

# ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE....



**A short history and portrait of William Bay, Denmark WA,  
its National Park (WBNP) and the WBNPA Association Inc.**

*By Gordon Harris*

# ...ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE....

The Story of William Bay, William Bay National Park and the William Bay National Parks Association Inc. covering the WBNPA's first fifteen years 1995-2010

Written and compiled by **Gordon Harris** with  
Research by **Gordon Harris** and **Jessie Healey**

## *ISBN*

Another Day in Paradise...

A short history and portrait of William Bay, Denmark WA  
its National Park(WBNP) and the WBNP Association Inc.

*Cover pictures – Gordon Harris:*

- *Footprints in the sand at Mazzoletti Beach*
- *Nature's sculpture in the Petrified Forest*
- *William Bay from Greens Pool car-park lookout*
- *All photos by the author except those acknowledged otherwise.*



## **Step Softly, Reefwalkers...**

*Step softly in the gardens of the sea*

*Where strange and lovely creatures*

*Live upon the trackless reefs.*

*Move quickly, gently, back in place*

*The boulders you have turned*

*To watch in wonder and delight*

*The hidden life, the colour, all those tiny clustered eggs*

*Which dry and die so swiftly in the blaze of the sun.*

*Don't take back shells*

*To gather dust on some suburban shelf.*

*Take pictures –*

*Take home memories of living things*

*In their own cool and opalescent world*

*Of rock and reef, lagoon and swinging tide.*

Jean Edgecombe  
(courtesy "Australian Seashores")

# FOREWORD

*Located not far west of Denmark on the south coast of Western Australia, the William Bay National Park attracts a multitude of visitors, tourists and locals alike. This is not surprising for, although not large as national parks go, it has a variety of natural features not as readily accessible elsewhere in the South West. The central attraction is Greens Pool, encircled by a defensive barrier of boulders and rocky outliers which extend further west and east to the imposing Elephant Rocks and beyond. Here we have a veritable playground for both young and old; safe swimming, rock climbing and coastal bush walking.*

*The Bibbulmun Track passes the full length of the park offering some wonderful walks through forests and heathlands. Impressive panoramic views over the ocean and along the coastline can be experienced from high points along the track. One of the many overnight huts for walkers is also located in the park. Some distance inland from Greens Pool, a group of large granite boulders dominate the hilly skyline seemingly keeping watch over the surrounding countryside. The coastal region here is an interesting mix of igneous rocks (volcanic origin) and sedimentary limestone more recently laid down as sea levels rose and fell over geological times.*

*In addition to the floristically rich coastal heath, the park has both Karri and Peppermint forests and several wetlands. It is rich in fauna as it is in flora. Birdlife abounds to the delight of birdwatchers and numerous ground animals have been identified during the several trap-line surveys done in recent years.*

*Undoubtedly, the many attractions of the William Bay area stimulated its designation as a national park. For similar reasons The William Bay National Parks Association was subsequently set up and is still going strong, attracting an enthusiastic and active membership.*

*The many facets to the history of Denmark, and William Bay in particular, have received the dedicated and persistent attention of Gordon Harris over many years. He has skilfully brought together information from numerous sources, including his own research, into a single book. It is most readable, informative and entertaining. The layout with separate sections on physical features and history, national park designation and management, and community association, involvement and contributions, makes for easy reading. The numerous appendices also help the reader home-in on specific topics. Those interested in the local history and special features of the William Bay area will find this book an invaluable reference and an otherwise good read.*

**Norman Godfrey** December 2010  
Retired Research Officer with the Dept. of Agriculture  
and a Founding Member of the WBNP Association

## INTRODUCTION

*When I was asked by my dear friend and Member colleague, Mrs Jessie Healey, to write this history, I was unsure both how to begin, and how much of the William Bay area I should include, in order to properly set the scene for the first fifteen years of the William Bay National Parks Association Inc (WBNPA), which was ostensibly the basic object of the project. Originally, we considered a history of their first ten years, but this blew-out to fifteen years due to the high level of other historical work in hand, and the enormous amount of research required for this assignment.*

*It was during this research on William Bay and the WBNPA that I came across a thesis that I had worked on with Ms Vanessa Chapman in 2001-2, a colleague at the Denmark Environment Centre, where I had also worked for about ten years. The essay was on William Bay, developed by Vanessa with the valuable help of another good friend, the late Eric Kingdon, an old Denmark resident from a local pioneering family. Eric could be considered a lay-authority on William Bay in general, and Greens Pool area in particular.*

*Browsing through Vanessa's thesis, which she published in 2002, and for which she deservedly received a 'D' for Distinction, a yearning came-up time and again, where Vanessa suggested a deeper and more thorough study of William Bay should be done, and which she hoped to do at a later stage. However, the best laid plans.... Sadly, it never came to pass, as Vanessa moved home a number of times, which eventually saw her 'drop off the radar' and, try as I may, I have been unable to locate her present whereabouts at the time of writing this introduction.*

*Consequently, I felt it would be in order to complete her dream by dividing this history into three parts, namely 1. **William Bay** (the district), 2. **The William Bay National Park** and 3. **The William Bay National Parks Association Inc**. It would have been necessary to give a fairly detailed outline of the Park and topography before dealing with the Association's story, but Vanessa's absence gave me the ideal opportunity to also achieve a personal ambition by writing about this glorious place on the south coast of Western Australia, its history and structure, together with locals' anecdotes of their days in and around the Park.*

*My thanks to all who helped me with this project, particularly Jessie Healey who hung in there when things got sticky, and to Eric Kingdon (dec. 2012) and Vanessa Chapman, Members such as Lindy and Garth Wilson whose information was invaluable for me to complete the story, Tina Smith, Tom Healey et al. Wherever data on various subjects eg Geology, Flora and Fauna species is long and specific, it has been covered broadly in the story and referenced in greater detail in the Appendices for the more interested reader and researcher.*

*I hope the reader will learn more about William Bay, and its many faces, and enjoy the facts and the tales told in this story which for me, a daily visitor to Greens Pool, was a true labour of love.*

Gordon J Harris  
Denmark WA September 2012

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