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COVID-19 UPDATE

Friends Respond
to the Pandemic



FRIENDS 2019 IN REVIEW

MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF WALKING

WHAT HIKING TAUGHT ME ABOUT ISOLATION

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We continue to operate remotely and will offer our local walking events
and trips in South Australia as soon as distancing restrictions lift.





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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: The wide open spaces of
Morialta Conservation Park may
be the perfect place to practise
self-distancing. Photo: Josh West.

Trailwalker welcomes photo
submissions suitable for the cover
of the magazine. Please email
your high-resolution image to
trailwalker@heysentrail.asn.au

About the Friends

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Wednesday 20 May
Wednesday 17 June
Wednesday 15 July

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Honourable Hieu Van Le AC

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E2E12 Adam Matthews
E2E13 Vicki Barrett
E2E14 Mark Fletcher
E2E15 Mark Curtis
E2E-2 Julian Monfries

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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)
S14-18 Arrangements
currently under review

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TUESDAYS

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Judy McAdam
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Erica Gordon
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Erika Guess
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Suzanne Mausolf

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Dom Henschke
Graham Loveday
Jack Marcelis



We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians whose ancestral lands we traverse along the Heysen Trail. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal peoples to Country and pay respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal peoples within the Country we walk.



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JULIAN MONFRIES

DEAN MORTIMER

Following on from the 'Original End-to-End Walk' article from Autumn Trailwalker 2020.

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JOSH WEST

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THE TERRY LAVENDER CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP

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Ben investigates ways to develop, manage and promote recreational trails and outdoor pursuits.

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A NEW SHADE OF GREEN: TRAMPING TE ARAROA

KIRBY DRAPER

With only nine days remaining, Kirby had to depart the Te Araroa.

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A WEE TOUR OF BEN NEVIS

SEAN BENZ

Sean couldn't help wonder why the UK doesn't have its own grand tour around its highest mountain.

Trailwalker

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 (Spring 2020):

31 JULY 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 typical 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 Heyzen 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

The Friends respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic

MELANIE SJOBERG



What a start to 2020: first bushfires devastating vast areas on Kangaroo Island and the east coast; then extensive restrictions across the community in response to a global pandemic. It seems we're exhausting the thesaurus: unprecedented, extraordinary, unusual, unexpected, unrivalled, and exceptional... and creating terms like 'new normal'.

The Friends Council views the health, safety and wellbeing of our members and volunteers as a priority, especially while the whole community continues to come to grips with the enormous impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We took the Federal and State Government public health messages seriously by postponing our Annual General Meeting and initially cancelling activities to the end of May.

“

Strange it may be, but most of us recognise there is a driving imperative to protect the community

”

Members would be aware that Walking SA also cancelled the annual Hiking Expo at the end of April. Friends of Parks and other volunteer groups cancelled all activity for the foreseeable future.

As we all manage tighter constraints on our daily activity we've now seen large numbers of people working from home, frequent cleaning on buses and

trains, lines to enter supermarkets with sanitiser for shopping trolleys and many businesses closed. Strange it may be, but most of us recognise there is a driving imperative to protect the community and our health service capacity that underpins the call to isolate and stay home.

Sadly, in light of ongoing public health requirements, the Friends Council made the difficult but necessary decision to cancel our activities:

- *End-to-End Walk Program and other walks using buses for 2020;*
- *TrailWalker/TrailStarter until further notice;*
- *On-Trail Maintenance & Development Work; and*
- *Keep the Office closed until further notice.*

Unfortunately, we couldn't defer or avoid making a clear decision about the End-to-End Walk Programme that so many of us love. Clearly the format of large groups using buses doesn't align with current public health restrictions related to physical distancing, hygiene and bans on large group gatherings. We also weighed up the complexity of organising multiple groups at varying stages along the Trail as well as challenges related to bus and accommodation bookings in an unknown timeframe.

On Friday 8 May, SA Premier Steven Marshall announced a staggered timeframe to ease some restrictions within SA. The initial phase allows regional travel and reopens camping in National Parks and caravan parks. There is still a limit of 10 people on

outdoor community and group activity. At this stage, the DEW suspension of volunteer activity is still in place. The public pronouncements reinforce that, for widespread community safety, we must practise hygiene and physical distancing for an extended period

The Friends Council and Committees will discuss options for our activities in light of the announced easing of restrictions and any requirements and public health risks that community groups must consider. While we remain positive about working it through, limiting groups to a maximum of 10 is challenging.

“

Stay safe, keep walking and keep in touch

”

Like many not-for-profits, it will be a tough year for the Friends as group walking is so important for our health and wellbeing. It is especially sad for our members to miss that intrinsic pleasure derived from sharing an interest and being part of an organisation that walks and supports the Heysen. Despite the restrictions, the Friends continues to maintain our behind-the-scenes administration, website, insurance and office; so I especially ask that you maintain your membership during the year to help the Friends organisation stay alive.

Meanwhile stay safe, keep walking and keep in touch through Facebook. I look forward to seeing you back on the Trail.



Trailwalker is calling for iconic Heysen Trail photos

To help celebrate the Heysen Trail's 35th year anniversary in 2021, *Trailwalker* is on the hunt for iconic, unique, historic and distinct images of the Trail. We are planning to showcase these shots (plus brief location descriptions/walker anecdotes) in the upcoming 2020/21 Summer edition with a look back at the moments that have shaped, and continue to shape, our Trail.

Snow on Mt Bryan? Aftermath of a fire? Dolphins on Tunkalilla Beach? Endearing Trail figures? Landmark events? Send your high-resolution shots to the *Trailwalker* Editor trailwalker@heysentrail.asn.au



Wind, hail and rain no more!
The Friends have a new branded marquee to erect at future field days, expos and social events.

What's the state of play in SA?



SA Premier Steven Marshall announced the state planned to ease restrictions on intrastate travel and outdoor activities. So where does this leave the Heysen Trail?

From Monday 11 May, South Australia's Stage 3 restrictions, which have been in place throughout the state to limit physical distancing and reduce the COVID-19 threat, were eased. Several of these new announcements have a direct effect on the Heysen Trail, including:

- community groups may commence outdoor activities in groups of up to 10;
- regional travel is now allowed; and
- National Parks will reopen for camping (including along the Heysen Trail).

For the most up-to-date information, check out www.heysentrail.asn.au

DAY WALKING

The Department of Recreation & Sport has advised that community organisations must develop guidelines for managing COVID-19 risks before resuming any group activities. Walking SA has provided a guide for all walking clubs which the Friends is considering along with specific elements to suit our walking activity. We anticipate that the Friends should be able to revive a modified Trailstarter/Trailwalker programme and will announce that on the website after a detailed plan has been finalised. As previously advised, the End-to-End Programme is cancelled for 2020.

THROUGH-HIKING

This latest development, which also allows camping on-park and on Crown Land, means this season's South Australian Heysen Trail through-hikers can continue their preparation and commence their journey as planned.

Despite the easing of restrictions, remember to practise good hygiene and adhere to the 1.5-metre rule.

Has your membership lapsed?

Thank you for being a friend, but please take a moment to reflect.

Did you know that many of our members don't walk our trails but their financial contribution (*only \$25 a year for singles and \$40 for couples*) goes a long way to help our volunteer organisation?

Your contribution allows us to:

- **HELP OTHERS WALK THE ENTIRE TRAIL** as many of you have done, with leaders and buses
- **OPEN AN OFFICE 5 DAYS A WEEK** with volunteers to answer questions and sell maps and other material
- **MAINTAIN AND REDEVELOP THE 1200KM TRAIL** with markers, stiles and toilets.

Rest assured, your \$25 is very well spent. We hope your time with us was enjoyable; we would love you to stay.

The Friends are moving office – next door

Members and Volunteers will be pleased to know that we have arranged with Epworth House to move into the vacant office right next door to our current office. The only address change will be from Suite 212 to 203.

The significant change will be a bigger, brighter space to carry out our volunteer work and to meet in what promises to be a welcoming atmosphere for everyone.

The Friends Executive and Office Committee is looking at how we coordinate the transition while keeping in line with current restrictions. Activity will be staggered to ensure volunteers willing to help are able to adhere to physical distance, health & safety and hygiene. At least in this restricted period we can gradually shift across over the next few weeks.

As already announced, the office will remain closed until further notice due to COVID-19; so members may look forward to visiting the new office once the restrictions allow us to gather.



Trailthinker Quiz

1. What is the name of the highest mountain in South Australia?
2. Who is the only South Australian-born person to feature on an Australian banknote?
3. In which year was the first section of the Heysen Trail officially opened?
4. Which Heysen Trail town holds the distinction of being the oldest copper mining town in Australia?
5. Farmers Union Iced Coffee was first sold in South Australia in which year?
6. What are the names of five squares in Adelaide's city centre?
7. What is the largest local government area in South Australia?
8. The Trailwalker was first published in which year?
9. Mt Sonder is a trailhead for which Australian long-distance trail?
10. The 426-kilometre Hume and Hovell Track is located in which Australian state?

ANSWERS PAGE 18



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Large group?
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ON THE MOVE? RING US FOR A REMOVAL QUOTE

 Newland Head Conservation Park

Wild South Coast Way on the Heysen Trail



Melanie Sjoberg reports on the upgrade of the Heysen's coastal stretch.

Members may recall the announcement last year that the SA Government had committed \$6 million to upgrade the Heysen Trail and Deep Creek. Plans are progressing for rejuvenation of the Heysen Trail between Cape Jervis and Victor Harbor.

The Friends of Heysen Trail President and Yankalilla Council Tourism & Events Manager are represented on the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) Steering Committee overseeing the project. The summer bushfires and more recent COVID-19 Pandemic caused some slowing but designs are now being prepared and consultation is underway with the local tourism sector to identify opportunities for transport, walking support and accommodation in the region.

Most importantly, the reinvigorated section of the Trail will have its own moniker – *Wild South Coast Way on the Heysen Trail!* And plans are afoot for a signature Trailhead just east of Cape Jervis and another highlight marker as you complete the 5-day section in Victor Harbor. We're hoping the Trailhead will be ready to open in October 2020.

While designs are yet to be finalised, the current project plan aims to commence building infrastructure for high-quality walk-in campsites along the 5 day, 4 night section with the first site to be open around June 2021. Current camping in Deep Creek, such as Stringybark, Tapanappa, Trig and Cobblers Hill will also gain improvements to facilities during the 4 year project.

Those of us initiating the rejuvenation are especially excited that an upgrade to the carpark, facilities and ridgeline along Goondooloo will provide access for people with limited mobility to experience nature and those wonderful views across to the Pages.

This stunning coastal section of the Heysen Trail is poised to become a drawcard for through-hikers as well as day-walkers wanting to explore the dramatic cliffs, gullies, beaches and expansive native vegetation while staying in one of the many local accommodation options with ready access to drop-off, pick-up points. For those that enjoy being under the stars but not carrying a pack there is always the option of camping in Deep Creek or more comfort staying at local cottages and B&Bs.

Treasurer's Report 2019

Friends Treasurer Stephen Salib-Brown reports a surplus totalling \$10,415 for the year 2019.

INCOME

SALES OF GOODS	\$5,717
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS	\$24,859
WALKING, WEEKENDS AND OTHERS	\$49,992
ADVERTISING REVENUE	\$7,369
INTEREST RECEIVED	\$2,594
SUNDRY INCOME (INCL. HH DONATIONS)	\$25,035
TOTAL	\$115,566

EXPENDITURE

ADMINISTRATION	\$5,434
LEASE COSTS	\$9,926
INSURANCE AND AFFILIATION FEES	\$7,037
BANK FEES	\$3,685
OFFICE EXPENSES	\$13,572
PROMOTIONAL COSTS	\$5,433
TRAILWALKER COSTS	\$13,706
TOTAL	\$58,793

ADMINISTRATIVE SURPLUS	\$56,772
LESS TRAIL MAINTENANCE	\$46,357
NET SURPLUS	\$10,415

Volunteer Profile: Richard Webb

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE FRIENDS?

I started helping out with the maintenance of Section 6 on the Heysen Trail back in 1998, so I guess more than 20 years now. I teamed up with a fellow walker from the Four Seasons Walking Club, where we were already looking after a stretch of overgrown scrub on Blackfellows Creek Road.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN MAINTAINING YOUR SECTION OF THE HEYSEN TRAIL?

In the beginning, it was a working bee where 20 or so people would come out to cut back small trees and clear the trail path. Over the years the number has waned, but I still head out on a Wednesday. I'll usually have hand saws, loppers and a battery-powered hand drill with me. All tools, that by the age of 75, you have tucked away in your shed. I live nearby the section, and access for short trips is easy. If any trunks are thicker than 20cm, I put in a call to the Heysen Friends Committee, and they organise professionals with equipment.

One part of my role is to coordinate local landowners where the Trail crosses their land. I've enjoyed being a part of the community, and I'm always pleasantly surprised at the generosity of time and equipment they offer to preserve trail infrastructure.

WHAT KEEPS YOU VOLUNTEERING FOR THE HEYSEN FRIENDS?

I thrive being outdoors. My partner will often come along, and we've both enjoyed seeing the landscape change over time. It was great to see new trees being planted on the western boundary of Kyeema and then watch them grow. I remember walking the Heysen Trail back in the 1970-80s and finding myself making up time after straying off the path. I'm conscious of young families and lone walkers needing a well-marked trail, so the experience is enjoyable and straightforward. I've

stopped many a time and had a great conversation with these same people, and it's what keeps me committed.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE WALK ON THE HEYSEN?

The coastal breeze, birds and animals of the Waitpinga to Bluff stretch first comes to mind. But then my mind wanders to the Ranger's headquarters at Mt Magnificent or maybe St Mary's Peak with its purple Cockatoos in the Flinders, but then again there are the wildflowers of Morialta; so many to choose from.

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

Cradle Mountain; another time I took an unexpected detour, but you know what? I saw the beauty of Cradle Mountain from a different perspective, and I will always cherish that.



YOUR FUNNIEST MEMORY MAINTAINING THE TRAIL?

We conducted a short survey walk to check markers near Chookarloo, which turned into an all-day adventure with friends, complete with a bogged 4WD and a trek to hail a local landowner with a tractor to dislodge us as the sun was setting. Wasn't the first time he'd rescued visitors in the area.

A MEMORABLE MOMENT?

Meeting Terry Lavender; a pioneer of both the Heysen and Lavender Trails. An inspiring man.



Photo: Anne Kirk

**Trailwalker
Photo
Competition**

Pauleen Bond safely adhering to social distancing rules with her *Trailwalker* in Belair National Park.

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

Friends of the Heysen 2019 in review

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Friends postponed the Annual General Meeting scheduled for March. The following is a summary of key outcomes from 2019 that formed the basis of Melanie Sjöberg's President's Report.

Images: Mark Scicluna

As always, it is our members and dedicated volunteers who put in an enormous effort to keep the Trail alive and our organisation functioning.

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

In 2019, the TDC launched a database to record trail activity and help monitor projects and volunteer hours. It was designed and constructed by a skilled volunteer and fully funded by the FOHT.

Why does this matter? Fundamentally, it helps analysis of what is being done and improves how we plan our work. Importantly it allows us to report outcomes and our volunteer contribution to DEW and gives us sound data to assist with preparing grant applications for future projects.

TDC VOLUNTEER HOURS

ACTIVITIES	HOURS
SECTION LEADERS (regular maintenance, pruning, fix markers, posts, stiles)	868
END-TO-END MAINTENANCE (identified and programmed repairs, re-marking routes; includes meeting with local landholders, councillors and service providers)	432
FRIENDS SHED (weekly preparation) located at Cobbler Creek Conservation Park with support from DEW	360
INSTALLATIONS (platforms, toilets, tanks)	384
MAJOR UPGRADES - Hallett Railway Hut - Black Jack Cabin	507
ANNUAL HUT SURVEY (assessing conditions, vermin, tanks; replace fire extinguishers, smoke alarm testing)	60
TOTAL	2611

NB this summation does not include assessment and project planning time, meeting and preparation time, coordinating volunteers, training or completion of forms for DEW.

2631

TDC volunteer hours throughout 2019

SIGNIFICANT TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The focus of major infrastructure projects during 2019 was around the Mid North and facilities at campsites further north were also improved.

- **BLACK JACK CABIN**
(north of Burra)
Refurbished the cabin including bed benches, transported it to site, installed cabin, toilet and water tank and added outdoor platform, fire pit, solar.
- **HALLETT RAILWAY HUT**
Replaced ceiling and cornices, new wood burning stove, new stainless steel sink, long table and benches & fresh paint, solar. Toilet & tank existed.
- **STONY CREEK CAMP**
Replaced water tank, repaired guttering & installed platform.
- **BUNDALEER WEIR CAMP**
Installed toilet and platform.
- **LIGHT HUMMOCK CAMP**
(Allendale)
Installed water tank & platform.
- **MIDDLESIGHT & WILMINGTON**
Installed platforms.

DEW TRAINING SUPPORT

Our volunteers benefitted from several training courses related to health and safety that were funded by DEW during 2019. ➤

TRAINING	ACTIVITY/SECTION LEADERS TRAINED
VOLUNTEER SAFETY FRAMEWORK	10
4WD SAFETY	11
CHAINSAW	5
REMOTE FIRST AID	4

WALKING THE TRAIL

Our walking programme is critical to the overall success of the Friends and special thanks should be conveyed to the Walk Committee that ensures it operates effectively.

In 2019, our volunteer walk leaders coordinated:

- 27 Twilight walks,
- 38 TrailStarters;
- 50 TrailWalkers;
- 1 Extended Walk and 1 Rambler.

Total 2019 Walk Registrations: 3932

Interestingly, over 66% register 2-4 weeks ahead and most members register online with only 8% via the office.

Our End-to-End walk leaders have a special role in sharing the Friends ethos and encouraging involvement through regular chats along the Trail. End-to-End walks also provide an important revenue base that allows us to pursue opportunities aligned with the objectives of the Friends.

END-TO-END GROUP	2019 REGISTRATIONS	
	FIRST WALK	FINAL WALK
9*	58	59
10	36	44
11	38	48
12	60	50
13	53	40
14	78	70

*Completion Year

The Walk Committee created an exciting programme for 2020 so it is a huge disappointment that the COVID-19 Pandemic has curtailed our plans. Our walk leaders are such a vital spark within the Friends that they are already conjuring up options and plans for 2021.

73

Certificates & badges issued to walkers who completed the Trail in 2019

TRAIL PROMOTION

MEMBERSHIP

Friends welcomed 222 new members to the organisation in 2019 (1230 in total).

TRAILWALKER

The magazine is published 4 times per year providing an essential, high-quality promotional product carrying articles about walking and maintenance along the Heysen Trail. Beyond our membership, we distribute it free to Regional Visitor Centres, Landholders and Service Providers that builds relationships and awareness about walking the Heysen.

Thanks go out to Greg Martin who shepherded Trailwalker as editor over the past 2 years and encouraged consolidation of an editorial sub-committee to actively source material.

We also welcome our new editor Josh West, who walked the Heysen in 2018 and is inspired to share that fondness of the Trail and hiking.

DIGITAL

- **WEBSITE:** The Friends website is the most comprehensive online source of information for walking the Trail: conditions on the Trail, distances, campsites, re-routes, regional accommodation and transport and relevant notices about fire danger season and park closures. DEW links direct to our site.
- **FACEBOOK:** Our page promoting the Heysen Trail has over 5500 regular followers. It is used to promote our events and wider activity such as Walking SA Hiking Expo, DEW Park of the Month, charity fundraisers and health benefits of walking.
- **APP:** During 2019, we collaborated with international company Guthooks Guides to ensure that the Heysen Trail features on their new app for Australia-NZ hiking guides.

OFFICE VOLUNTEER TIME

The Friends Office is usually open 10.30-14.30 5 days per week with 2 volunteers per day.

Office Volunteers engage in a raft of behind-the-scenes administration that keeps the Friends, our walks and promotional efforts ticking over. Importantly they provide advice and information about walking the Heysen Trail; coordinate on-line shop orders; manage Trailwalker postage; help publish website news items, such as park closures for fire management, pest control, and fire danger season.

RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

Since Council decided to establish a Reconciliation group, the Friends has commenced discussion with First Nations leaders aiming to work collaboratively to learn more about the traditional lands that the Heysen Trail crosses.

FOHT has now formalised a Reconciliation Committee nominating Anne Kirk as Chair and that aims:

- To acknowledge country and build an understanding of reconciliation along the Heysen Trail;
- Work with Traditional Owners, where possible, so they can share their stories; and build connections through trust and a willingness to listen.

In consultation with Reconciliation SA we identified an appropriate form of words that End-to-End Walk groups may use during their walks on different sections of the trail.

Future plans include:

- pursue connections with several identified Aboriginal contacts;
- continue to investigate location of transition points of Traditional Lands on the trail; and
- share stories where appropriate.





WARREN
BONYTHON
HEYSEN TRAIL
FOUNDATION

THE WARREN BONYTHON HEYSEN TRAIL FOUNDATION was established as the fundraising arm of the Friends of the Heysen Trail in order to assist with the development of the Heysen Trail and other walking trails in South Australia.

The Foundation is a registered charity with tax deductible donations being directed towards improving the environment along the Trail.



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In addition, lifetime membership of the Foundation can also be obtained by payment of \$25 through the website.

The End-to-End story continues

Following on from Julian Monfries' report on the 'Original End-to-End Walk', both Julian and Dean Mortimer continue the story.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

So, after finishing the first End-to-End, what happened next? Not that much!

Some walkers who hadn't finished their Heysen journey joined informally to complete the Trail — known as the 'Millennium Catch-up Walk' (later as End-to-End 2). Unfortunately, the group leader departed as soon as he had earned his Heysen honours; luckily, Jerry Foster came to the rescue and led members from then on. Jerry had played backup driver for his wife Michelle, who walked and finished with End-to-End 1. In fact, it was the Fosters who wrote the End-to-End reference which all leaders still use today. Jerry also recruited the much-loved Gavin from Rufus Bus Service, who remain our transport providers for every End-to-End in their final year.

The End-to-End 2 walking group are known for completing the shortest ever day on the Trail. It was decided after nearly becoming bogged en route to the destination, the bus would divert, and hikers would instead attack the stretch from Warren Gorge in the east (now a common route). After having walked four kilometres to arrive at the Trail, and less than 100 metres on the Trail itself, they aborted the day, with conditions too miserable and the threat of hypothermia too real.

HARNESSING EARLY SUCCESS

In April 2006, End-to-End 3 began on the back of the success of the first iteration, with Simon Cameron taking the helm. At this stage, the Friends hadn't thought to do them every year,

and frankly, were overwhelmed by their popularity. You can imagine our surprise, after advertising this third End-to-End, when 144 walkers registered! Marshalling leaders from End-to-End 1 and 2, and enlisting three large Genesis buses, we were, paradoxically, relieved when only 121 turned up on the first day.

End-to-End 3 finished in 2011, with around 54 walkers completing the Trail. It was this group, under the tutelage of Simon, that introduced the idea of themes — something that has caught on with varying degrees of success amongst subsequent End-to-Enders.

Simon's article from TrailWalker Spring 2011 perfectly summed up the experience.

"What a wonderful journey it has been, traversing the Mt Lofty and Flinders Ranges travelling through the historic hinterland of South Australia. Sharing each other's company, trading adventures and celebrating in every town we stopped. Saturday nights were the scene of home-cooked feasts hosted by community and service clubs. Christmas in July at Burra brought new life to the 12 days of Christmas, and the "Royal Variety" performance at Wirrabara showed just how talented walkers are.

In the last week of walking the excitement builds, the mountain vistas lift the gaze, and the scenery catches your breath. The walking is easy, and the nights are a party. The last day is a wild melange of fun, frolic and trail memories with just a tincture of sadness that it has ended.

Having witnessed two previous finishes, I can attest that the end of the trail is the beginning of new adventures and the continuation of friendships. After six years you have accumulated walking partners for life, and if you have finished the Trail, you have succumbed to its charms and wiles. A love affair with a living trail that will endure to the last horizon."

End-to-End 4 followed after a three-year hiatus, with Nick Langsford and ➤

Heather Nimmo coordinating efforts. The team were again shocked to have an incredible 202 walkers book on! At that point, we stopped accepting registrations.

Again, as 'luck' would have it due to the previous day's wet and windy conditions, only 144 turned up, though Genesis still had to come to the party with four large buses. End-to-End 4 culminated in 2014, with 74 walkers crossing the finish line; 40 of these completing the entire Trail.

GOING ANNUAL

Since the Friends launched the concept of annual walking groups in 2010, the organisation has organised 11 new Walking Groups along the Heysen (six of which have since finished), while another two had planned to commence this year, but were postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

All of these groups share special moments on the Trail, but some seem to have a little more fortune than others. End-to-End 5 has the dubious honour of walking the longest ever reroute after the Wirrabara fires brushed through the region in 2014. End-to-End 11 too have endured their share of obstacles with lingering injuries plaguing both hikers and leaders alike. In contrast, End-to-End 7 (otherwise known as the Blessed 7s) could barely recall a day when they had to utilise their wet weather gear throughout the entire northbound trip. Realising the variable fortunes of the walk, End-to-End 13 decided to embrace their stereotypically ominous number and select a black cat as their mascot, while several members begin their day's journey by walking under a ladder.

Astonishingly, End-to-Ends have become so popular that many book out within hours of registrations opening; competition is fierce! At last count, nearly 1,000 walkers have participated in the programme, with a number of walkers on their second or third journeys along the Trail. We must be doing something right!

.....
The original article 'The original End-to-End: 20 years on' can be found in Autumn Trailwalker 2020.

Welcome New Members

The President and the Council would like to extend a warm welcome to the following 55 members who have joined the Friends since the last edition of Trailwalker.

Colleen	Rodney Dodd	Jennifer	Kim Schwarz
Adriaanse	Philip Evans	Meacham	Olive Schwarz
Walter	Eric Felgate	Mary Mitchell	Cass Selwood
Adriaanse	Harry Gillespie	Lorraine	Charlie
Glenda	Rakesh Gopal	Moore	Selwood
Battersby	Sara Grafton	Robin Moore	Matilda
Tracy Belling	David Grimes	Peter Moriarty	Selwood
Linda Bowes	Trish Hansen	Yolande Morris	Melanie
Sandra	Glen Harrison	Suzanne Napier	Selwood
Braithwaite	Tanya Harrison	Paul Nicholas	Mick Sims
Tricia Bubner	Georgie Hart	Chris Robson	Tanya Stacey
Scott Chandler	John Hart	Leonie Robson	Kenneth Stuart
Barbara	Trish Hensley	Jarrod Rueff	Tori Tassone
Christensen	Joe Hoogland	Jannett Russ	Peter Wood
Susan Clark	Dara Lancaster	Alison Russell	Rebecca Wu
Kate Cotellessa	Kev McDonald	Clayton Schwarz	Keryn Yorke
Daryl Curyer	Robin McEgan	Darren Schwarz	Stephen Young
Sharon Curyer			

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The mental and physical health effects of walking

HELEN DONOVAN

Photo: Philip Bell

Dr Helen Donovan, Executive Director of Walking SA and Health Psychologist, highlights the mental and physical benefits of walking.

Most of us have had the experience of going for a walk and noticing we feel a little (or a lot) better at the end of it. We also have a broad understanding that physical activity is good for us and helps to build physical

fitness in a variety of ways. However, I believe we significantly undervalue the wide-ranging benefits of the humble walk and the dramatic impact it has on our biochemistry, and therefore both our physical and mental health.

What do *you* notice when you go for a walk in your favourite national park, or along the beach? A boost to your mood? A feeling of increased energy (the physical activity paradox — expending energy makes us feel more energised)? A sense of having a better perspective on life's worries? When you get into a routine of regular walking do you notice improved sleep and a tendency to make healthier food choices?

It is all these things and more that led me to a desire to better understand the chemistry of the links between mental health and physical health, and the more I learn, the more interested I become.

“

Each choice we make has the potential to influence our biochemistry, which shapes our next choice. I think of it as a series of mini upward or downward spirals.

”

Our daily health behaviours are a complex interplay between routines, our environment, and the cause and effect of each preceding choice (amongst other things, like our genetic make-up). Each choice we make has the potential to influence our biochemistry, which shapes our next choice. I think of it as a series of mini upward or downward spirals.

We tend to be both proactive and reactive in those choices (and much of our decision-making is built into our routines, which requires less conscious decision-making). Let us look at just a couple of biochemical impacts that you create for your internal world when you make the decision to include a daily walk.

As we move toward the end of Autumn it is getting a little colder and wetter in the mornings, but today, you decide to get up and go for a walk anyway — raincoat on. Your dog is especially ➤

happy and bounds up to you ready to come with you. You smile at her excitement, and so begins your positive biochemical spiral. Like most systems in your body, that little smile involves multiple systems, including your brain, nerves and hormones. Your smile causes the release of chemical messengers into your nervous system that communicate to your brain to let you know that you are happy. This triggers the release of our 'happy hormone' trio: dopamine, serotonin and endorphins. This trio helps you to relax and gives you a little mood boost. Dopamine is a motivator to continue with rewarding behaviours (like walking and smiling!), serotonin helps to regulate your mood, and endorphins act on the opiate receptors in your brains, reducing pain and boosting pleasure.

“

Stress, especially long periods of it, weakens your immune system. By exercising, you are reducing the production of stress hormones and helping your immune system and general wellbeing.

”

You step out the door with Fido and head to the park. On your way you pass a couple of neighbours out and about. You smile and nod hello (top up booster of happy hormones!). People who walk regularly in their neighbourhood tend to have higher levels of social connectedness which is related to increased wellbeing.

As you hit your stride you experience an extra boost in endorphins and a decrease in your stress hormones, cortisol and adrenaline. Stress, especially long periods of it, weakens your immune system. By exercising, you are reducing the production of stress hormones and helping your immune system and general wellbeing. That boost in endorphins reduces the morning aches and pains and you are feeling great. Next come

the Killer T cells. Previous studies have shown walking for just 30 minutes increases the concentration of Killer T cells in the body. Killer T cells roam around your body and destroy cancer cells! I think that is worth reading again — your humble daily walk is reducing your risk of cancer. It also boosts the size of your hippocampus (the part of your brain responsible for consolidating information from short-term memory to long-term memory) and buffers against memory loss and dementia.

Regular exercise, like walking, is also correlated with improved self-efficacy, your belief in your own ability to influence events that effect your life and control over the way these events are experienced. Regular walking helps us to feel we can accomplish more in our day, and in our life.

You exit your urban street and hit the green space of your local park. As you walk through the park you are feeling great from the positive biochemical cascade you have already created internally (any walk is a good walk!). As you smell the eucalyptus, hear the birds, and see the surrounding trees, you feel more relaxed. The mechanisms are not fully understood but walking in nature is associated with even better health outcomes, including reductions in cortisol levels, heart rate, and blood pressure, and an overall improvement in wellbeing. Some research suggests the phytoncides (wood essential oils) released by trees positively affect the human endocrine and immune systems.

All this (and so much more) from enjoying a daily walk! So, where are you walking today? Check out Walking SA's 'find a place to walk' database to explore somewhere new: www.walkingsa.org.au/walk/find-a-place-to-walk and keep an eye out for our work-in-progress, bringing you a new challenge: www.adelaide100.com because guess what else increases brain volume and brain health? New experiences!

Dr Helen Donovan is the Executive Director of Walking SA and a Health Psychologist.

Keeping your inspiration for the Trail

Click on the icons to view the online accounts for these Heysen adventures.




PLAN B (YOUTUBE)

 Plan B's Youtube Page




JEZ (BLOG)

 jez-heysen.blogspot.com



BANE OF THE TRAIL (BLOG)

 baneofthetrail.ca/heysen-trail



NEANDERJOEL (BLOG)

 neanderjoel.wordpress.com



CARL GREENSTREET (RAMBLR)

 [gstreet's Ramblr Account](#)



TREKKING WEST (BLOG / YOUTUBE)

  Trekking West Pages



What hiking taught me about dealing with social isolation

JOSH WEST

Photo: Josh West



Climbing to the Cruz de Ferro, Camino

Trail Ambassador Josh West recaps his experiences with social isolation on the trail.

Aside from confronting a previously untapped level of back pain, the most challenging aspect of my first multi-day solo hike involved battling the hidden depths of social isolation. Initially, walking for days between towns without any face-to-face interaction was unnerving, then jarring, then draining. Knowing I faced social solitude for up to a week at a time left me feeling unsuspectingly deflated — this mental sluggishness was not a test I had expected to encounter. However, as the weeks went by, and the detachment became routine, I gradually discovered the many advantages of spending uninterrupted periods in my own head.

Bans on non-essential intrastate, interstate and international travel are already in effect here in Australia and throughout much of the world. With our typical social liberties and freedoms temporarily suspended, many face losing their identity and motivation.

‘Social isolation’ can feel like a dirty phrase; however, if approached in the right frame of mind, this period can present a bevy of benefits. The positives I’ve absorbed from solo hiking, then subsequently repurposed throughout my life, will help me navigate the imminent COVID-19 shut-in. Here are a hatful of values I developed from time spent in social isolation.

REDEFINITION AND GROWTH

Embracing sustained periods of peaceful solitude — by taking the time to stop, think and reflect — allows for unforeseeable self-development. As

the proverb goes, silence is golden. Without the continuous torrent of outside voices shaping our decision-making, an often over-influenced inner voice can reinvent its message.

Following weeks of wafting around the South Australian wilderness on my first multi-day solo hike, I finally felt ‘me’ again. Status-hungry society no longer impacted my thinking; my profession, income, education, degrees and material possessions did not define me; my character stripped clean. I could finally reassess who I was, what I wanted to be, and where I was going.

After re-emerging from isolation, I felt surprisingly motivated and productive; and I wasn’t the only one. Sir Isaac Newton discovered gravity while practising safe social distancing as the plague impacted Europe in the mid-1600s. Take your time; be patient; be kind to yourself. You may not reinvent the laws of motion, but you may just reinvent yourself. ➤

LEARN THE VALUE OF INDEPENDENCE

The love, warmth and support from your nearest and dearest is an extraordinarily beautiful thing, but so, I would say, is the nourishment you give yourself. Developing genuine independence, in the face of isolated adversity, has galvanised my resilience.

By no means should 'independence' be taken as merely 'looking out for number one'; hoarding essential supplies and other Machiavellian traits only generate panic and unnecessary stress. Instead, independence relates to having your own self-worth, confidence and ability to govern yourself.

Despite all the challenges we face in the near and distant future, including people's urge to clean out the toilet paper aisle, I know, with patience and compassion, we will rebuild; hopefully, with an enhanced sense of open-mindedness.

TAKE THE POSITIVES OUT OF EVERY SITUATION

It could be argued, that, as a society, we're programmed to absorb doom and gloom. We are regularly exposed to abrupt headlines from newspapers, scandalous lead stories from 6 o'clock bulletins, shock jocks spewing confrontational bile and 'Karen from Facebook' sharing her views. I can understand; outrage sells. However, after inadvertently distancing myself from these toxic mediums on the trail, I discovered that I became more open to seeing the positives.

The outbreak of COVID-19 holds daunting health and economic implications around the globe, but there are still positives we can collect from the rubble. After decades of suffocation, the planet is finally breathing again; communities are working together, and we have already begun building our resilience. We must rely on our positivity, humour, generosity and togetherness to see us through this pandemic and propel us into the recovery phase. Breaking the constant stream of negative messaging goes a long way to feeding that optimism.

EMBRACE MINIMALISM

Living without life's routine refinements on the trail took some adjusting; especially when only the barest of essentials squeezed into my supply box. However, before long, rationing became standard, 'normality' turned to indulgence, and luxury seemed almost unjustifiable. Daily showers were a distant memory, cooked meals were eternally savoured, bedsheets were a curious novelty and hot water flowing directly from a tap felt like alchemist-conjured sorcery.

When our rituals finally return, an increased sense of gratitude, appreciation and empathy will inevitably follow.

Self-isolation on a hike requires forfeiting everyday creature comforts; fortunately, social distancing at

home doesn't demand such primal simplicity, though, some modern privileges may still have to wait. Embracing minimalism isn't always easy, but it does get easier; and, when our rituals finally return, an increased sense of gratitude, appreciation and empathy will inevitably follow.

WHAT WE CAN ALL DO

Stay safe, stay local, stay positive, and for goodness sake, stay healthy. Exercise! If possible, visit a nearby park or cut a couple of laps of the block. When you go for a walk, it's not just your body that benefits, the way you think and feel changes too! The world can appear less complicated after a mind-cleansing stroll.

Set yourself up to be a better, rounded individual at the end of your isolation.

We're all bracing for what is to come, and it won't be easy, but, if you have the means, set yourself up to be a better, rounded individual at the end of your isolation.

And finally, if circumstances allow, get out into the wilderness and appreciate all the things you've taken for granted. I know I am.

If you are struggling with self-isolation, seek help. Chat to friends, family and health professionals. If it's urgent, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

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ASK A HIKER

What is your secret scroggin ingredient?



Highly impractical in hot weather, but as far as I'm concerned, you can't go past **dark chocolate**. It is a real energy booster that contains caffeine for a "fix" and increases endorphins, the feel good chemical, to give you a quick pick-me-up.

JUDY MCADAM

Walk Leader



To be honest, I'm not a scroggin devotee, as it generally interferes with my habit of talking incessantly. My favourite variety is **OP's (other people's)**. The fact that fellow walkers keep offering it to me may have something to do with the opening sentence of my answer.

DOM HENSCHKE

Office Chair



I don't have much of a sweet tooth, so I mostly enjoy the savoury snacks (cashews and soy crisps are such a great combo). But for me, every snack bag needs a few **Cool Mints!** They are perfect for clearing out that horrible taste in your mouth after a store bought freeze-dried meal, and offer just enough of a work out on the jaw to keep things interesting!

PLAN B

Through-hiker



No doubt about it; **Starburst Snakes**. After traipsing through the wilderness and munching my way through fist-fulls of nuts, dried fruit and seeds, there may be nothing more satisfying as tucking into a gelatinous treat that I've dutifully saved for the final march into camp.

JOSH WEST

Ambassador



On End-to-End 5, I was known as Carol with the pantry in her backpack; along the trail I would continuously snack. I always include **chocolate** which gives me that boost of energy when I feel my energy running low.

CAROL HOMEWOOD

Council Member



I typically enjoy walking in warmer climes, so what could be better than chocolate that doesn't melt. **M&Ms** (pictured) for me.

SIMON CAMERON

Heysen Highlights Author



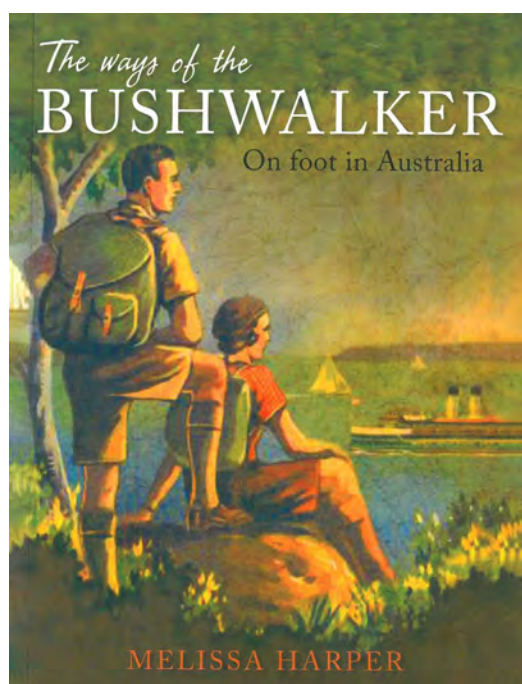
I like to include three **liquorice allsorts** - you know, the cubes with layers of candy and liquorice. Each one is my reward for completing a particular challenge. I try to save the last one as my reward for getting to the end.

PETER WYNEN

Past Trailwalker Editor

Trailthinker Quiz Answers

1. Mount Woodroffe (Ngarutjaranya)
2. David Unaipon (\$50 banknote)
3. 1976 (9 km within the Cleland Conservation Park)
4. Kapunda
5. 1977
6. Victoria Square (Tarntanyangga), Hindmarsh Square (Mukata), Light Square (Wauwi), Hurtle Square (Tangkairra) and Whitmore Square (Iparrityi)
7. City of Onkaparinga
8. 1986 (the same year the Friends was founded)
9. Larapinta Trail
10. New South Wales



Book Review: The ways of the Bushwalker

Melissa Harper, The ways of the Bushwalker: On foot in Australia (UNSW Press, 2007)

Melanie Sjoberg investigates how the role of a bushwalker has developed over the centuries.

Books are my vice, and second-hand bookshops nurture my passion. When that shop offers coffee and snacks, I'm at serious risk of randomly discovering yet another read that piques my interest. The Ways of the Bushwalker provides an intriguing guide to the evolution of bushwalking groups in Australia, presenting an insight into precursors to the Friends of Heysen Trail and other groups.

The author acknowledges upfront that the book doesn't cover Aboriginal walking practice, albeit recognising that it is an essential element of their culture and imbued with ceremonial meaning. Rather, the story traces bushwalking origins from colonial times and fundamentally locates the practice as a choice to walk for leisure; thereby available to those with a certain social and economic position.

In the early days, it seems bushwalking had difficulties being taken seriously because 'walking' was viewed as such an "...everyday, mundane..." activity. In 2020 Australia, the practice is still part of our every day, but now it's most definitely taken seriously. The annual Ausplay survey shows that walking is the number one activity across the community and bushwalking comes in at seven just after Aussie Rules Football (Ausplay SA Data 31 October 2019).

As we isolate and keep physically distant under COVID-19, the importance of walking – preferably in nature – seems even more evident.

COLONIAL RAMBLING

A fascinating section from the earliest days of the colony outlines experiences, elicited from diaries, that find early settlement walkers spending long hours, as they explored the rivers, lakes, hills and mountains of their new surroundings. The author suggests this harked back to practices from mother England and the Edwardian tradition of taking a turn around the gardens; though I suspect that background probably didn't apply to the convict population. Quaint diary remarks date back to 1788 outlining forays into the woods with a gun, food and making a camp by a fire.

WALKING GUIDES

I particularly appreciated the outline of Alice Mansfield as one of the earliest 'walking guides' around Victoria's Mt Buffalo from the 1890s to 1930s. As you might imagine for the role of women during that period, she apparently caused a stir while wearing a pantsuit.

The availability of experienced guides seemed to ignite the development of tourism-type destinations from Mt Buffalo to Healesville and Mt Macedon, the Blue Mountains, Mt Kosciuszko

and Mt Lofty in SA. This influx led to a gradual blossoming of group walks led along tracks previously established by bush workers, bridle paths or livestock routes.

EARLY CLUBS

The book explores the growing awareness for organisation among walkers late in the 19th-century. As such, planning became more common among sporting groups and throughout other parts of society, like trade unions and political parties.

“

A deep-felt concern emanated from some of the early groups that allowing just anyone to join a walk would diminish the bushwalking ethos.

”

The early stories show that it was predominantly professional city types heading bush for some escapism or clear air and invokes a reality that you needed mobility, transport and finances to be able to get away from the city. They also indicate that walks tended to preclude women whose social situation ordinarily required genteel activity under a chaperone or that working women were too busily consumed with feeding and caring for large families. These features are not meant to suggest early settlers and farmers weren't also making inroads into the bush, but simply that walking was not their focus.

EARLY WALKS

Tracing the formal establishment of bushwalking as an activity, the author identifies the eastern states – specifically NSW and Victoria – as the logical forerunners due to the geography, conducive climate and growing population. It aligned with a burgeoning interest and desire to explore the landscape and champion Australian nature. Harper also situates the period post WW1 and 1930 Depression as engendering an emphasis on physical health and "racial strength" thus promoting outdoor activity as part of a wider nationalist trend in community outlook. ➤

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Notwithstanding indications that walking in the bush for leisure was undertaken earlier, Harper traces use of the word bushwalking to 1920s with a specific definition related to what we'd probably now describe as overnight hiking with a pack. It would seem at that time if you didn't "get off the beaten track and know how to find your own way, carry your own gear and camp overnight" you just didn't cut it.

The fundamental ethos for walking groups was to venture into the wilderness and be self-sufficient, as well as extending the bushwalker role to protecting the bush. The author suggests this is important for knowing how the reflected view of bushwalking and its relationship to the landscape shaped 'clubs'.

WHOSE BUSH IS IT ANYWAY?

It seems a deep-felt concern emanated from some of the early groups that

allowing just anyone to join a walk would diminish the bushwalking ethos: "... sterner pursuits of craftsmanship and stoical superiority and endurance to unpleasant conditions". It poses an interesting question even today as to whether bushwalking is only for those capable of negotiating rugged wilderness or should walking also be available to those who prefer a more structured trail experience and an opportunity to be immersed in nature?

TRAIL DEVELOPMENTS

Leap to the 1980s, and we find long-distance marked trails being developed across Australia: our own Heysen Trail, as well as the Bibbulmun in WA, Australian Alps Walking Trail, the Hume and Hovell Track and many more. In more recent years, the commercial tourism sector has created several high-end luxury 'walks'. Trail developments sit alongside a dynamic shift to ever more

functional, lightweight hiking gear improving our comfort and allowing increased participation.

“

There is an ongoing challenge in maintaining the nature experience in parks and wilderness.

”

Advance to the 21st century, and it seems Harper's theme around the protection of natural places continues as a robust debate over the protection of wilderness areas and incursion by commercial development for private profit has not diminished. There is an ongoing challenge in maintaining the nature experience in parks and wilderness that attracts people in the first place alongside opportunities for revenue from tourism that helps to support regional communities.



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The Terry Lavender Churchill Fellowship

BEN TREWREN

The Terry Lavender Churchill Fellowship was established in 2017 to provide a South Australian with an opportunity to follow their passion overseas to investigate ways to develop, improve, manage and promote outdoor recreational trails and pursuits.

My name is Ben Trewren, and in 2018, I was incredibly humbled to become the sole recipient of this Churchill Fellowship that honours a trail building icon in South Australia, but also someone who I viewed as my Outdoor Hero.

I pursued this Fellowship in a continuation of my passion for community, experiential learning and the outdoors and wanted to explore opportunities for trail destinations to attract and grow world-class 'shared-use' interests. Between June to August

last year, I travelled to New Zealand, Canada, United States, United Kingdom and Switzerland to establish and build relationships while also immersing myself in trail-based experiences.

“

Maximising the value of shared-use trails is outdoor recreation's greatest challenge

”

The strength of outdoor experiences come from the relationships we share.

Having the pleasure of meeting with key outdoor leaders from across 73 different organisations, including the US National Park Service, Leave No Trace, Ramblers UK, NZ Federated Mountain Clubs, Trailforks (to name a few) throughout my Fellowship is something I'll never take for granted.

The outdoors matters because it brings people together, in community.

Many understand a shared trail as infrastructure that equally and respectfully supports multiple recreation and transportation opportunities. I consider the word 'share' an interesting one, defined by our ability to collectively use a resource or space. An action to consider everyone's interests and respond in a manner that allows us all to thrive. Maximising the value of shared-use trails is outdoor recreation's greatest challenge — how do we get multiple users to share trails, activate the spaces the trails surround and engage those users in a meaningful and enjoyable way. Shared-use is much more than just a practical use. It's about sharing in community, responsibility, history, mutual respect, ownership, knowledge, skills and most importantly, experience.

The outdoors matters because it brings people together, in community. A place for people to belong, a space for people to feel equal. The outdoors



Main: Enjoying the majestic view across Yosemite National Park from Tunnel View.



Right: Taking on a 10km round trip into The Narrows, Zion National Park. Hiking at least ankle deep in water was an experience.

Photos: Maddie Trewren and Ben Trewren.



allows us all a chance to undertake our own experiences that can challenge, grow, inspire and connect us.

My Churchill Adventure has reinforced in me the communal value of the outdoors and reminded me of the endless possibilities there are to improve our communities through outdoor trails. Furthermore, I have a greater appreciation for the value that outdoor trails can have to create opportunities for inclusion, diversity and accessibility in our communities.

Over two months, I had the chance to adventure on over 250 km of different hiking trails. Highlights included, but certainly weren't limited to, hiking up to Makara Peak (Wellington, NZ),

to Rainbow Lake (Whistler, Canada), through Yosemite Valley (USA), up to Angels Landing and through the Narrows in Zion National Park (USA), along the New York Highline (USA), the Bristol to Bath Shared Path, through Waterfall Country in Brecon Beacons and up to Pen Y Fan (UK). I also had the chance to hike sections of thru-hikes including the Te Araroa Trail (NZ), Pacific Crest Trail and Appalachian Trail (USA) and numerous Rail Trails.

We're living in a dynamic and demanding world. The importance of the outdoors and the experiential opportunities to learn, grow and develop through shared adventures are as critical as ever. Outdoor trails are of



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interest to everyone. Represented by a diverse cross-section of our broad and diverse community, the attraction is gathered from our sense of adventure and inquisition into the benefits for our physical, mental, social and emotional health.

The Tahoe Rim Trail in California was undoubtedly the best shared trail experience I had. A single unsealed trail, consisting of day and multi-day options around the popular Lake Tahoe that regularly facilitates the collective use of walkers, bike riders and horse riders. The trail supports all users through good infrastructure and management, but it's the organic strength of the local community and the diversity of users that sets a culture which not only promotes but takes ownership in maintaining the trail.

We're part of a world where how we interact today, matters as much as the

decisions we're making for tomorrow. It's our shared responsibility to protect and conserve our natural outdoor spaces, to utilise trails to connect with cultural and historical understanding and to embrace community in facilitating interactive opportunities through recreation, tourism and enterprise.

“

Solutions begin with individuals taking ownership and responsibility

”

The outdoors brings people together, and it's well known that experiences are often better when shared. It is my hope that sharing my experiences will appeal to all trail users — especially those with an interest in walking,

bushwalking, mountain biking, cycling, horse riding, and/or trail running.

Whistler, as a town and trails destination, was easily my favourite place to visit. This Canadian village has a combination of a small-town vibe, friendly local culture, great food and accommodation options, stunning natural landscape, resourced with a diversity of local businesses, access to high-quality equipment and of course world-class trails for all types of users made it a very fun experience.

Shared understanding allows us a collective of outdoor trail users, to respect, relate with, collaborate on and influence decision-makers, Government departments, peak representative bodies, landowners, clubs, community groups and local businesses.

Solutions begin with individuals taking ownership and responsibility and then seeking to gather and mobilise other

BEN'S THREE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR US ALL TO CONSIDER:

LET'S INCREASE THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY IN OUTDOOR TRAILS

- › Recognising that developing, supporting and maintaining trail users and groups is as important as the trail networks themselves.
- › Offer more places and spaces for people to connect, share, learn and grow together.
- › Create multilateral opportunities to support one another – recreationally (activities), economically (business/enterprise) and socially (relationships).
- › Remind ourselves of the importance that if we value something, we should invest in it – either with our money or our time.

CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSION, DIVERSITY & ACCESSIBILITY

- › The outdoors should be a place for ALL people.
- › Adapt and transition between generational differences, appreciating the experiences of the past and accepting the new perspectives of the future.
- › Explore and undertake more offerings and opportunities to take risks, develop new ideas, create memories – whether it be a program, business, expedition.
- › Recognition that everyone is on their own personal journey, especially in the outdoors.
- › Facilitate opportunities for diversity to be brought together in harmony – irrespective of background, experience, ability, gender, age or otherwise.
- › Consideration towards both practical (signage, trails) and cultural (acceptance, shared) improvements.

SHAPE A FUTURE WITH SHARED AND EXPERIENTIAL APPROACHES

- › Continue to explore opportunities to allow outdoor experiences to challenge and then influence traditional forms of education and learning, not just for young people, but all people.
- › Engage people in all components of trails – recreation, enterprise, trail building, conservation, cultural recognition and others as relevant to each trail's location.
- › Consider how trails can play a role in overcoming broader community-based challenges such as unemployment, health, rehabilitation and climate change.
- › Present pathways for experiential, hands-on, practical, real world learning.

- › Providing an equalised platform to allow diversity to share together. Especially those who have been marginalised from exposure to outdoor experiences.
- › Our society's challenges of unemployment, health, isolation can be positively influenced and affected by outdoor experiences.
- › Trails can be the starting point for exemplifying a more adventurous, communal, sustainable and healthy world.



like-minded people to help us collectively overcome challenges together.

Finally, I wanted to pass on my thanks and appreciation to the many Friends of the Heysen Trail who invested in the Terry Lavender Churchill Fellowship, who supported me with their time both prior to and after my travels and for all the resources and information that has been passed along.

It was a huge privilege to travel to trails across the world, to continue exploring the future possibilities for trails on behalf of Terry's legacy and to share about South Australia's most iconic trail – the Heysen Trail.

Read Ben's report in full.

View the full Churchill Fellowship Report via bltrewren.wixsite.com/bentrewren/churchill-fellowship-report



One of the many Shared Use signs from across the adventure reflecting opportunities for multiple users to access trails together.

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Photo: Claire Brear

A new shade of green: tramping Te Araroa

KIRBY DRAPER



Tararua Ranges, NZ North Island

With only nine days remaining on her fundraising trek along one of the world's longest trails, Kirby Draper had to depart the Te Araroa as the COVID-19 Pandemic decended.

For the longest time, my favourite colour has been turquoise: a particular hue nestled somewhere on the spectrum between blue

and green. This colour is showcased in its most spectacular form in alpine landscapes, under precise conditions in springtime sunlight, when the silt, or rock flour, is at its most bountiful. I was precisely 2,773 km into my 3000 km endeavour to hike the length of New Zealand's mountainous bushland; it was day 138; I had not seen so much as a grocery store in a month, and I was enveloped by green.

I awoke in my tent around 7.00 am. My morning starts had become later and chillier with each passing day. The rainfall droplets on my tent had become my simplest form of entertainment. I would study the

patterns created by the sliding drops for longer than I could justify to avoid donning my inevitably wet socks, which, by daybreak, were usually still frozen solid. As had become tradition, a South Island robin would visit me under my tent vestibule, throwing all caution to the wind in favour of his curiosity. Today he perched himself on top of my teacup, helping himself to a sip of morning caffeine before busying himself with the contents of my rucksack. I smiled to myself, thinking about the night before when I had mapped out the final stretch of my hike. I pulled out my roughly sketched plan again and studied it in disbelief. >

After five months of walking, I would stand at the finish line in a mere nine days. My grin broadened. I didn't know it yet, but today would be my last day on the Te Araroa. Unbeknown to me, the chaos unfolding in the outside world would soon bleed in.

Taking on a long-distance trail is easy to romanticise, and there is a good reason why — during my time on the Te Araroa, I was exposed to experiences that were so breathtaking that I struggled to reconcile them as real. But the vividness of this journey also brought about times of intense monochromatic melancholy. The only thing that I could rely on, where my emotions were concerned, was their inconsistency. If they were measured, I am sure they would have resembled the elevation profile of a mountain range.

“

Unbeknown to me, the chaos unfolding in the outside world would soon bleed in.

”

While misty mountain tops brought on feelings of achievement and elatedness, the terror of spending eleven hours clambering up and down sharp, rocky bluffs equipped with sheer drops and no safety equipment prompted levels of exhaustion and vulnerability that I didn't care to fully recognise other than to crawl into my tent and sob myself to sleep in the absence of dinner.

The rollercoaster of emotions is nicely demonstrated by my sixty-fourth day on the trail. About three quarters along the journey down the North Island, a 160 km section of trail is required to be completed by canoe in the white water rapids of the mighty Whanganui River. The scenery on this thing was something out of a sci-fi film — endless kilometres surrounded by a twelve-metre vertical jungle as you whizzed down a pristine river. Even though I had cumulatively paddled for over 36 hours by this stage and my upper body had entered a stage of paralysis, it was hard not to be caught up in an opalescence of privilege, joy and awe. However, in true Kiwi style, and I suppose what is also true for general human existence, we were taking on this section without a guide or sufficient training on how to navigate the 200 plus rapids.

As a safety precaution, you are required to buddy up with another canoe. I was lucky enough to have a safety net of three. Later in the afternoon, in the middle of an uncharacteristically still stretch of river, we lowered our guards and afforded ourselves a well-earned rest from paddling. Up ahead, we heard the familiar sounds of a crashing rapid but saw nothing. We chatted unwittingly before it was too late; the swirl became too strong to arrange ourselves correctly into the mouth of the largest rapid we would encounter; cue a state of helpless panic.

To add insult to injury, the fury of the torrent had caused an enormous tree

to collapse, only intensifying the flow. The first one of our fleet was sucked in at a side angle and disappeared under the immense waves. Remarkably, he was spat out the other side unharmed.

The second was forced to surrender to the flow; they would not be so lucky. The bow of their boat crashed into the fallen tree trunk, causing them to capsize mid-rapid. Both of the passengers were sucked under by the current. Their boat's thwart faced the tide, causing the canoe to bow back on itself — threatening to snap in half and leave us stranded. The canoe's contents surged out of reach down the river. Terror ensued. I screamed at my boat mate to paddle harder, as I had completely lost control of my steer and managed, only just, to manoeuvre the boat to safe harbour.

“

There was a sense of elation when the rescued barrel contained a hefty supply of beer.

”

The three of us began swimming against the current to enact a rescue. I was in such a state of panic that my mind has completely blocked out how we went about achieving that. I only recall rescuing a barrel and dragging it back towards the shore which also housed the damaged boat and two very wet, but alive, crewmates. ➤

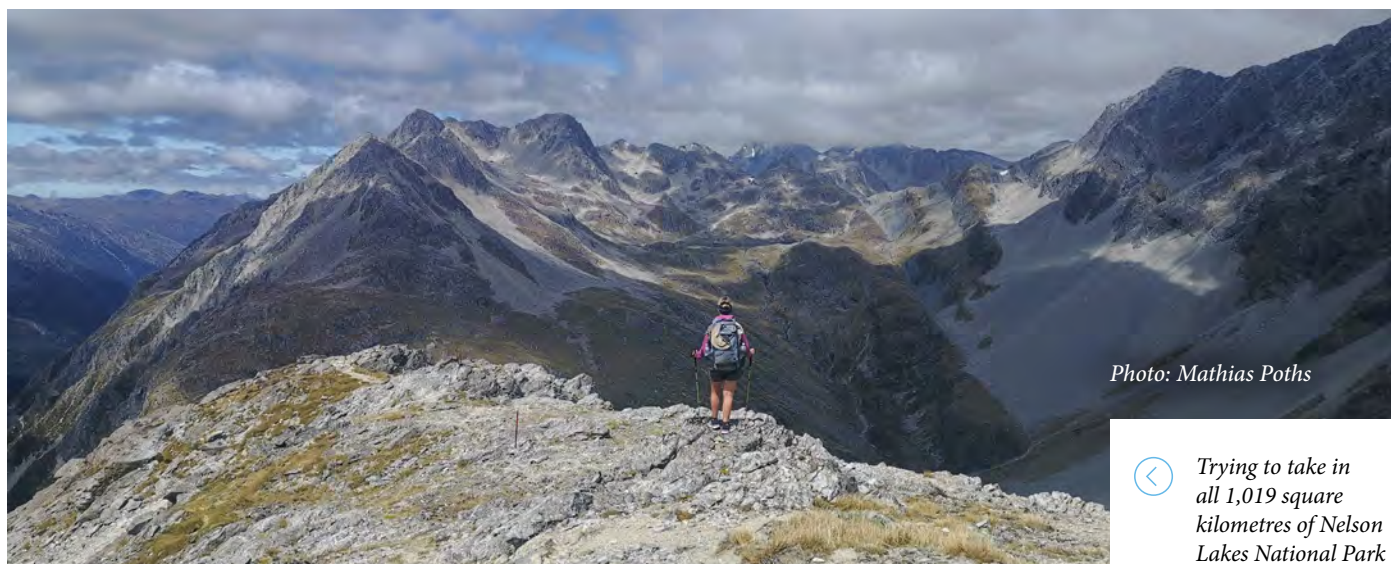


Photo: Mathias Poths



Trying to take in all 1,019 square kilometres of Nelson Lakes National Park

There was a sense of elation when the rescued barrel contained a hefty supply of beer. We each cracked a brew and sat laughing in a state of shock. When we reached camp that night, I went to sleep with an odd sense of contentment, knowing that we were all sleeping safely beside each other.

I reflected on the underlying cause for my peculiar sense of calm after such an ordeal. And to me, the answer lies in what I would lose: I would feel discontentment if I didn't do something, purely because of the risks that they posed. If I had to choose between allowing the flow to guide me or to swim upstream, I would almost always prefer to feel the force of the current.

Fast forward one hundred or so days and the ending that I had fantasised about for five months had all but arrived; though it wasn't what I expected. I had been hiking for four days without signal, only to be spurted out the other side into a barrage of text messages that New Zealand was heading for stage four lockdown. The world had entered the COVID-19 Pandemic.

I struggled to grapple with the lack of control I held over my own trail conclusion. When I had planned to be climbing my last mountain towards the finish line, I found myself on a plane home surrounded by face masks. Now, with the benefit of reflection, I can appreciate the message that the forced conclusion of my journey carried with it.

Over time, becoming comfortable with discomfort became integral to my

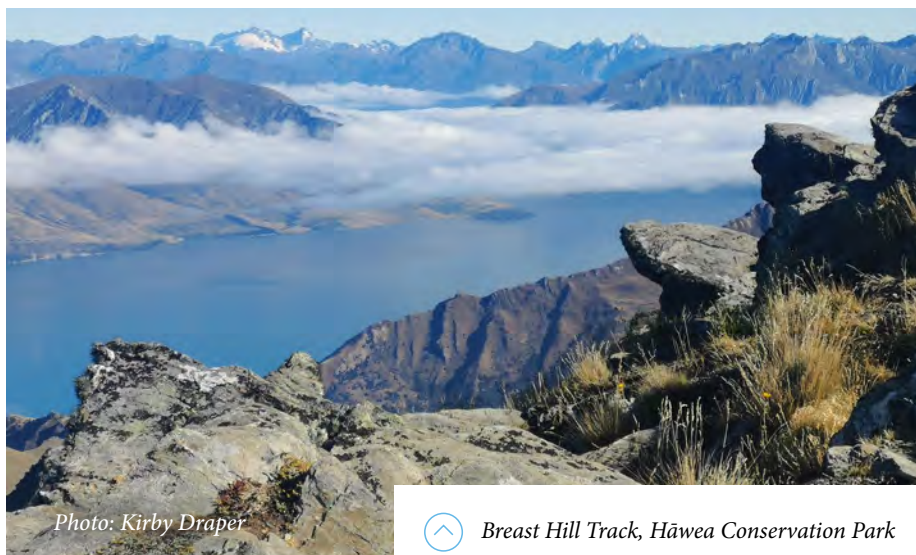


Photo: Kirby Draper



Breast Hill Track, Hāwea Conservation Park

ability to continue moving forward. Adaptability to the unexpected was a prerequisite for my progression. I became accustomed to hiking in rain, hail, shine and even snow. In turn, I had come to appreciate the different qualities this reveals in the landscape around me. Thinking fleetingly, it is easy — even convenient — to categorise objects by colour and immediately dismiss the thought. But after five months of walking, the colour green had demanded my scrutiny. In the morning sunlight, the forest is prismatically ablaze; in the afternoon rain, the palette shifts by its own iridescence, revealing a vividness, which is hidden in conditions of direct light.

The colours of my surroundings, like my emotions, are on an ever-changing spectrum. Each point of that spectrum held a quality that, had it been

ignored, I risked losing a perspective that was worth something to me. Learning to appreciate the spectrum for what it is, without resistance, taught me that this range not only brings a greater comparative vibrancy, but sometimes, you will be lucky enough to discover something completely new — a new shade of green.

Kirby Draper has raised \$11,000 for BackTrack to help disadvantaged kids stay alive, out of jail, and chasing their dreams.

To learn more about Kirby's adventures in New Zealand, and to donate to BackTrack, visit www.trampingsouth.com



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SEAN BENZ

A wee tour of Ben Nevis: A hike around 'the Ben'

Originally published by Cicerone.

Photos: Sean Benz

Having ventured on the Annapurna Circuit and the tours of Mont Blanc, the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa, Sean Benz couldn't help wondering why the UK doesn't have its own grand tour around its highest mountain.

The highest mountains in any country always attract walkers and climbers to ascend its slopes and Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the British Isles, standing at 1344m, is no exception.

Annually, more than 100,000 people climb 'the Ben', as it is affectionately known, with the vast majority going up the 'tourist track'. This means missing out on the real beauty of the mountain and the dramatic rock architecture of the north face. Did those hikers really know how imposing the mountain is and how wild the land is behind it?

As a director of North West Frontiers, I wanted to create a new walking adventure for the holiday programme. I also believed that the tour had value in being an attraction for adventurous walkers and had the attributes to make it a standout multi-day hike.

I wanted to keep the tour to less than a week, as it would not only fit with the tour programme for North West Frontiers but had the potential to become a great walk in its own right. I knew the local area was well serviced with public transport, accommodation and luggage transfers. The question was whether I could connect all these things to make a light-weight hiking tour round Ben Nevis. On several Alpine long-distance hikes, you can connect with post bus services, use ski area summer uplifts and stay in a mountain refuge. The only way to find out if this was going to work was to get the boots on and see if it would work on the ground.

Over the course of 18 months, I hiked the different options multiple times until I found a route that I felt worked and delivered what I wanted. The result was a route that covered just over 100km with nearly 4500m of ascent, which included climbing Ben Nevis. It could be completed in five days, or six if an ascent of the Ben was made. Walking times varied from six to 10 hours and covered distances of up to 26km. Accommodation was available on each night and on most days there was always a plan B in case the weather turned for the worse. Luggage transfer services were available, including options to use public transport and the potential for one night in the wilderness without the need to camp. ➤

Over five days the circuit climbs remote mountains, ventures into wild corries speckled with lochans that are home to golden eagles, deer, mountain hares and ptarmigans. The route explores much of the wonderfully remote hinterland using many of the historical paths and tracks that have shaped the history of the Highlands. It can be completed in either direction, although clockwise would be the preferred option. This enables the walker to ease themselves in, with the days becoming progressively harder on the final days back to Fort William. Spring through to autumn is the best time of year and, having hiked it in winter, it makes for a challenging expedition and one certainly not to be underestimated.

DAY 1

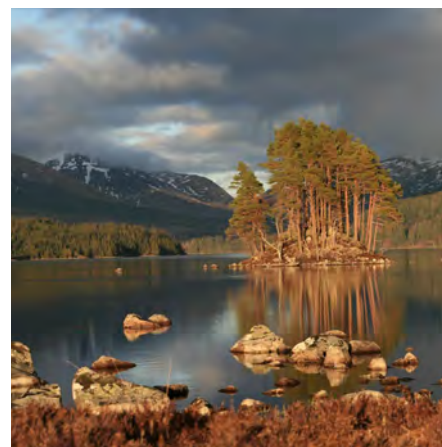
Out of all the days on the route, the first is the most difficult to piece together. Initially, there seems to be only two options: the first is to utilise the Great Glen Way as far as Gairloch then walk on a section of road to Spean Bridge. The other is to pick up the tracks through Leanachan Forest, passing Nevis Range and on to Spean Bridge, which is used by another long-distance walk, the East Highland Way. None of these options appeal as they followed existing walking routes and offered nothing new.

On closer inspection there is another route sandwiched between the two that I feel has greater merit and that would also use part of General Wade's Military Road. The route passes Old Inverlochy Castle, visits Highbridge and provides the perfect panoramic skyline of the major mountains in the area. Not only will you see the north face of Ben Nevis, there will be Aonach Mor and Aonach Beag, along with the peaks of the Grey Corries. There is a short section on a quiet road from Highbridge into the Leanachan forest, but I feel the attributes of the route outweigh this section.

The first day results in 20km on a mix of paths and tracks that give a nice warm-up for what lies ahead. Spean Bridge provides plenty of accommodation options and there's always the option to utilise the Great Glen luggage services to move bags from Fort William.

DAY 2

My initial thought had been to extend the route further east towards Laggan, but this would have made the route too long. It would also mean no accommodation except for camping, which is not part of my idea. It's somewhat convenient that in the remote lands to the south, on the edge of Rannoch Moor, is Loch Ossian (pictured right) and Corrour Station. Here is a wonderfully remote Youth Hostel on the shores of the loch, which provides dormitories. Corrour Station also offers accommodation in the Station House and meals are available in the restaurant. Staying at either gives a real sense of isolation and a wonderful experience, especially given the ease of access with the Glasgow to Fort William railway.



their onward travels. This is a timely reminder as the route now heads into some very remote country that should not be underestimated. Corrour Station certainly makes for a welcome sight after 26km of walking.

There is the option of staying another night in Spean Bridge and taking the train back, although you'd need to allow some contingency time in case of any unforeseen delays as missing the train could make for a rough night without a tent! With some clever planning, baggage services can be used to shuttle bags from Spean Bridge to Kinlochleven, allowing lightweight travel on this section of the route. ➤

“
The ‘Wee Minister’ wishes walkers and climbers good luck on their onward travels.
”

Day two uses the drove road through the Lairig Leacach and before heading through, the ‘Wee Minister’ wishes walkers and climbers good luck on

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DAY 3

From Corrour it is now a case of finding a route west towards Kinlochleven. There is an option to retrace the route to Loch Treig then head south west through Gleann Iolairian on an old drove road that leads to a remote bothy on the shores of Loch Chiarain. As this is a low-level route it is better served as an alternative in the event of poor weather.

Standing on the platform of Corrour Station looking west rises an inviting ridge leading to the summit of Leum Uilleim. It seems a perfect fit to bag a peak and avoid the need to retrace the steps from the previous day. Although not a Munro, the summit provides stunning uninterrupted views of the Cairngorms, Glencoe and Ben Nevis and feels as if you really are in a great wilderness.

From the summit there is no track down to the hut at Loch Chairian, but the slope provides little difficulty with the route soon picking up the path to the Blackwater Reservoir. From the reservoir the route continues down the Ciaran Path following the Blackwater River to Kinlochleven. This is a beautiful section of trail with lochans, waterfalls and the ever-rushing waters of the river for company. Day three provides 21km of fantastic walking in some very remote country.

There is ample accommodation in Kinlochleven and there's also the option of catching the bus back to Fort William then returning to Kinlochleven the following morning. Bags can be shuttled as well using the West Highland Way luggage transfer services. Kinlochleven gets very busy with the West Highland Way so accommodation needs to be booked well in advance to ensure a bed for the night.

DAY 4

From Kinlochleven the obvious route is to pick up the last day of the West Highland Way to Fort William. Again, this doesn't fit with the original idea, although it certainly provides a safe alternative in the event of bad weather. The peaks of the Mamores act as barrier between Kinlochleven and Glen Nevis, with few weaknesses in their armour. Fortunately, a number

of good stalkers' paths lead into the wild corries between the peaks and this seems to provide the perfect answer in giving a route over into Glen Nevis.

Looking at the options available there is a stalkers' path that heads east from Kinlochleven, making a rising traverse around the steep southern slopes of Sgurr Eilde Beag and into Coire an Lochain. This allows the route to descend into the top of Glen Nevis, passing Steall waterfall and down through the gorge. This will be the toughest day of the entire route and one certainly not to be underestimated. This high section of the route is wild and magical, with the peaks of Sgor Eilde Beag and Sgurr Eilde reflected in the shimmering waters of the lochan.

“

Easy walking leads down through Glen Nevis, passing Steall waterfall and on through the beautiful gorge

”

From the lochan between Binnein Mor and Binnein Beag, there's a descent of approximately 400m into Glen Nevis. The stalkers' path ends at the lochan. Although the descent is not overly steep it does require some navigation to avoid several small rock slabs while aiming for the junction of the Water of Nevis and the Allt Coire na Gabhalach. At low water levels it's an easy crossing, otherwise it's best to stay on the south side of the river until a wire bridge. The bridge is not for the faint hearted but makes for a great photo opportunity.

Easy walking leads down through Glen Nevis, passing Steall waterfall and on through the beautiful gorge to the road end. There's a short section of road before crossing back over the river again and on to the car park at Polldubh. At this point, 17km of walking has been completed and there's another 9km until Fort William. There's an option to continue or take the bus back and complete the last section the following day.

Interested in Mountain Biking? Check out Sean Benz's 'Mountain Biking in West and North West Scotland' available via Cicerone.

DAY 5

After the exertions of day four, the last section gives easy walking along the River Nevis back into Fort William, making for a short day. It's a case of taking the bus back up Glen Nevis and following the path on the river down to the Youth Hostel. This is a much-overlooked path and is certainly not as busy as the Steall waterfall path. On reaching the youth hostel things will get busier, with the combination of West Highland Way and Ben Nevis walkers on the final section into Fort William and the completion of the Tour of Ben Nevis.

DAY 6

There is only one more thing to do to finish the tour and that is to ascend the summit of the mountain that the tour had been circumnavigating. Out of the two main routes the only option is via Carn Mor Dearg arete and then onto Ben. This is the route that really showcases the scale and rugged beauty of the mountain and provides the perfect perch to survey the wild lands that the tour has travelled.

Sean Benz is Coordinator Visitor Experiences, National Parks and Wildlife Service and an author for Cicerone.

Read more of Sean's work at www.cicerone.co.uk/authors/sean-benz

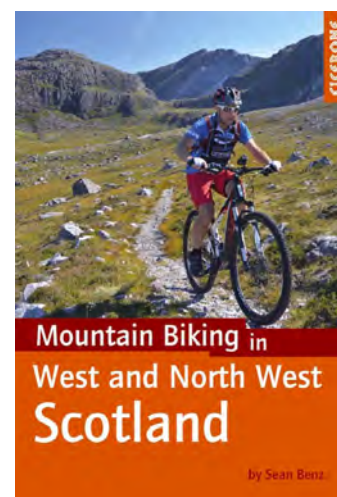




Image: Maggie Moy



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