN?

The first-year walks along the South Coast were all incredible and seeing dolphins is always a highlight.

WHAT'S A FAVOURITE WALK OTHER THAN ON THE HEYSEN TRAIL?

Last year, I completed the Laugavegur Trail in Iceland, which had very dramatic and diverse scenery. It was a beautiful trail and I would highly recommend it.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'D NEVER BE WITHOUT WHEN YOU'RE WALKING?

On my Iceland walk my luggage didn't arrive, so after six days I realised how incredible merino is and now I always wear merino.

WHAT'S THE FUNNIEST MOMENT ON THE TRAIL?

Walking Section 1 of the Willunga Basin Trail this year along Maslins Beach was quite a funny experience as 15 hikers walked past some locals.

WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE EVENT/DAY FOR YOU ON THE TRAIL?

With End-to-End 12 we've had a few character building days.



“

The walk up Balquhiddy was entertaining as people grabbed the fence to pull themselves up, or braved the muddy area and climbed to the top only to be greeted with winds that almost bowled us over.

”

This year walking from Tanunda to Kapunda we were hailed on in a field for several minutes, which was the first of three hail storms for the day.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE TOWN/LOCATION ALONG THE HEYSEN AND WHY?

We haven't been through too many towns yet, but I'd have to say the bakery lunch in Tanunda was a nice surprise and one that many of the E2E12's took advantage of.

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Photo: Jon Holbrook

END-TO-END 9

A Walk in the Sun

Jon Holbrook describes how End-to-End 9 coalesced over six years from a random group of walkers into a team.

All great stories, whether classic literature or teen fiction, are ultimately about people. We talk long and loud about the beauties of the Heysen Trail and the physical challenges of walking its 1200kms. But ask anyone who is walking with an End-to-End group and sooner or later the talk will turn to the people they walk with.

So it was with End-to-End 9. From the outside the group was just a random collection of people from around Adelaide and its environs who came together because walking the Trail with an End-to-End group seemed a good idea in early 2014. Now that we've finished, it's clear that over the six years the group coalesced into what I can only describe as a team.

For those who aren't familiar with End-to-End walks, the first two and a bit

years, from Cape Jervis to Kapunda, are done as day walks. One Sunday a month from May to November you drive to the end of the day's walk and catch a bus to the starting point. From Kapunda to Quorn the walks are then done on weekends, with two walks per weekend. And, finally, there are two weeks in the sixth year for immersing yourself in the beauty of the Flinders Ranges.

“

In the beginning, when we all met at Cape Jervis for the first walk in May 2014, there were only a few people who knew each other.

”

The married couples, of course, siblings, including two sets of twins, friends who joined together, and walkers from previous End-to-End groups. Otherwise, we were all complete strangers with walking as our one shared interest. The ages ranged from teens to 70s, and the fitness levels and walking experience could best be described as varied. We set off on that first walk with many having no idea what we were really getting into.

As one member put it, 'I was initially horrified to discover on Day 1 that the group had over 70 members. But I quickly saw that there was plenty of room for us all as we stretched out along the trail. With a group of that size all walking levels and paces are

comfortably accommodated and no one is left behind.'

Fifteen kilometres seemed to take a long time, and there were a lot of sore legs the next day. There were members of our group who were struggling, and who were wondering whether they would make it. But as time went on, the group changed as fitness levels improved. By the end, 30kms in a day was done without drama.

HOW DID WE GET THERE?

Everyone joined End-to-End 9 in very different ways. Many joined because a friend or spouse wanted to do the walk, and they came along to be supportive. I joined because both my sister and spouse were keen. We had members join on a whim, and complete the Trail. Another was out for a walk with the family on the day that registrations opened and got chatting with a couple of people they happened to meet who mentioned End-to-End and that they were about to register. Another was talking to members of her swimming group and thought it sounded interesting. There were experienced bushwalkers, occasional strollers, and the whole spectrum in between.

LEADERS

Our leaders quickly set the tone for End-to-End 9, which for the most part one could describe as relaxed. As someone put it to me when talking about our leader Peter Clark: 'Peter's deceptively laid-back approach to leading us disguised shrewd logistical >

management. Given that, and his exceptional weather management, we have come to affectionately tolerate Peter's interpretation of concepts such as 'undulation' and the length of 'today's walk.' (In case you're wondering, 'undulation' is anything that doesn't have the word 'mount' in its name, and distance is a fluid concept that changes from week to week. As for the weather, End-to-End 9 have been blessed by the sun god and will only bring rain the day after they have walked.)

SOCIAL CONTACT

There are lots of pluses to a big group, mostly to do with social contact. This happens from the start.

'As one member said, 'I have enjoyed the ebb and flow of contact with different people during each walk; the various conversations that I've joined in, moved along and left aside as I've walked my Heysen Trail. I've also enjoyed long stretches of solitary and silent walking, knowing the group was not far away if I needed help or wanted company. I've been inspired by the physical feats of other walkers, recoveries from illness and injury, and intrepid travels among the group.'

“

Whether it's through car-pooling to day walks, visits to the pub/winery/brewery afterwards, community dinners and shared accommodation on weekends away, or shared training regimes, the social cohesion of the group among the regulars is huge. Although this didn't start straight away.

”

'On our first walk I was talking with a guy from End-to-End 4. He said it wouldn't be until we started the weekends away that we would start getting to know the rest of the group. At the time I didn't believe him, but it was absolutely true. In the first three years there were so many random comings-and-goings that it was hard to know who was part of the core End-to-End 9 group, so I stuck predominantly with who I knew.'

'It wasn't until we started the weekends away that the group stabilised into the core 50 or so serious E2E9ers. And it was then that friendships started to branch out, particularly for those who had started on their own, and needed to find others to share accommodation with and car pool.'

During the weeks away, the dynamics changed again. I don't know if it was because we spent all day, every day in

each other's company and got bored with our usual companions, but I had long conversations with people I'd barely spoken to over the previous five years, and I noticed other people doing the same.

The big downside for a large group is finding some solitary time on the Trail. It's a little easier at the back with stops to take photos or visit the bushes, but if you want a solo walk,



Photo: Mark Scicluna

End-to-End 9 Walkers

On 17 August 2019, End-to-End 9 completed their six-year northward journey to Parachilna Gorge. Thanks to walk leaders, your efforts are greatly appreciated by those who have followed you.

Aled Jones
Alison Swart
Bev Skeen
Bill van Riet
Bronwyn
Glassmann
Carol Stevens
Christine
Tremain
David
Andrewartha
Denise Ryan
Edward
Bonkowski

Felicity
Bonkowski
Graham Jobling
Ian Norman
Jon Holbrook
Julie Tonkin
Kellie Holbrook
Kerry Skinner
Linda Nimmo
Louise McNeil
Lynne Norman
Mal Cockburn
Marg Donohue
Mark Scicluna

Patricia Pigou
Paul van Riet
Peter Cronin
Robyn Coburn
Sandra Purdon
Shauna Gill
Stephanie
Lewis
Steph Thomson
Steve Kirkbride
Vicki Stewart
Victoria
Szilassy
Yang Kuai

**The following
End-to-End
9 walkers
completed the
Trail for the
second time and
received 'E2E
Done Again'
awards:**
Catherine
Anderson
Dávid Szilassy
Peter Clark

an End-to-End group is not for you. However, even in a group this size you learn more about yourself; what you're capable of – both physically and mentally – and how hard you can push yourself. It also amazed me how long it took to learn, and remember, all their names. I finally got everyone by the sixth year!

“

Regardless of how you're feeling, and how you're walking, the most welcome social contact in End-to-End 9 was our fabulous support crew of Mike and Sheila. It was always great to see their white car up ahead and know that there'd be water, a big smile and Sheila with her box of sugar and food colouring.

”

However, there were some serious moments. Thankfully, only one broken bone (a foot, which due to where we were could be walked out to the bus). heat exhaustion on one day (where, fortunately, we had good access to the support car) and members of the group getting ill (both physically and mentally) and having other life issues. We finished one day's walk in the dark, though the beautiful sunset and the gorgeous walk up Tourilie Gorge in the twilight is the part that I remember of that day.

These trying times were part of building the social cohesion of the group. Groups, like people, are strengthened in adversity.

On the lighter side, we had two group members move in together (that's really building the social cohesion). We drank port at the top of Mt Bryan (it was kind of the halfway mark). We tried as many pubs as we could find (one member has compiled a list, and it's quite long). We had some

fabulous dinners prepared by amazing community groups in small towns.

“

We saw parts of this amazing country that most people don't get to see. We stumbled on wildlife and flora almost every day. We met the occasional through-walker (and runner). And, ultimately, we finished.

”

Would I recommend an End-to-End walk? Without hesitation.

If you're not sure, try it anyway. If you don't like it, you don't have to finish. But give yourself some time to get to know your capabilities and the group around you.



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A Warm Welcome to our New Members

The President and the Council would like to extend a warm welcome to the following 45 members who have joined the Friends since the last edition of *Trailwalker*, and urge them to become involved in the voluntary, walking and social aspects of the organisation.

Mac Aird	Warren Harch
Christina Angus	Victoria Hart
Robert Angus	Heidi Hill
Carol Baker	Peter Ilee
Paul Baker	Michael Jobe
Carolyn Bartholomew	Joanna Lamek
Liam Bennett	Julia Manning
Charles Bowden	Leila McEgan
Anna Brook	Robert Menz
Darren Burns	Ethan Milliken-Ilee
Suzanne Cunningham	Patricia Montanaro
Duncan Cunningham-Reid	Ea Mulligan
Andrew Dixon	Alex Nolan
Shelley Forester	Rosalie Nolan
Julie Gore	James Noonan
Livy Gore	Trish Peier
Abby Gransden	Fiona Sanders
Rowen Gransden	Don Sinnott
Jodie Hamilton	Wendy Sinnott
Caroline Harch	Deb Spiden
	Kathryn Tebbutt
	Molly Wakely
	Jackie Westover
	Jon Westover
	Pamela Wood



Register for 2020

Wishing to walk the Heysen Trail in 2020?

Each year a new group of walkers, called End-to-End's, commence their six-year journey of 1200kms from Cape Jervis on the Fleurieu Peninsula to Parachilna Gorge in the Flinders Ranges. Next year's 2020 group will be known as End-to-End 15.

The group leaders will be Mark Curtis (also group coordinator), Audrey Sclanders, Maria Bootle,

Andrea Gillin, Mike Joyce, Leanne and Philip Bell.

The group will commence the first walk at Cape Jervis on Saturday 9 May 2020. Registration and walk details can be found on the Heysen website.

For those unsure of their fitness level or have not walked in a group environment before, a training walk of TrailWalker level will be held on Saturday 18 April 2020, with details provided to you once you register for the first walk, Cape Jervis to Cobbler Hill, on 9 May.

We look forward to seeing you on the Trail.

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Beginning at the End

Tammy Main, Monique Percy and Julie Signoriello explain what a weekend away walking with End-to-End 11 means for busy Mums with jobs and houses to run.

Photo: Tammy Main

Walkers on End-to-End 11 come in many guises. We are three women – nine children between us – with jobs and houses to run. Blessed? Yes. Busy? Better believe it. But for seven or so times a year we race through the preceding week with one glorious weekend in our sights.

“

**Hiking Gear? Check.
Food & water? Check.
Meals prepared for the family? Check.
Kids weekend activities sorted? Check.
Hiking Boots? Dammit!
Back for the boots.**

”

Where the pace changes from the frenetic scramble of ‘juggling it all’ to a rhythmic stride where our lungs are filled to capacity, where the sounds of nature and the quiet, background chatter of fellow walkers brings relief, grounding

and an opportunity to recharge.

So, what did our fourth year on the Trail bring? This year we started at the end! Well, that is to say we came out of World’s End. Can you think of a more dramatic name for a place? It was everything we expected: DRY AND BROWN. A tough act to follow after the rolling, green stretches of the previous year. But don’t despair, what we discovered was a vastness of space, where the sky became a prominent canvas with changing colours and clouds of every description. With all distraction gone from underfoot, that brown colour turned into a multitude of shades and textures.

We walked the Burra Hills and we faced and conquered Mt Bryan. For those of you who have come before us, you know. For those yet to come, we will tell you that when they say ‘the view is worth the climb’, they are telling the absolute truth. But you will earn it!

We have always known that we were on to a good thing with our volunteer walk leaders. While us Mums debrief on the frantic month just gone, we did so knowing the leaders were checking the maps, looking for sign posts, carrying the first-aid kit; that a support car was ready to whisk us away if needed and, of course, someone was carrying that all important bag of lollies. But Mt Bryan, on a windy day, is a test and our leaders walked beside us for morale and ➤

physical assistance even when they were hurting themselves. It was humbling.

We went on to stroll along country backroads, atop a ridge or two with wind farms in the distance – one special morning with only the tops peeking through the low-lying cloud – past a roughly 150-year-old stone wall, which we were careful not to lean on. For lunch that day, we were graced with a crop-duster aerial display for our entertainment. We then headed down along cement water pipes and irrigation trenches to Bundaleer Reservoir and ended the year with our feet in the Southern Flinders Ranges at Wirrabara with a taste of the year to come.

The year saw the leaders coming and going for various reasons. For goodness sakes, it's a six-year labour of love. An amazing level of commitment from them. We discovered that their presence had become so familiar that their absence was deeply felt. How we missed the banter between John and Helen; John's pacing up and down the line, always making eye contact and checking. The quiet, respectful assurance of Andrew. However, don't think for a moment we were deserted. In their place sprung borrowed leaders with stories of their own and, from within the group, new personalities emerged as individuals raised their hands to contribute. By no means the only one but, in particular, Chris, we thank you. And to our leaders, John, Helen, Dom, Marlene and Andrew, much appreciation.

To understand a journey, you must understand the context in which the events unfold. And on the Trail context translates to mean Mother Nature. She was kind to us this year. Mostly,

beautiful temperate weather with the occasional thunderstorm looming in the distance just to quicken our pace on the homeward stretch. She was perhaps quietly chuckling, as Year 4 marks the passing of the mid-way point. We celebrated this twice: once passing the halfway mark in physical kilometres and a second time a month later when we stood on the geographical mid-point.

The year came with a wealth of historical and geographical learning. Maybe it was being near Burra township with its well-developed story. Perhaps because we got our hands on *Heysen Highlights* by Simon Cameron. It could also have been the local landowners who took the time to share their town histories and the local walkers who joined us on our hikes. Whatever combination, it added to the walk experience immensely.

You see new faces as casual walkers join for a day or two, but there was one of note for us. He had started the walk many years before, but stopped or 'paused', as life sometimes dictates. His story resonated with us because at the beginning of the year we farewelled a friend whose path took her in another direction. To her we say, it is here waiting for when the time is right.

We did eventually turn back over the Goyder Line and, as winter progressed,

we were ensconced in green fields once more. We remember this clearly as we scan through the photographs. Many thanks go to our visual storytellers for

their generosity in sharing. It has been a pleasure to watch these people develop in skill and artistry. Well, all except Martin, who had that from the beginning. To Paul, Helen, Cindy, Neil, Rosie, Glenn, Rhonda and Martin, thank you for the memories!

One last thank you goes to our 'Action Man' Ross, who helped E2E11 members with that busted tyre, the flat

battery, the sore muscles, the empty water bags, the stuck toilet door ... we don't think there is anything he couldn't deal with.

Sunday afternoons roll around too quickly and us girls barrel back into our car, look longingly at the retirees who settle in for another night away, and head back refreshed to our normal lives. **But let us leave you with a few fourth-year tips:**

Best place to stay in Burra – Hillside Cottage (burracottage.com.au). Highly recommended is the hot bathtub in the tin water tank complete with fairy lights!

Best place to stop for coffee on the way home – Tarlee Coffee Stop (look for the red sign).

Best place to eat – So sorry! Our own Vas and Bruce Dolman provided the best dinner of the year. Made the Gladstone Goal weekend even more memorable and a little less spooky! But in second place, the Laura Hotel did a fine job, having only that week opened their refurbished dining room.



Photo: Tammy Main



Photo: Paul Frost

- ⤴ Above: Tom taking a contemplative moment after a long skyward stroll.
- ⤴ Main: Transversing the Burra hills.
- ⤴ Left: The group huddles together at the blustery Mt Bryan summit.



END-TO-END 12

'It looked like a set for some movie'

Allan Kull describes what it was like to walk for the first time with the Friends on an End-to-End 12 hike.

Frankly, I had no idea what to expect on my first walk with the Friends of the Heysen Trail. It was 19th May and the walk was starting from Cudlee Creek. I remember being surprised when I arrived at the designated location – some dirt road in the Adelaide Hills – to find a large white bus, dozens of walkers either arriving in cars, milling about talking or ducking off into the bush for their comfort stops. It looked like a set for some movie with all the assortments of hiking attire, organisers checking registrations before we all embarked on the bus and headed off to the walk's beginning.

Once at Cudlee Creek, our walk leader Adam quickly went about making announcements and outlining the day's walk programme. There was a group photo of all 50 walkers, and off we went.

That initial hill certainly tested me as I only had one walking stick, thinking that even that wouldn't be required. But I soon learnt that I was in the company of seasoned and experienced walkers, many of whom had been walking together as a group for three years, and I needed to step up fast.

That day was indeed a great introduction for me as it combined

often challenging terrain, cold and intermittent rain, magnificent scenery, military-style organisation and, above all else, a sense of camaraderie. Complete strangers, recognising that I was new, would come up and walk with me for a while, have a general chat and give me some advice, if needed.

Following this day a few things became obvious. I needed to review my 'battle dress': what I was wearing and what I was putting into my pack. And if I could, I should take out shares in the Osprey backpack business, because they clearly had the numbers, especially when all the lime green rain covers were deployed.

Fortunately, the next two End-to-End 12 walks – Nugget Rd to Mt Crawford on 16th June and Mt. Crawford to Pewsey Vale on 30th June – were less challenging as far as the topography was concerned, and the weather was kinder, too. The scenery, nonetheless, was beautiful.

“

There is something almost European about walking through pine forests; the smell, the cool atmosphere, its unmistakable.

”

It provides an interesting contrast to the rolling hills and paddocks we encountered earlier. While walking up a grassy fire break between two large stands of pine forest, three horse riders approached us in the opposite direction.

The sight of 50 people walking towards them started to freak out the horses. Adam instructed us to quickly move to one side and walk in single file so as not to create too much distraction.

Pewsey Vale to Tanunda on Sunday 21st July began as a cold misty morning following the ridge line of the hills of the Barossa, close to the Kaiserstuhl Conservation Park. Off to our left we noted the famous 600-metre peak of Kaiserstuhl itself, although it was shrouded in cloud during our walk. What was to follow as we descended from the hills was the truly breathtaking expanse of the Barossa Valley. This time of the year everything is a vibrant green, while the vines lay dormant waiting for spring to bring them alive for yet another vintage. Lunch was in the main street of Tanunda, where great coffee was an unusual adjunct to our trail mix of sandwiches and energy bars. ➤

End-to-End Awards

Congratulations to the following walkers who received End-to-End awards for completing the Trail over the period **July to October 2019**

Donna Triggs
Julie Hammond
Barry Cole
Sheryl Cole
Lorraine Gubbins
Graham Sando
Christine Malpas
Richard Triggs
Dennis Ryan
John Herriot
Jonathan Vallario
Justin Vallario
Douglas Dunsmore
Mike Phillips
Richard Pash
Matthew Dodd

The final sector of this particular walk led us only one block away from my own home in Marananga.

The Tanunda to Kapunda sector on Sunday 18th August was probably the most memorable for me and, I suspect, for a few others. That day the gods decided to throw everything at us – cold temperatures, high winds, rain and, yes, hail. We walked single file through numerous crops and fields, through creek beds and cuttings. Miraculously, lunch was during a break in the rain as if Adam had commanded it. Then we emerged on the fringes of Kapunda, past the old copper mine and welded-horse statue. At this point I'm sure Adam felt we had not walked enough, so we proceeded to take a zig-zag route back to our cars!

For me, the last End-to-End 12 for the 2019 walk calendar was the first of our weekend away walks: from Kapunda to Hamilton then to Peters Hill. Although not particularly challenging walks, the highlight was the social events that occurred in the evening of the two days. These were well organised and gave everybody a chance to really get to know each other.

Reflecting back on the past few months, I am so glad I have become part of this great organisation. The End-to-End walks have provided me with considerable respite from life's challenges, and I have been so impressed with the professionalism that has been displayed by the leadership team, the great support team of each walk, the social committee and the companionship of my fellow walkers. Can't wait till 2020 to start it again.

Keeping track of End-to-End Groups

E2E 9

Finished at Parachilna Gorge in August

E2E 10

Dutchman's Stern Conservation Park

E2E 11

Wirrabara

E2E 12

Webb Gap

E2E 13

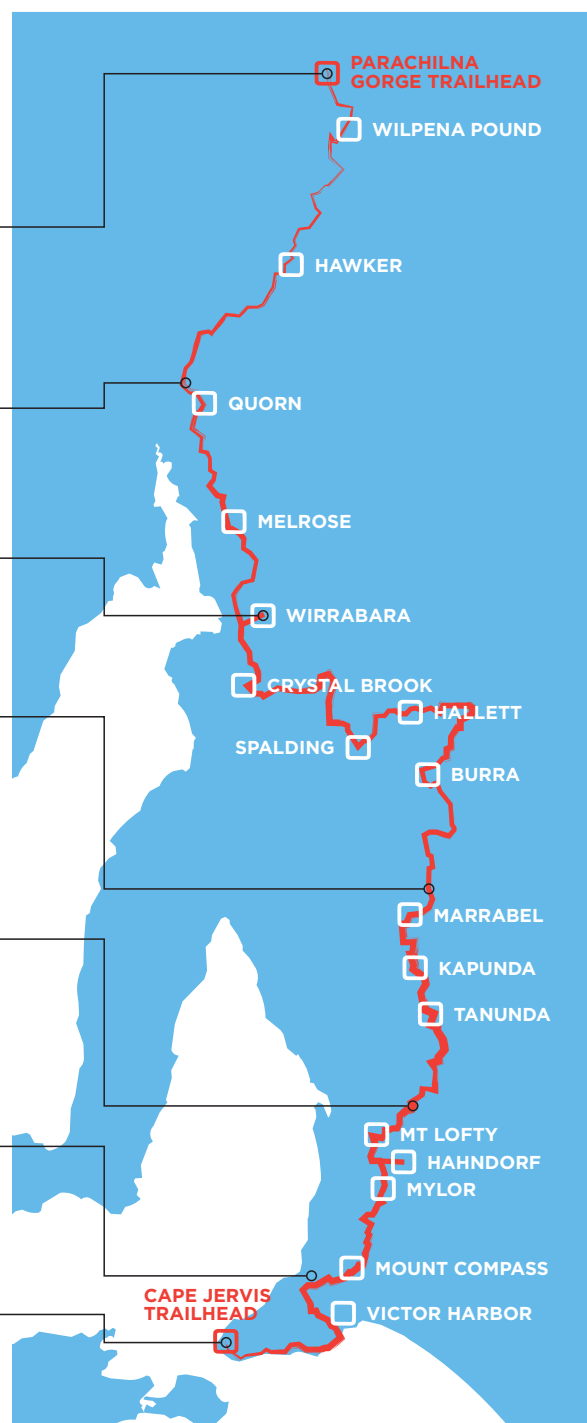
Nugget Road, beyond Cudlee Creek

E2E 14

Myponga

E2E 15

Begin at Cape Jervis in 2020



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Email: info@heysensrest.com.au
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Photos: Justin Vallario

Baptism By Fire – My Heysen Trail Experience

JONATHAN VALLARIO

Jonathan Vallario describes how walking the Heysen Trail in 53 days would beat him down with numbing pain and tear him up with raw beauty.

I have a confession to make: the Heysen Trail was my first multi-day hike. I had done a few day hikes in the Blue Mountains and Central Coast NSW, but nothing even close to the Heysen Trail. My younger brother Justin had never even hiked before, so to say we were ‘pretty green’ is an understatement.

Prior to our decision to walk the Heysen, Justin and I were preparing for a cross-country four-wheel drive trek to Broome and back, replicating a similar trip we had done to Perth in 2017. What changed my mind was the film ‘Wild’ where Reece Witherspoon plays a woman who hikes the Pacific Crest Trail. I was so inspired I looked up ‘long hike Australia’. Upon finding the Heysen Trail, I sent the link to Justin to see if he wanted to do it. ‘It’s 60 days!’ he replied. I responded, ‘yeah and...?’

After watching a few YouTube videos of what to bring and how to prepare, I felt I was ready. ‘It couldn’t be that hard,’ I thought.

How wrong I was.

It was 3:37pm on 5 July 2019 that we took our first steps past the starting arrow, leading down from Cape Jervis Caravan Park.

We didn’t end up finishing that first day until close to 10pm. My unfit and unprepared body struggled over Cobbler Hill, and ascending the 285 metre steep slope in darkness by dim headlight, with only one trekking pole, made me repeatedly question why I was doing this and if I had the resolve to continue.

The only thing getting me through that first night were the trail markers – those red reflective beacons that I came to call ‘Where’s Wallys’ – which otherwise we both would’ve been lost to the trail. ➤

It was our baptism by fire.

After that initial day my body was aching, and all the usual bodily alarm bells were blaring. I was 93 kilos, suffered a subluxation or partial dislocation of my left knee only a few months earlier and a weak left shoulder that has dislocated at least ten times. I was told the first week is always the hardest, before your body starts to adjust. When things got tough, Justin would push me by shouting, 'if you can beat Cobbler Hill, you can beat this!' Those words helped immensely. Nothing prepares you for the trek across beaches with one pole and an oversized pack, immediately followed with Shear-Oak Hill. Thanks, little brother.

“

From the beginning, it was nourishment to the senses: cool seaside air you could taste and eyes filled with picturesque beaches. And the hike was still only in its infancy.

”

Traversing through the southern section of the trail was truly memorable, akin to walking through a Heysen painting in virtual reality.



Main: A gentle sunrise stroll toward Kuitpo Hall on Day 9.



Right: The relief when you finally find your way back to the trail.



Below: Compare the pair. Brothers Jonathan and Justin on Day 1 at Cape Jervis compared to Day 53 at Parachilna Gorge.



I could totally understand why he chose this beautiful part of the world to paint.

As the days went on and the dehydrated meals became a chore to eat, the dazzling scenery only got more surreal.

The wind turbine sections between Hallett and Spalding were breathtaking. I must have run out

of memory on my phone trying to capture the beauty. This was a definite highlight, along with the locals at Spalding pub, especially Shauna, who were absolute legends.

Meeting people on the trail is another experience that makes the Heysen so unforgettable. Although I only met two other end-to-end hikers (Ken and Jasper), a few groups and a handful of weekend hikers, everybody was so lovely, giving us the time of day to listen and have a real conversation. A nice farmer even let us stay in his camping shed when we were in need of shelter as night fell. These true angels helped restore my faith in humanity.

The hiking community is full of the most honest, friendly and genuine people. Even on social media, they really listen to each other's questions and problems without judgement, and would share huts and campgrounds as if you were family. They really are just beautiful humans.

Sometimes the trail would beat me down with its numbingly cold nights, horizontal rain, gale-force winds, the unrelenting wet grass soaking my socks and shoes, and the slopes ruining my knees. Sometimes, I had to turn my mind off to get through the flurry of pain hitting me. >

They were messages from my body's voice that had to be ignored. I'm not going to sugar coat the experience as it was bloody tough. However, I knew the pain was temporary and there's no better feeling than seeing the roof of a hut pop into view after a hard slog of a day.

The view of Port Pirie as I climbed Mount Brown actually made me tear up with its raw beauty. The vast wonder of the Flinders as I ascended Mount Arden also struck a chord. There are many things that can make a grown man cry on the Heysen, whether it's a sharp rock under your worn out boots or the sight of a trail marker after being lost for hours.

After 53 days – ten days ahead of what was initially planned – we crossed the finish line together hand in hand at 1:40pm. This was after approximately 1.6 million steps and getting lost hours before the end as we ended up on the wrong side of the ABC Ranges. I suppose we got a little too excited as the end was nigh.

“
Hiking the Heysen was an unforgettable experience and has made me really appreciate the simple things in life, such as water, shelter, warmth, friendship, toilet paper and a bin.
”

Even though it is a vast distance, breaking it down day-by-day, section-by-section, makes it mentally easier to conquer. Each step was a step closer and each kilometre done today was a kilometre done tomorrow was my trek mantra.

I am so grateful for the countless hours that the volunteers put in to install and maintain all the trail markers, huts, sheds, rainwater tanks, shelters, and the Heysen Trail itself. From the bottom of my heart, I can't thank you enough.

I wrote a journal as an in-depth record of the entire day. It took me at least an hour each day, often feeling like a burden when all you want to do is sleep.



Views don't come much better than the Newland Head Conservation Park.

Justin took amazing photos throughout the entire trek, and together we are going to bring them together to create a book explaining the trek and our adventure in detail, including all the gear we used and tips for future Heysen Trail hikers so they don't make the same mistakes we did. You can keep updated using Instagram: [@jonoval](#) and [@skyvision-productions](#) for Justin.

I hope one day that those reading this can experience the Heysen Trail in its entirety. Nothing compares to experiencing it for yourself in your own worn-out boots.

Jonathan Vallario grew up in Sydney and now lives in the Sydney suburb of Belmore with his girlfriend Alison.

Jon is a licensed electrician and the frontman for the band Hornette. He decided to walk the Heysen Trail to get away from playing video games such as Rocket League and Fortnite.

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Favourite Short Walks

Port Noarlunga Beach to Onkaparinga Recreation Park.

Photos: Marie Hume

Submit your favourite short walks to the Editor

Ahead is the Onkaparinga Valley Rail Bridge which spans the Onkaparinga River, wetland and estuary.

The bridge is 1.2kms long and is one of Australia's longest rail bridges.

Shortly after passing underneath the bridge there is a small loop walk known as the Noarlunga Downs Wetland Trail. This is well worth exploring as there is art work by Paul Herzich with information about the river and wetlands.

The loop takes us back onto River Road by the kayak launch and over a boardwalk until we reach Perry's Bend. Here we take a right to join the Wetlands Loop trail (4.5k). This takes us alongside the river on one side and freshwater ponds on the other.

We have walked this trail after floods when there is lots of water in the ponds and alongside the trail, but in the summer the ponds dry out and vegetation grows where water has been.

When we reach the old rail bridge, before Old Noarlunga, we take a left turn that takes us up a slight rise overlooking the freshwater ponds now on our left.

As we dip down back to the river we take the option of walking on a significant boardwalk over reed beds to the sound of frogs and cicadas. We then head along the path where we came in, through the picnic area and back along River Road into Port Noarlunga where we enjoy lunch at one of the aforementioned cafes.

This is a relatively short walk – around 10kms return. It has no physical challenges, but lots of opportunities to see birds, lizards, plants, etc. and to learn about local history.

We park our car at the Port Noarlunga Beach car park and make our way along Gawler Street. On a Sunday morning the many cafes are full to overflowing with people enjoying the sunshine and Sunday morning breakfast.

The walk takes us across Gawler Street and onto River Road. From Gawler Street to Old Honeypot Road we are able to walk on a footpath with housing and a retirement home on our left and,

on our right, scrub, a golf driving range and the Sea Scout Hall.

“

The name 'Onkaparinga' comes from 'Ngangkiparringga', an Aboriginal word meaning 'The Women's River'.

ONKAPARINGA PLAQUE

”

After Old Honeypot Road it becomes tricky as there is no footpath and we have to walk on the grass verge making sure we leave plenty of room for numerous cars that come along quite frequently.


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Photos: Melanie Sjoberg

‘Many people underestimate WA’s Cape to Cape Track’

MELANIE SJOBERG & DANIEL JARDINE

Melanie Sjoberg and Daniel Jardine recommend a plan for tackling the Cape to Cape Track in the Margaret River region of Western Australia.

Anticipating a challenge, we researched a through-hike on the Cape to Cape Track (CtC) that follows the Indian Ocean coastline for 125kms, and approximately seven days, from Cape Naturaliste to Cape Leeuwin Lighthouses.

Similar to the Heysen Trail, the Cape to Cape has a Friends’ group that maintains the trail, produces a guidebook, maps and a website. This helped us plot the route, camping options, transport and a secure place to leave our car and camper-trailer. For day-walkers, there’s also a guide to

shorter loop walks, access points and accommodation bases. (See www.capetocapetrack.com.au)

In late August, we left the car with a local driver who supports walkers in between tours around the flourishing wine region. His prescient words that “... many people underestimate the Cape to Cape...” were to reverberate some days later.

The ‘hard trail’ descriptor defies belief as the northern entry at Cape Naturaliste commences with a few kilometres of compressed gravel path flourishing with wildflowers and allowing general access. It transforms as you move away from the tourist area into rocky granite outcrops and heath-topped cliffs.

On any coastal walk you expect some beach, so it wasn’t long before we found the first at Kadjinup, offering deep soft sand followed by a steep dune climb seriously testing the calf muscles. We didn’t realise then, but this proved to be a taster for the many beaches ahead.

THE DAY THAT GIFTED A CHALLENGE

Late rain was predicted for Day 2 on the hike. We arose before sunrise, draped jackets over our shoulders against the cold air while preparing ourselves with coffee. This served us well as a short stretch of tea tree led to Smiths Beach, proffering more soft sand, rock scrambling and wading through Gunyulgup Brook, while watching for wild waves that ultimately drenched Daniel’s boots. The coloured rock formations looked spectacular, but laborious as we scrambled over and around them with our heavy packs, while glancing up to the gradually greying sky.

We found some reprieve along wide 4WD tracks that were relatively firm underfoot. Here the guidebook became a critical adjunct to maps due to a lack of signage where several tracks crisscrossed. Indijup and Quininup Beaches delivered another brook, useful for a freshwater top up, before yet another huge sandhill climb to the clifftops. ➤

As the sky grew bleaker, we donned jackets and pants just before the heavy drops landed. The final three kilometre stretch through tea tree was a determined effort as the day pushed into an energy-draining 10 hours.

Lacking options, we found a new use for the toilet as a clothes drying room while we set up camp for a well-deserved meal.

PLAN B

Sensible hikers usually have a plan B! After the hard slog in wet gear we decided to shorten our next day so the tent could dry out. Heartened by a dramatic coastline and crashing waves we descended yet another brook crossing on Wilyabrup Beach. Melanie renamed this 'why-are-we-here beach' as we removed boots, rolled up pants and waded knee-deep across fast flowing currents only to suffer the indignity of sliding and sinking in quicksand-like edges.

“

Our first two kilometres had taken well over an hour.

”

After struggling up another dune – with a short reward of fabulous views from the clifftop – we confronted yet another climb on extremely steep stairs, which the guidebook suggested was a big improvement! We wondered how hard the old route must have appeared.

What goes up must come down. After following sandy steps down to Cullen Beach, we faced what we now

understood was par for the course: another soft dune shuffle.

A final section of rock scrambling took us around to Gracetown Beach with a delightful general store serving coffee and home-made pies. We treated ourselves to a cabin at the local caravan park – with a complimentary pick up/drop off – all of which was useful for drying out the gear and relaxing under a warm shower.

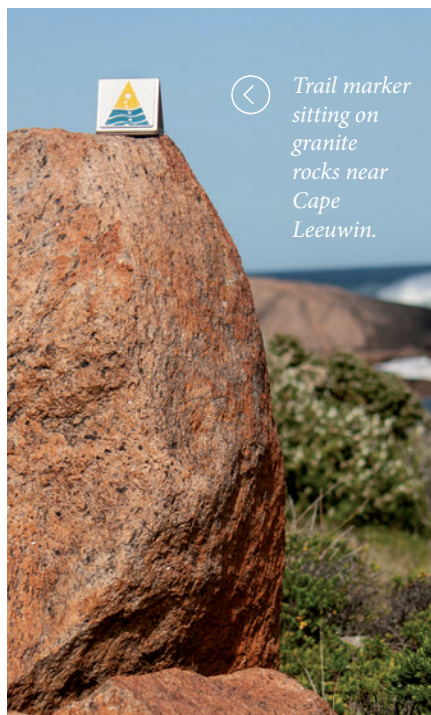
MORE BEACHES, MORE DUNES AND A BIT OF FOREST

The next few days followed much the same pattern of long soft beaches, steep dunes, great clifftop views and granite or limestone scrambles,

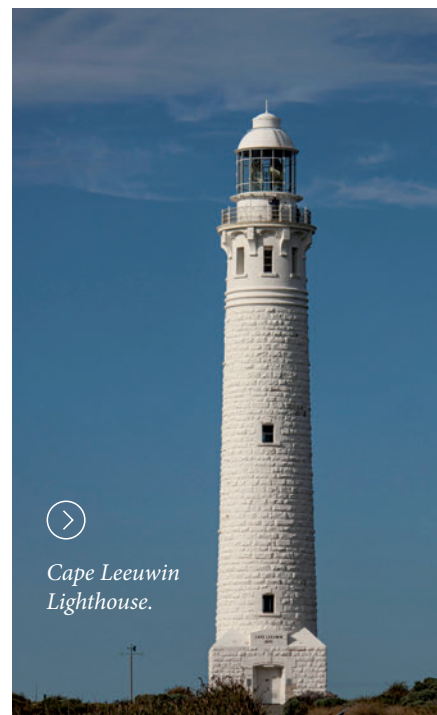
interspersed with an occasional easy-going stretch through woodland.

By Day 6 the driver's warning about underestimating the track was ringing true. We agreed we'd had enough beaches so organised transport after 14kms of woodland, rather than punish ourselves with yet another 6.5kms of soft sand and dune along Burnurup Beach, as well as resisting the temptation of 12.5kms of beach walking on Day 7.

Instead, after a decent pub meal overnight in Augusta, we sampled the final stretch of the Cape to Cape on a short walk north from Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse and a drive to Hamlyn Bay for a more comfortable beach walk. ➤



Trail marker sitting on granite rocks near Cape Leeuwin.



Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse.

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HANDY HINTS

In addition to the map, the guidebook is essential as it contains handy hints about points where the track is unclear, or where to look out for beach exits covered by sand movement. It also has a summary of wildflowers, birds and animals you may encounter.

We thought the distances between hiking campsites were not really convenient, given the challenging terrain, but breaking up the days staying at towns or caravan parks along the coast would help.

Contos National Park campsite has excellent facilities and several toilets. Smaller tent areas are separated from caravan/trailer sites and each have extensive shelters for cooking with gas provided, stainless steel benches and pumped water from tanks.

Like trail volunteers everywhere, the Friends of CtC put in a huge effort to maintain the track. Volunteers have undertaken particularly serious work to install 300 pine steps shoring up

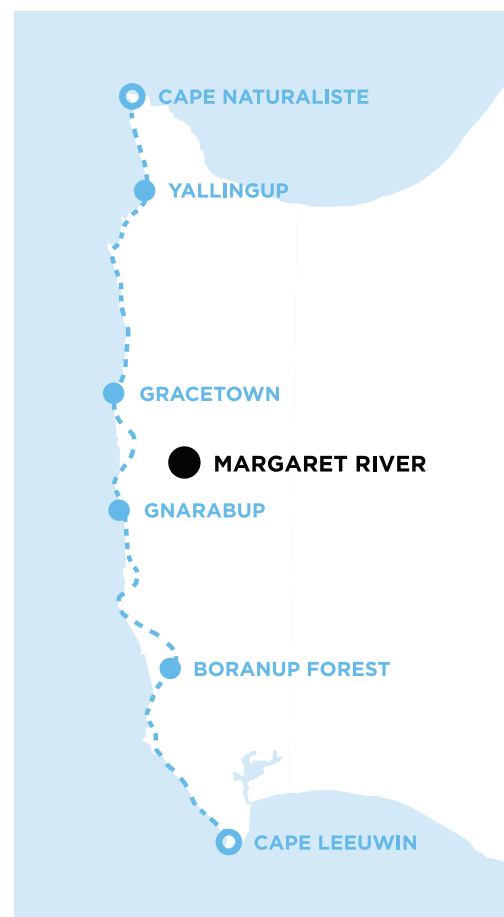
soft dunes down to an excellent sturdy bridge across Boodjibup Brook, all of which was carried in by hand over several kilometres.

The track is enjoyable. Despite the soft sandy beaches, it is offset by stunning views, the constant sound of crashing waves and, for us, the challenge of adapting to varying conditions. We also appreciated several points along the track that explained local Aboriginal connection to country, stories and interpretation.

.....
Western Australia's Cape to Cape Track is located in the state's south-west and runs between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin for approximately 125 kilometres.

The trail is open year-round, however spring and autumn are the best times of year to walk, while a north-south direction is also recommended.

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Paddy Pallin

El Caminito del Rey

Paul and Pauleen Bond introduce us to 'The Kings Little Pathway', once the world's most dangerous walk.

During a recent trip to the Adalucia region of Spain, we experienced the thrill of walking along Caminito del Rey.

Situated some 60kms north west of Málaga, the path to El Chorro gorge is mainly a timber boardwalk on steel supports attached to the vertical walls of a gorge, a hundred metres above the river.

The path was built to provide access between the two precipices for construction and maintenance workers on the hydroelectric scheme at the downstream end of the gorge.

The original path was built between 1901 and 1905 and used to transport material and people between two power stations either side of the El Chorro gorge. Its name, 'The Kings Little Pathway', resulted from King Alfonso XIII using the path when officially opening the hydroelectric scheme in 1921.

By 1999, due to a lack of maintenance, the pathway became known as the most dangerous walk in the world. Five fatalities in 1999 and 2000 caused the path to be closed. After four years of extensive repairs and renovations, it re-opened in 2015.

The result is a very safe walk that is rather intimidating for those who don't have a head for heights. However, even the most timid can enjoy the spectacular views afforded from this amazing construction.

After a pleasant and very scenic 3km walk along a path through the lower part of the gorge, we came to the start of the Caminito where we were fitted out with hard hats, given a briefing and allowed onto the boardwalk. From there it is simply breathtaking.



Photos: Paul Bond



Willunga Basin Trail wins WalkingSA recognition award

Bill Vine explains why Friends of the Willunga Basin Trail were recognised with WalkingSA special recognition awards this year.

Adelaide has a new walking trail and even before its official opening in September the Friends of the Heysen Trail had walked two thirds of it! The Willunga Basin Trail is a gem of a trail providing a unique view to walkers of coast, vineyards, farmland and natural bush.

The trail itself consists of an inner loop of 80km, running up the coast from Sellicks to Moana, inland to McLaren Vale, up to the Onkaparinga National Park, across to McLaren Flat and Willunga, and return to Sellicks via the ridge top. An outer loop from the Onkaparinga National Park to Kangarilla and onto McLaren Flat extends the total

length of the trail to 130km. Along the way it makes extensive use of roadways, road reserves and existing trails such as the Sea to Vines, Heysen and Kidman Trails.

“

The Friends of the Willunga Basin first proposed a trail in 2012.

”

The Willunga Basin Trail Inc, which formed out of this Friends group, consists of around 60 members and, since February 2019, they have been tirelessly working on the trail three days each week to complete it.

The trail development consists of three stages, the first of which the group hoped to have completed by the end of September 2019. The remaining two will be completed in eight-month periods with full completion expected in December 2020. A grant of \$78,000 from the State government will assist them complete the trail infrastructure, including some eye-catching trail markers and funky ladder stiles.

In addition to the grant, the group has been further recognised by WalkingSA with special recognition awards, not only to the group itself but also individual awards to two occasional guides on the trail, founding members Chris Davies and Zara Lupton. With only 40kms of the trail marked so far, Chris and Zara's help has been invaluable and their knowledge of the history of the region provides added insight.

Able lead by Daniel Jardine and Melanie Sjöberg, about 16 walkers attempted to complete the entire trail across six Saturdays over the walking season. Some of the unmarked sections of the trail proved challenging, but that added to the fun with the walks providing a pioneering flavour to the navigation, a challenge Daniel was more than up to.

Unfortunately, unseasonably warm weather at the beginning of October caused the cancellation of the fifth planned walk leaving us something new to look forward to next year.

Trailwalker Photo Competition



It's not hard to work out where this issue's winner, Adam Matthews, decided to stop and read his latest issue of *Trailwalker*.

We invite our readers to submit photos of themselves or others reading *Trailwalker* in interesting or unusual locations.

Please send your high-resolution photos to The Editor at trailwalker@heysentrail.asn.au

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