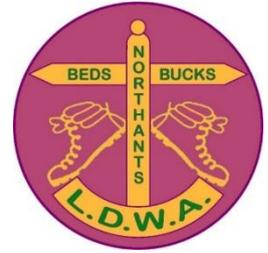




LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION
*furthering the interests of those who enjoy
long distance walking*



BEDS, BUCKS & NORTHANTS GROUP NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021



HAVE A GREAT DAY OUT, WALK WITH BBN
www.ldwa.org.uk/bedsbucksandnorthants

Dear BBN Members

I hope that you're keeping in good spirits and able to get out walking in your local area. Spring and longer days are just around the corner and it feels like the end of the current phase of the pandemic is in sight but I won't tempt fate! I hope those of you who have been called for a vaccination have taken up the offer as I'm sure this will speed up getting back to some semblance of normality



Latest news received from the NEC on 9th March is:

Following the statement by the Prime Minister covering the Roadmap out of Lockdown the NEC has been working with partners and Government bodies to agree our approach to restarting activities in England. Providing these proposals are accepted by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)/Sport England AND the Government Roadmap stays on track, the phased return for organised walking will be as follows:

No Earlier Than Monday 29 March:

While two households or groups of up to six people will be able to get together for informal walks, LDWA organised activities will remain suspended in England. Everyone is still encouraged to minimise travel.

No Earlier Than Monday 12 April:

Social walks will be able to resume across England in line with National Governing Body Covid-19 compliant guidelines. At that time full details of the requirements will be circulated as a reminder.

The NEC is exploring opportunities to use the various LDWA communication tools, such as email, Facebook and Twitter, to help facilitate the return to group walking once this is allowed.

Challenge Events

The holding of challenge events is being discussed and we'll provide further information in due course.

We will let you know the moment anything is confirmed.

I attended the National AGM which was held on Zoom on 7th March and it was a really good meeting – well organised and very informative. It was great to see how dedicated and passionate the NEC are to the LDWA and its members. There are a few changes of NEC officers - Julie Cribb, who was the Local Groups Secretary, is now Chair, Karen Pickersgill is Local Groups Secretary and Sara Dyer has taken over as 100s Coordinator.

Unfortunately, the person who was going to take over as IT and Internet Officer had to withdraw due to work commitments and this post is still vacant. This is a key role for the Association and if you could help, the NEC would be really pleased to hear from you.

You'll see in this newsletter that we've had to cancel or change some things we'd planned but do look out for details of the quiz on 23rd April, a summer social event still in the planning and another August Group holiday with Roy Carter to the South Coast.

In the meantime – do take care and happy walking.

With best wishes

Terry

Membership

Total membership: 745

Primary membership: 400
Associate membership: 345



New primary members since December

Sheona Smee	Towcester
Franc Colombo	Market Harborough
Tristan Denton	Kettering
Katy Laythorne	Pitstone
Jack Hoddle	Rushden
Neil Loake	Desborough
Steve & Susan Jenkins	Milton Keynes
Lucy Newman	Chesham
Geoffrey Collins	Brackley

Welcome to all new members. Enjoy walking with us.

Alan Leadbetter
Membership Secretary

BBN Walks and Events

With the gradual easing of Lockdown restrictions we are keen to get a walks programme together soon. If any of you have a walk which had to be cancelled over the last year or have found a walk during lockdown that you'd like to lead, please get in touch with Sara Waldron Tel 07850 665454 bbn.walks@ldwa.org.uk

We will have to wait for the go ahead from the Government and the NEC, but it would be good to have things ready to go. There is a list of available dates on the website.

Midsummer Meanders (19th June)

In view of the continuing uncertainty regarding the booking of halls and hosting events indoors, it has been decided to postpone BBN's day of walks until 2022.

Another casualty is our **Marsden Moor Weekend (8th/9th May)**

As B&Bs and hotels will not be opening until at least 17th May, this group weekend is also cancelled. Again, we are looking forward to next year.

But, plans are being made - subject of course to whatever Covid rules are in place at the time.

BBN's Anytime Challenges

The Chiltern Anytime Kanter will be opening as soon as we have Government/NEC approval.

The planned dates for the Pick and Mix Anytime are 24th May to 31st August.

Zoom Quiz:

We will be celebrating St George's Day with a Quiz on Friday 23rd April.

Make a note of the date now, more information will follow.

August Bank Holiday Trip

Something else to look forward to. Following the success of the Hathersage weekend last year, Roy has organised another trip for the 2021 August Bank Holiday weekend. More details on pages 7 and 8.

Summer Social Event – although our Midsummer Meanders day has been cancelled, planning is underway for a social event during the summer. Again, more information will follow.

News from neighbouring groups:

Essex Herts

The closing date for The Stagger Anytime Challenge has been extended until Sunday 4th July [The Stagger Anytime Challenge](#)

The Essex Walker (April) has been cancelled, but the following events have been tentatively added to the Essex Herts programme:

Herts Hobble - Sunday 27th June

Three Forests Way – Saturday 11th September/Sunday 12th September

Blackwater Marathon - Saturday 23rd October

Norfolk Suffolk

The closing date for the Anytime Daffodil Dawdle has been extended until 30th June 2021. Entries are open now: [Anytime Daffodil Dawdle](#)
A date for your diary - in anticipation of being able to run challenge events again, N/S have set the 3rd of October for the Flower of Suffolk and there may be another challenge event sometime in July.

LDWA: UPDATED DATA PROTECTION POLICY

The LDWA is committed to ensuring that all the personal data that it processes is held in accordance with data protection legislation. LDWA members can be assured that their rights under data protection can be exercised and that any personal information they provide to the association will be only be used for the purposes it was given and will be held securely.

There is updated data protection guidance for local groups which explains the responsibilities of the LDWA regarding data protection and how they expect local groups to fulfil their duties. The revised documents (policy and user guide) are here [Data Protection and Privacy Rules](#)

One aspect of the LDWA's updated policy that you should be aware of is the **privacy notice** which must now be included on all LDWA event entry forms and on all our social walk registers. The relevant wording is shown below:

Challenge Event Registration

I understand that the personal information submitted on this entry form will be held by the event organisers and retained securely for up to seven years after the event is held for the purposes of managing this event only.

I accept that photographs are likely to be taken at the event, which may be featured in Strider magazine, group newsletters, on LDWA websites and on LDWA social media. I understand this will be held in perpetuity and I have the right to request deletion where it is physically possible for the LDWA to do so.

I understand that my personal data may be published immediately and may be held in perpetuity for the purposes of providing a record of the event. I have the right to request that all my personal data be anonymised or removed where it is possible for the LDWA to do so.

Please see the Data Protection and Privacy User Guide on www.ldwa.org.uk for more information."

Social Walk Registration

I understand that the personal information submitted for this social walk will be held by the organisers and retained securely on the LDWA website for up to seven years after the walk has taken place.

Non members consent to supplying contact details to facilitate a follow up to check whether you wish to become a member of the LDWA.

The purpose of holding this information is to satisfy the requirements of the LDWA

public liability insurance policy.

I accept that photographs are likely to be taken during the walk, which may be featured in Strider magazine, group newsletters, on LDWA websites and on LDWA social media. I understand this will be held in perpetuity and I have the right to request deletion where it is physically possible for the LDWA to do so.

Please see the Data Protection and Privacy User Guide on www.ldwa.org.uk for more information.

LDWA: SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Here is the latest LDWA policy and information about Safeguarding

The Chair of the Group is the 'Local Safeguarding Representative'.

Reporting Incidents [Reporting Safeguarding Incidents V7 0.pdf \(ldwa.org.uk\)](#)

Safeguarding Children and Young People

[Safeguarding Young People Policy V7 0.pdf \(ldwa.org.uk\)](#)

Safeguarding Adults at Risk [Safeguarding Adults Policy V7 0.pdf \(ldwa.org.uk\)](#)

BBN Trip to the Isle of Wight, October 2019



BBN HOLIDAY TO EASTBOURNE **27th – 30th AUGUST 2021**



The walking weekend is centred on Eastbourne, which is the UK's sunniest place and just what we need after lockdown. As the tourist information put it “Feel the energy of its endless blue skies, sweeping South Downs countryside, colourful art scene and warm sunshine”. A short break here will leave you feeling re-energised, refreshed and invigorated. However, I think much of that will be down to the walks I’ve prepared. The main walks are on Saturday and Sunday – both walks being a comfortable 17 miles. There is an introductory walk on Friday afternoon and a departing walk on Monday – both of them 15 miles which can be shortened.

Accommodation will need to be obtained in Eastbourne and I’ve arranged the Queens Hotel for that purpose (pictured) It is a Self-Drive hotel and you can book Full Board (£169pp for 3 nights) by calling [Alfa Travel on 01257 248048](tel:01257248048). There are plenty of other Hotels, Guest Houses, B&B’s, Rental Properties, Campsites and a Youth Hostel in the area although it’s nice for us all to be together. It’s completely up to you.

Please contact the holiday organiser – Roy Carter to indicate interest. roycarter367@hotmail.com or 01234 301182

Eastbourne

Though Eastbourne is a relatively new town, there is evidence of human occupation in the area from the Stone Age. The town grew as a fashionable tourist resort largely thanks to prominent landowner, William Cavendish, later to become the Duke of Devonshire. Cavendish appointed architect Henry Currey to design a street plan for the town, but not before sending him to Europe to draw inspiration. The resulting mix of architecture is typically Victorian and remains a key feature of Eastbourne. With a seafront consisting largely of Victorian hotels, a pier and a Napoleonic fort and military museum, Eastbourne was developed at the direction of the Duke from 1859 from four separate hamlets. It has a growing population, a broad economic base and is home to companies in a wide range of industries. Theresa May was born in Eastbourne; George Orwell and Eddie Izzard went to

school there; and Sir Ernest Shackleton and Tommy Cooper lived in the town. The comedian would say, pressing a tea-bag into the palm of whoever took him home after an evening out, “have a drink on me.”

Walk Itinerary

Friday 27th August @ 1:30pm (?) – Eastbourne Circular – 15 miles (?)

I developed a circular walk around the town visiting the new Sovereign Harbour, Pevensey Castle, Polegate Windmill and Old Town. I can't make the walk shorter without traipsing along busy roads and through modern housing estates. However, there are opportunities to return to the seafront by train or by bus when the afternoon or our spirits fade. So I've decided to leave it in since we'll get an overview of the area before the weekend really begins. The starting point is from Eastbourne Pier and the walk length can be shortened.

Saturday 28th August @ 9:30am – The Seven Sisters – 17 miles

Starting from Eastbourne Pier the walk takes the Wealdway onto Beachy Head and follows the South Downs Way to Birling Gap for a morning break. We then continue over the Seven Sisters to lunch at the Cuckmere Inn across Exceat Bridge. We make our return via Westdean through Friston Forest to Eastdean and stop at the Tiger Inn for refreshment. It is but a short meander back into Eastbourne. There are opportunities to cut corners and shorten your walk.

Sunday 29th August @ 9:30am – Long Man of Wilmington – 17 miles

Catching the 09:18 train, it's a short stop to Hampden Park (£3). We walk through pleasant suburbs up to Jevington for a morning break. Then we cross the Downs into Litlington and follow the Cuckmere River to the very picturesque village of Alfriston for lunch. From here we return along the Wealdway around the foot of The Long Man of Wilmington back towards Jevington again for an afternoon break at the Eight Bells. Again it is but a short meander back into Eastbourne along different paths through Hampden Park and passing the Old Town if we missed it on Friday. There are opportunities to cut corners and shorten your walk.

Monday 30th August @ 10:00am – Firle Beacon – 15 miles

The walk starts from the carpark in Glynde, close to the railway station. We walk out to cross the A27 into Firle and then ascend to the Beacon for a morning break. From here we return along the top of the escarpment on the South Downs Way and descend to Southease Station and cross the river Ouse. From here we follow the river Ouse floodplain into the town of Lewes for lunch and we're almost done. Just one hill to go, up to Caburn fort and then to descend into Glynde ready for the homeward journey.

Charity Requests and Donations

The group regularly receives email requests from charities. The committee has agreed that BBN should have a general group policy not to get involved with organising, promoting or entering specific charity events (as a group) because there are too many and we must say no to all to be fair to all.

The committee agreed that any donations made by BBN should reflect the activities of the group/LDWA, for example replacing stiles with kissing gates and improving bench provision, supporting Yorkshire Three Peaks remedial path works etc. We have also regularly donated to the various Air Ambulances that cover our area.

It was agreed that we would be happy to advertise any organised charity walk in our area that followed “the LDWA challenge event format” and which may be of interest to our members, but only if that walk does not clash with a BBN social walk or event.

The committee would also be happy to consider a request for advertising in the Newsletter from a member taking on a charitable challenge.

Donations agreed at 25th February committee meeting

£250 to the Donate-a-Gate scheme of North Bucks rRIPPLE (ramblers Repairing & Improving Public Paths for Leisure & Exercise). £250 covers the cost of a gate and includes a plaque commemorating the donor. The location of the gate is still to be decided. Suggested by Ed Kendrick.

£50 to the fundraising appeal for the Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team volunteer who suffered life changing injuries after falling during a rescue in February. Suggested by Norman Corrin

The committee will keep you informed about the donations we make, the purpose, organisation and amount, and we very much welcome members' suggestions for future donations.

8th March 2021

***The Minutes of the Zoom Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 25th February 2021 are on the website
<https://ldwa.org.uk/BedsBucksAndNorthants/W/1052/meetings.html>***

SPOTLIGHT ON BBN KIT



All of our BBN badged kit is available through our website, just click on the merchandise tab and have fun spending your money.

Let's have a look at the fleece this time.

FLEECE



What a beast and only £24 and that includes the logos etc, (what £24, you can buy two, his and hers perhaps.)

Features include a paneled construction, at least 2 pockets and cord zip pulls for when you have the wet and soggy gloves on.

Made from 100% polyester anti pill fleece and, yes, I had to look it up. Nothing to do with aspirins, so to quote the great interweb:

“anti-pill fleece is a durable and soft fabric. Anti-pill means the fleece will not incur pilling. This refers to the little bundles that you may have seen around areas where the fleece frequently rubs against the body. The anti-pill is of a better quality and ensures longer lasting”.

The fleece comes in a wide variety sizes as you would expect and there is a ladies version which I am reliably informed is cut with a bit more of a ladylike shape.

You have many colours to choose from, provided it is BBN burgundy!

So there you have it, good value for a snazzy piece of kit that will help you stand out from the crowd and keep you warm.

Peter Engledow
Merchandising

Last of the Summer 2018

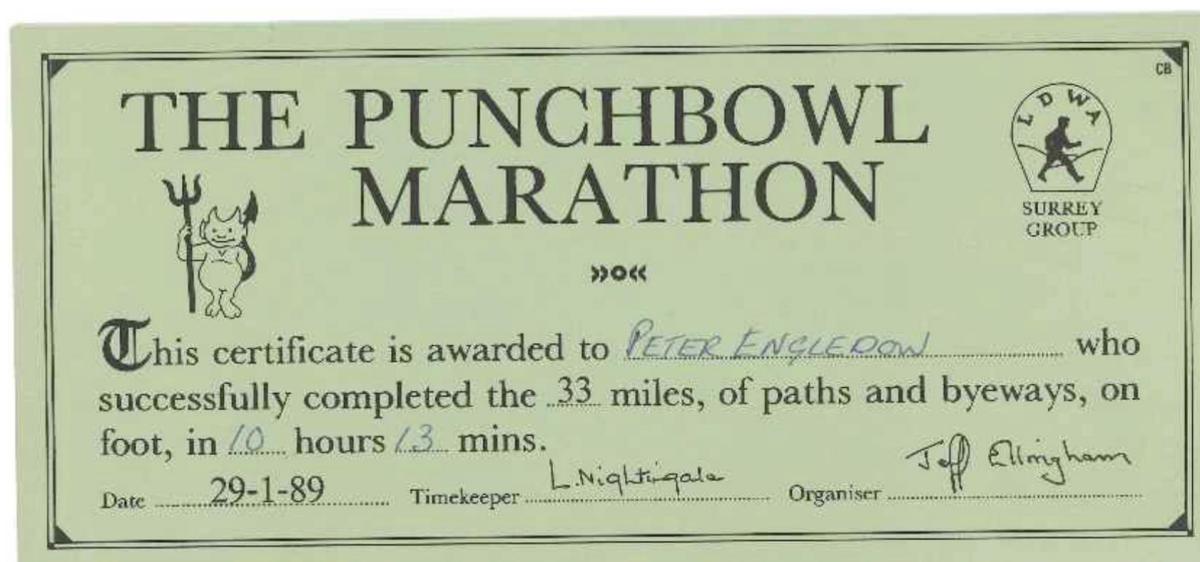


Photo: Geoff Curnock

THINGS YOU FIND TUCKED AWAY



Doing a bit of tidying up prior to finally getting my daughter out of the house again, like a bad penny, she keeps coming back. Will probably change the locks this time just to be on the safe side. I digress. I came across a bag (Woolworths, that takes you back a bit) with a selection of my old certificates, an old Punchbowl for your entertainment is below.



Whilst I cannot necessarily recall what happened yesterday, I do have a few recollections of the day. I seem to remember that it was dry, or at least it did not rain too much. However, it had rained for the previous month and it was a bit squishy underfoot. Clumping round in those days in an ancient pair of Berghaus monsters, I'm sure they weighed several hundredweight by the end of the day.

I really should take issue with the organisers as well....33 miles of paths and byeways? You forgot to mention swamp, river crossings and I am sure a few wild animals as well.

All in all though a fantastic day in a lovely part of the world, and thanks again to Surrey for putting on the event and producing such a durable certificate. It has lasted longer than the Berghaus beasts which have long gone to the boot graveyard.

Peter Engledow

**BACKPACKING IN NEW ZEALAND
AND AUSTRALIA
1988 – 1989
PT 1**



It was back in 1987 that I decided I was going to visit my relatives in NZ. My mother's brother went over to New Zealand back in the forties for a visit and when he returned home he could not settle so, with a £10 ticket, he returned to New Zealand, met an Australian girl Thelma and settled there for life, bringing up five boys and five girls. I rented my house out and in October 1988 set off for New Zealand via Gatwick airport and Jakarta with an economy class ticket with air Guruda.

Due to a mishap with the plane, apparently its brakes failed somewhere (on the ground...honest), my flight was cancelled. Three nights in Gatwick hotels, I eventually left England on a Club class ticket with BA to Los Angeles then a first class ticket with Air New Zealand to Auckland. Not a bad start eh.

I arrived in Auckland safe and sound and had to catch a bus to Hamilton, where I was met by Clare, one of the daughters, and after a coffee we drove to Te Awamutu and met the rest of the family. I stayed with my relatives for about a month, went water skiing with family friends, took a hike up Mt Pironga, then got a lift to Auckland and started my tour of NZ.

I stayed in Auckland for a couple of days looking around, bought a road map of the North Is, and worked out where I would head to next.

I decided to head for the North West tip of the North Is and Cape Reinga. I headed out heading for Dargaville, then Opononi, then on to Cape Reinga. The hitchhiking was pretty good except when I got the other side of Dargaville, then the lifts came to a halt (well it was getting late afternoon). I decided to turn around and head back to Dargaville. I got a lift pretty quick and got a bed in the YHA in Dargaville.

The following morning I was asked if I wanted to go horse riding for free, well I had to jump to that didn't I. I set off the next day for Opononi and this time I got a lift all the way there. I think it was a backpackers where I laid my head while I was in Opononi. There is a sad story about a dolphin named Opo, a young female bottlenose dolphin, which used to play with the kids and holiday makers on the shores of Opononi but sadly she was found dead one day. It is believed that it was illegal fishermen using explosives that killed Opo in 1956.

I stayed for a full day and then headed for Cape Reinga. It would take me another couple of days to get there. I was lucky enough to get a lift in a camper van that was going all the way to the visitor car park for Cape Reinga. A walk to the tip of Cape Reinga, a look around then the trip back south to Auckland via the Bay of Islands.



Bay of Islands

The Bay of Islands was a beautiful place, I stayed in a backpackers in Kerikeri and did the touristy bit for the next couple of days. The Bay of Islands lived up to its name, there were Islands all over the place. I visited the Waitangi Treaty grounds (***The Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document. It takes its name from the place in the Bay of Islands where it was first signed, on 6 February 1840. This day is now a public holiday in New Zealand. The Treaty is an agreement, in Māori and English, that was made between the British Crown and about 540 Māori rangatira (chiefs)***)

After a couple of days it was time to move on. I returned to Auckland for a day then moved on. The North east tip of NZ, the Coromandel Peninsular, was going to be my next destination so with my rucksack packed with my tent, Billies, and spare clothes, I set off to hitchhike to the Coromandel.

I arrived at the top of the Coromandel via a very nice young woman who even bought me coffee and toast on the way. There I pitched my tent on a campsite. I walked or should I say "tramped" around the Coromandel walk way which was a coastal path, then I went over to the Great Barrier Island by boat where there was some ancient Maori dams which my cousins had told me about. After a three or four days it was time to head back to the mainland and head back down the Coromandel.

The problem was that the weather had turned bad and the ferry going across to the mainland was not sailing. That meant a night in a hostel till the weather changed. I met a couple of medical students who had just finished their final exams and couldn't wait to get back to Auckland for their results. I wonder if they passed? The weather changed and I got the ferry back to the mainland but the sea was a bit choppy to say the least. I sat at the back (stern) of the boat watching the other boats ride the waves in the choppy seas till we reached land. I headed for a campsite, stayed for the night, then headed back down the Coromandel to Thames.

I would like to point out now, before I go any further, that backpacking in NZ in 88-89 was a great experience, it was very easy to get a lift and very friendly people picked me up. "BUT" there is always one isn't there, and that time came on the way back down the Coromandel. Not a lot of vehicles were going my way and those that were did not stop, UNTIL an off road rickety motorcycle pulled up and the guy on it said "I'll give ya a lift mate". Well I had been walking for a few hours so I accepted the kind invitation and climbed on the back with my large heavy backpack. Put your feet on the footrests he said, and off we went. Due to my heavy rucksack my feet immediately left the footrests and my feet and legs went straight up in the air and I was holding on for dear life at right angles off the back of the motorcycle. PUT YOUR FEET ON THE FOOTRESTS he kept shouting at me, I CAN'T, SLOW DOWN WILL YA I shouted back, PUT YOUR FEET ON THE FOOTRESTS, he shouted back again, I BLOODY CAN'T, SLOW DOWN I shouted. A car passed us going the other way, the looks on their faces told the story (I'm sure the kid in the back took a photo, I wonder where that is now). We eventually came to a halt at a fork in the road, he said I'm going that way, which way are you going??.....

So anyway, I eventually made my way down to Thames, the gateway to the Coromandel and stayed in the hostel there. The following day I made my way to Gisborne. On the way I stopped at Tauranga. I climbed Mount Maunganui, a small hill, then moved on to Gisborne. I only stayed there for a day, visited the statue of Nicholas Young, Captain Cook's cabin boy, whose eagle eyes were the first to spot NZ (the white cliffs at Young Nick's Head).

From Gisborne I headed to Napier at Hawkes Bay where I stayed for a few days. There was an earthquake in 1931 which destroyed the whole town. They rebuilt the town of Napier and painted the town in nice colours so it's known for its art deco. From Napier I headed inland to Taupo where there is a large lake, Lake Taupo. With a surface area of 616 square kilometres, it is the largest lake by surface area in New Zealand, and the second largest freshwater lake by surface area in geopolitical Oceania, after Lake Murray in Papua New Guinea. I stayed in Taupo for a couple of days swimming in the lake. While I was swimming I heard a young boy shouting for help, he had got out of his depth and was in trouble so I swam out to him and swam back to shore with him.

From Taupo I headed back to Te Awamutu where my cousins lived for the Xmas hols. I had a great Xmas and New Year and I told them all my stories of my travels and how easy it was to hitchhike around.

After New Year I headed for the South Is. I had to be in Te Anau for the 7th Feb 1989 to tramp the famous Milford Track. But first I headed for New Plymouth and Mt Taranaki, which I climbed to the top, then headed down to Wellington the capital of NZ. I had a couple of days looking around, visited the "Bee Hive" which is their parliament building, then caught the ferry across the Marlborough Sounds to Picton to start my journey around the South IS.

I had four weeks to get to Te Anau which was more than enough time so I stopped off at Christchurch for a couple of days, booking a bed in the YHA. Christchurch was a beautiful and friendly clean place and I enjoyed myself looking around. I moved on down to Dunedin after a couple of days and did the same there, then on to Invercargill. I still had a bit of time before I got to Te Anua and noticed on an info board in the Invercargill YHA that there was

an eight day trek on Stewart Is, but you had to be totally self-sufficient, i.e. take all your own food, billies etc. etc., staying in back country huts with nothing but water for cooking. This I had not done before. If you ran out of food or forgot something HARD LUCK. This was going to be good training for the Milford Track so I left everything that I would not need in a plastic bag in the Invercargill YHA and made my way down to Bluff, the most southern town on main land NZ to catch the ferry across to Oban on Stewart Is.



Stewart Is

I arrived on Stewart Is ready for the trek, I was only going to do a couple of days trekking but at the first hut I was told that there had been sightings of wild kiwis running around Christmas Bay in the daylight although they are nocturnal. So I had to go to Christmas Bay to see the Kiwis. That meant I would do the full 8 days trek. The trail was quite hard to follow because the track was not that well maintained and you followed tiny little metal disks on trees which sometimes had been blown over. The huts were a bit ramshackle at times as well, one of them had tarpaulin for a roof, but I did stay dry. When I got to Christmas Bay I went looking for the Kiwis, and I did see one, but it was only a glimpse.

My trek around Stewart Is was a great experience. I had a great time telling stories in the evenings and listening to stories from others travelling around NZ. Back in Oban after 8 glorious days trekking on Stewart Is I booked my ferry back to the mainland and then on to Te Anau where I would catch the bus to Te Anau Downs and catch the ferry to the start of the Milford Track.

When I got to Te Anau I still had a week to spare so I trekked the Kepler Track, another 3-4 days trek carrying all my own food and Billies then when I got back to Te Anau I went to watch bungee jumpers jump off a bridge with an elastic band strapped to their ankles.



Mackinnon Pass

February 7th 1989 I was at the bus station in Te Anau to catch the bus to Te Anau Downs for the ferry to the start of the Milford Track. Four days trekking, up and over Mackinnon Pass you eventually arrive at Sand-fly Point, thirty three and a half miles later. It was a fantastic trek through the heart of the Fiordland national park.

On top of Mackinnon Pass you could look back down the valley that we'd trekked up, it was a fantastic view.

I walked the track as an independent walker which meant that you carried all your own food and cooked it as well. (You could walk it as a guided walker and get all your cooking done for you but that got a bit expensive).

After the Milford Track I stayed in Te Anau for a few more days, did my laundry and bought more backpacking food and headed for the Routeburn Track, which was more of a high level track. I moved slowly up the west coast of the south Is visiting Queenstown a town which does not sleep, Greymouth, Fox Glacier, Franz Josef, Westport, Collingwood, Nelson and the Nelson Lakes. I did more trekking on the Heaphy track, the Able Tasman coastal trek, and in the Nelson Lakes. Heading for the Heaphy track I had to go over the Karamere bluffs, I got a lift to the foot of the bluffs by an ex NZ cricketer. I hitchhiked over the bluffs but didn't get a lift. I walked all the way, which was a hike and a half. Then when I got to the other side and sat down to rest my poor ole feet a car pulled up and asked if I would like a lift, would you believe it?

My six months was coming to an end and I had to start thinking about getting back to the North IS and back to Te Awamutu then back to Auckland and the flight to Australia. (The back-country huts in NZ were 4, 8 and 12 dollars, \$12 got you pots and pans gas to cook with so you saved your own gas, \$8 got you pots and pans and maybe gas as well, and the \$4 got you just a bed and rain water to cook with.

Back in Te Awamutu I told all my travelling stories to my cousins, had a final slap up meal and they drove me to Auckland for my flight over to Australia. Sitting on the plane over to Australia I had a lot of good memories of the last six months, plenty to tell in the backpackers of Australia.

I arrived in Sydney ready for my next adventure. I was not going to hitchhike around Aussie, I got a bus pass because the distances between towns and cities were too great. I hung around Sydney for a week, I did not have a lot of money left so I was going to have to find a bit of work. I decided I would take a trip to see Ayers Rock and the Great Barrier

Reef and maybe call it a day and return home early but that did not happen. By the time I had visited those two landmarks, it was going to cost me just as much to get an eastern explorer bus ticket which took me from Sydney north up to Cairns, across the top to Darwin, down through the middle to Ayers Rock, onto Adelaide, Melbourne then back to Sydney, the bus pass cost me \$350 and would last twelve months. You could not backtrack, only go forward except places like Townsville to Cairns and back to Townsville because you did not have any choice.

Backpack packed I set off north, spent a bit of time on the Gold Coast and Brisbane, where I found some work at the Golden Circle Cannery, I asked how long would I have work here, they said if it doesn't rain it could be months, if it rains it will be your last day. It rained all that weekend so that was that. I ran out of money in Brisbane and had to ask my dad for a loan, £500 in those days that was \$1000, so that should do me. I paid off my backpacker's bill and moved on.

Heading for Cairns, the furthest I would go north, I travelled through Bundaberg then hung around Airlie Beach. I took a trip on a catamaran while I was there but you could not see much of the reef because there had been a bad storm earlier and it made the water murky. As we sailed we jumped off the front of the catamaran let the catamaran sail over us and then caught a rope behind and hauled ourselves back on board. Then we got towed behind the craft on a small board. Some managed to stand up on it. I never got that far. The skipper would stand up on the board and then get a young woman to climb on his back. Nobody else managed that feat.

On up to Townsville then on to Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef, I was looking for a bit of work as I went but did not get very far. Townsville and Cairns were great little places, In Cairns I went to book a steam train trip into the wilds but mist moved in and the trip got cancelled, but they sold me a kayaking trip which everybody said was great fun for a day, I did decline but changed my mind, I'm glad I did, I had a great time. We went down so many white water rapids it was unbelievable. We did the capsizing drills before we moved off, then we paddled to our first rapid, when our leader told us how to go down it, just keep paddling he said and see you at the bottom. Have you ever tried paddling when the only part of your body that is above the water line is your head? We must have gone down at least half a dozen rapids. I managed to stay in the seat for at least half of them. I remember there was a Canadian who didn't get down one of them, he would always get to the bottom of the rapid before or after his kayak. At the end of the trip we kayaked out into a bay and paddling around. A wave sat him on a rock and as the tide was going out it left him high and dry. I couldn't stop laughing. I recommended that trip to everybody I met.

From Cairns I travelled back to Townsville and across the top to Darwin and the Kakado National Park. Still looking for a bit of work and still not getting anywhere I paid for a day trip into the Kakado NP. It was a great day and I saw my first wild crocodile, well worth the money. Had a good look around Darwin then moved south to Ayers Rock and Alice Springs, in 1989 you could still climb to the top of Ayers Rock and at the top there was a book you signed to say you were there. One woman started to climb the rock in what was not far off high heels, she never made. On the way back down we passed a party on the way up and suddenly a lady said "**Steve Clark what are you doing here**". I turned around and there was my cousin Lynn from NZ. What a surprise, we had a chinwag and met up that evening for drinks and she made me some sarnies for the next day. She was working as a tour leader and was leading her party up Ayers Rock that day. Small world ennit.



Ayers Rock/ Uluru

From Alice Springs I headed south to Adelaide, a large town, and I stayed there for a couple of days doing the touristy bit and still looking for a bit of work. I found some work in a small engineering firm, but that only lasted a day. So I moved on to Melbourne where I was to find some work and make some good friends. I was in a coffee shop and talking to other travellers and they told me of an employment place for casual workers in Queen Street, you turned up there and when work became available you put your hand up if you wanted it, and if you got picked you got work. I turned up and signed on, *Have you got a fork lift licence* they asked, I said *Yes, I've been driving fork lifts for the last five years back home. That will do* they said. *Stay by a phone*, we might have a job for you.

I got the phone call and I ended up working for Australia telecom in Altona North, a short train ride from the backpackers where I was staying. Monday to Friday and a Saturday morning for six weeks, I was earning good money, Vinny the boss told me about day long bus tours, so every Sunday I took a bus tour around Victoria. One of the best of the trips was along the Great Ocean Road, we drove for hours but it was a great trip. We visited London Bridge a rocky outcrop that looked uncannily like London Bridge. Every Thursday afternoon work would stop and we had a BBQ.

After about six weeks I had saved some money so I decided to move on. In six weeks I had seen more different types of phone than I'd had hot dinners. I bought a bus ticket over to Perth. In 89 there was not a high rise building to be seen in Perth, they were unheard of. Over the Nullarbor plains we went. Perth was a lovely place and I took some day bus trips while I was there, to the Pinnacles desert and to the Hippo rock, so called because the rock looked exactly like a hippo's head. I had a week in Perth then headed back to Melbourne via train which was a lot more comfortable.

Back in Melbourne I decided to take a trip over to Tasmania. I expected to sleep in the lounge because there was a pilots' strike going on and the ferries were packed. I ended up in a two berth cabin with an Australian guy named Peter who shared his cognac with me and when I told him that I was going to hike the Cradle Mountain and Lake Sinclair walk he said that if I was at Cradle Mountain lodge on a certain date he would shout me (pay for in Aussie) a meal and we could walk the first day together, then he would return back the way we came because he had work to sort out. The crossing was a night time crossing and there was a large school party on board sleeping in the lounge and because the crossing was very rough (in fact I swear we did a couple of somersaults), to say the least the whole lounge area and toilets were, well, let's just say that the school party were a bit ill.

I turned up at the lodge and Peter and I walked the first day together then parted company the next day. Four days later I got to Lake Sinclair. There was supposed to be a boat that you could take to the end of the walk, but when I phoned up about a ticket I was told that it had sunk two weeks before, so I had to walk the length of the lake. It was a good walk though. After the hike I hired a car with some other guys and we travelled around Tasmania together. I stayed in Tasmania for around two weeks having a great time.

By the time I left Tasmania it was time to start thinking about getting back to Sydney and the return trip back to dear ole Blighty. I arrived back home with an Australian accent. My sister reckoned I sounded like someone out of neighbours. It was a fantastic trip and due to strange circumstances I would return some years later to NZ, but that story is for another time.

Stevecee x

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