

REFLECTIONS on William Bay.

Sally Pamberger (formerly Haigh) – A Founding Member of the William Bay National Parks Association (WBNPA). Sally was a former resident of Eaglemont and now lives in Albany with husband Lutz:

Greens Pool has to be the most beautiful beach in the world and I was so lucky to live close to it for many years.

I have many happy memories of Greens Pool and William Bay National Park – early morning swims after a run along the beach with Jenny Douglas and Vicki Day, swimming just before sunset on hot summer evenings, skinny dips, beach and rock walks, sea eagles, beach combing with Katie Syme, looking for the elusive nautilus shell, catching up with Denmark friends, sundowners with a glass of red and nibbles... The weather can be different every day, however regular morning beach goers have their routines and there was a lot of friendly banter – I could always rely on Gordon Harris for an update on the conditions and temperature of the water; we noticed if somebody did something different or was wearing new bathers...I always went for a run before my swim and waded into the water at the same point – I will always remember being teased by Muriel Brenton for swimming a different route one morning!

I have seen in the New Year at Greens Pool, farewelled my grandmother with a small ceremony timed to coincide with her funeral in England, and many times gone there for solace in difficult times, always uplifted by the beauty of nature, delicious clean air and friendly faces found there.

My happiest memory is of getting married barefoot on the beach on a perfect summer's day in 2006. Many of our guests had a swim after the ceremony, whilst Lutz and I went for a walk.

Sally's recollections continue at the close of Part 3 when she recalls her thoughts on the WBNPA's early days.

Gordon Harris : *Having swum down here (Greens Pool) virtually every day for over 18 years, it is easy to feel proprietary about the place and when people ask me 'why?' I tell them "Swimming is my religion and Greens Pool is my church!"*

That may sound trite, but when I first started coming down here in the early 1990s, there were only four local ladies swimming, and they would have left by the time my swim was finished, after which I went for a run towards Parry Beach for some kilometres and a slow, lazy walk back, interspersed with another dip (often skinny) or two on the way, and I rarely saw another soul. That was when my love-affair with William Bay became such an important part of my life.

To me, it is a very special place where the cares of the world quickly fade and are replaced by the water, sand and the rounded rocks (which, strangely) I find very reassuring, and I never tire of immersing myself, body and soul, in the ever-changing, never-ending beauty of the surroundings, and I can truly live for the moment before having to return to a world seemingly in chaos. I have often said to

family and close friends that I could happily live on a desert island, which is an exaggeration of course, but it gives a small insight as to how I feel at William Bay, especially when the beaches are deserted. Most of the regulars prefer the occasions of predominant solitude of the area.

NB The 'regular' dawn swimmers of contemporary times began in 1991 when local resident Anita Matthews began swimming with her sister Audrey and soon after they were joined by neighbour Bev Blechynden, who was one of the 'four ladies' referred to earlier when I began daily swimming in 1992. The others were locals Muriel and Jean Brenton. These ladies were even mentioned in Jocelyn Burt's book 'Discover Western Australia' when, in an article about Greens Pool, they were referred to quite unwittingly as 'four elderly ladies'! That was twenty years ago, and Jocelyn must have been very young to think of them as 'elderly', a term that nowadays generally applies to the over-seventies, which they certainly were not then.



Greens Pool on a still Summer's morn with Point Hiller on the horizon



A quiet spot just at the west end of Greens Pool (near Beach Rock)

Pat Anda A long-time Member of the WBNPA, and the lady who stepped on a stingaree, wrote a poem about the regular swimmers at Greens Pool, which was included in Newsletter number 65 of August 2007 and it is reprinted below:

THE WILLIAM BAY SWIMMERS By PAT ANDA:

*I'm one of the swimmers at William Bay
A mad bunch of oldies greeting dawn every day.
There's Gordon and Tom, Jessie, Gary and Rob
We swim in the rain, the cold and the fog.*

*We swim in the winter, the autumn and spring
The wimps come in summer when the suns in the sky
Some even wear wetsuits to keep their skin dry.*

*We walk up the beach in the sun and the rain
We walk in the wind, sometimes even in hail
We swim in Greens Pool right up to the top
We swim in the deep then turn round the rock
We go every day to keep ourselves fit.*

*The thunder may roar the lightning may strike
But our mad bunch of swimmers relish the fight
It makes us feel young, and it makes us feel good.*

*We're the mad bunch of swimmers of William Bay
Who swim at the beach at least once a day
Perhaps you may join us at dawn every day
To swim in Greens Pool at William Bay.*

Vanessa Chapman (In the Conclusion from her thesis on Megaliths and Memories):

Though this small report is limited in its scope for opinions of the value of William Bay to the Denmark area, the emotional ties of people like Eric Kingdon should not be overlooked as rich sources of the understanding as to the role the area has played in the lives of many locals and visitors alike. Though the Park itself may only now be bringing in the important tourist dollar to the Shire, its role in the lives of the many early (white) settlers, and perhaps to earlier indigenous peoples, should not be dismissed as irrelevant – on the contrary, it is priceless. The emotional and physical ties that bound people to William Bay served to build the characters and opportunities that have shaped Denmark into the environmentally conscious and peaceful haven that it prides itself upon being today. Further research into both environmental and social human aspects of life in William Bay is long overdue....it is a very dynamic place which refuses to stay the same. It is vital, therefore, that a comprehensive history of the Park be undertaken, while long-time residents are still available to interview, as it is through the lives of those who have lived there that we are able to see a picture of the realities of the Park in a way that the tourist brochures cannot (or will not) paint. William Bay is indeed a treasure on the south coast – and the residents who know it best are the jewels in the crown of understanding.

Editor's Note: Vanessa would be happy to know that many of the older and long-time residents have been interviewed and their thoughts are to be found in the Denmark Historical Society's Museum files in Mitchell Street. I hope I have been able to cover some of Vanessa's concerns about a more comprehensive history of the Park in this work, and hope that I may be able to locate her one day to let her know that her wish has (hopefully) been realised.



Greens Pool in the background – a view from Beach Rock to the east.

Horses on the coast.

Brady (Edward Herbert) Walters, an old resident and Historical Society ‘memory-man’, who passed away in 2002 aged 89, recalled :

As a young man, I used to catch wild horses over a wide area of the coast from Wilson Inlet to Parrys (*sic.*) Beach. People used to call them brumbies but they were not really that wild. Many of them were already broken in but had been released. There were quite a few stallions amongst them so lots of foals were born out there in the bush.

To catch them, we’d ride out there on horseback and, when we found a group of horses, we’d pick out the ones that we wanted and try to get close to them. Sometimes, when we were chasing them, we’d have to toss the noose over their heads when riding alongside at full gallop. The noose was a slip knot so, when we pulled our own horses in, the noose would pull tight and they’d stop. Then we would lead them home and put them in the yards. Later we’d break them in, if necessary, and then sell them. Some people reckoned we stole them, but they were unbranded and anybody could have them. Some people just let their horses go when they didn’t want them anymore.

In the following photos one of Denmark’s most famous pioneers J D Smith, affectionately known around town as ‘J D’, and regarded as Denmark’s unofficial mayor, was often seen riding same hills with his friends, among which were ‘Ric’ Smith (nee Ricketts) and the Tucker family, amongst others.



courtesy: Pat Sacino (nee Tucker)

More recently, in the late 1980s/early 1990s, horse-riding parties were seen on the William Bay beaches, which were eventually stopped by CALM. Boat Harbour Trail Rides were also advertised in the Denmark Bulletin in the late 1980s extolling:

...ENJOY A LEISURELY TRAIL RIDE THROUGH BEAUTIFUL COASTAL
WILDERNESS...MAGNIFICENT SCENERY ONLY TO BE SEEN ON HORSEBACK..



Sand drifts on Mazzoletti Beach William Bay

Further Anecdotes. Eric Kingdon, an old Denmark Resident always yearned after William Bay, and his thoughts follow:

William Bay - as I knew it

It was a great day way back in 1933 when Dad took most of the family to William Bay in our modern Ford with the fold down roof. Leaving the main road (Now Sth West H'wy) we weaved down the winding two wheel track and passed Grandpa Byleveld's earlier homestead site where some 15 acres had been put to pasture some years earlier.. The skeleton of the stables was still clearly visible from the road as well as the fig tree growing there .. Onwards we went viewing with wonder the glimpses of what is now Lake Byleveld so named after our pioneering Grand parents . After crossing the drain from the lake we faced our first "test" negotiating a steep incline . Here all but Dad (the driver) and Granny Byleveld had to jump out and push for all our worth to get over what was to become the first many sandy crossings barring our way.

It soon became a "fun time" to leap out and start pushing just before the vehicle bogged down.. No thought was every given about the return journey or the problems facing us getting past the "Sand Patch" where a long winding flat of deeply rutted road awaited us, doubly difficult if someone in a horse drawn cart had been before us as the cart wheels reduced the grip for the car wheels.

Determination won the day --after about one hour from the gravel of what is now Sth Coast H'way we arrived at the track terminus Grand Dad had named "The Horse Camp" for the simple reason that no horse cart could negotiate the steep climb on the return trip from the beach .

This was a beautifully sheltered hollow shaded by many peppermint trees used for some rare special occasions as well as a car park. One party known to us even had their wind up gramophone for entertainment there one day

A very steep foot path from there wound down to a lower level of stunted heath and gorse which was to delight us for many seasons with it's glorious display of wildflowers during spring time when all the bush seemed to be in flower and the over powering scent engulfed us how only all the beauty of nature can.

It was a long walk to the beach passing that odd Billabong that was usually bone dry during winter months and full with potable water all summer . The foot pad met the beach closer to the West Rocks than Green's Pool--but it was usually The Pool that decided our destination.---Our love to fish or explore the rock crevices for crabs and shells was insatiable. Even an occasion octopus was found hidden deep in a crevice.

Those were the days when you could see the 2 metre wide black rays gliding around in search of food --and sometimes catch --- a huge Blue Groper in "The Pool".

At mid-day we would move to the Causeway and Elephant Rocks. In our own secret sheltered spot behind the sand dunes where we would have our lunch protected from the wind . Eagerly drinking the most beautiful mugs of tea I have ever tasted made in our blackened much used jam tin billies---We would get cool fresh water some 30 metres up the tiny stream flowing from a small water fall which was surrounded by water cress. Just why the tea was so flavoursome eluded us . Maybe the dry salty bush used on the fire, the water and Cress / or the fresh untreated cows milk ---what-ever we all loved it.

Then off we would go to the black basalt rocks to catch big "Sandies" or King George while the Men would try their hand for nice "Skippy" on the point. It There was an awesome sight the day when a huge White Pointer slowly cruised right up to the shallows of the beach---making us very wary of even paddling in the shallows.

By 3-30 p.m. it was time to leave--tired out from our exertions . The cows had to be milked, the chooks and pigs fed and finally ourselves then off to bed for much needed sleep and pleasant dreams of our day's outing.

Eric Kingdon Sept 6th 2009 age 82 and still dreaming.



Ray Laing of McLeod Road, William Bay.

Ray's family came to Denmark a little over one hundred years ago. The following article is a summary of an interview with Mr and Mrs Laing in February 2009 by Jessie Healey and Gordon Harris at their home in McLeod Road:

Mr. Ray Laing's family owned property in McLeod Road, and used the area, now designated William Bay National Park as commonage for their cattle in winter. The Denmark Shire had responsibility for the area, and farmers applied to them for permission. In winter Ray would drive as many as 60 cattle, some with bells, the 2 kilometres to the common and leave them there, going back to check on them every week. Farmers brought cattle over from Mt. Barker at times and even as far afield as Kojonup when fodder was scarce. The cattle had a plentiful supply of food and water and they could shelter from the cold and winter storms in gullies and behind hills. He remembers the area as a carpet of wildflowers, orchids, creepers and low shrubbery. Areas of bushland were burnt regularly so as to increase herbage and peppermints had not colonised the park to the extent they have today. One year a large bull was in such good condition after its agistment in the park, it was sent straight to market.

The Park had some very unique and interesting features. Mr. Laing remembers the clay pan where the clay was so fine it sat on top of the sand. A Perth potter used to use this clay for her fine china. On the path which ran directly from the horse camp to the beach, there was a hollow which was always dry in winter and filled up with water during summer.

Like the the very first settlers in the early 1920's, Mr. Ray Laing recalls that during the 1950's his family whose property was adjacent to the coast used the William Bay Park site as commonage. Using horses and dogs he would drove up to 60 cattle down to the coast and there they would stay during the winter months. He would go back every week to check on them. Some of the cows would be belled, they were not branded though. The cattle would feed on the herbage which was burnt regularly to increase its abundance. The cattle would thrive in the park, being well sheltered from winter storms and having a plentiful food supply. He remembers a carpet of flowers and orchids. The peppermints which dominate much of the park today (2009) were not so prominent then. Mr. Laing noted that it is about 30 years since the Park had any burning done. He recalled dropping a match in the Greens Pool area and the fire creeping slowly all the way down to Lights Beach. The Denmark Shire was responsible for the common and issued permits to farmers to run their cattle for a period of 6 weeks and up to 2 months. It was just not cattle using the common J.D. Smith ran horses there and up to 1000 sheep were run at Parrys during the drought.....

In the 50's, the track did not go to the beach, it extended approximately 2 kilometres into the Park, arriving at a spot known as the horse camp. From there, there was a track leading to the beach, along which Mr. Laing recollected there was a hollow which filled up with water in summer and was dry in winter and a clay patch where the clay was so fine it sat on top of the sand. A potter from Perth used this clay for her finest bone china. Dolphins, bronze whalers and huge shoals of salmon, (which Mr. Laing thought were probably resting), used to be seen in Greens Pool quite regularly. Fishing shacks were also a feature in the sandhills. Amongst them were four at William Bay and Mr. Laing's family hut at Madfish Bay. All these disappeared when the Park was gazetted in.....

There were two major fires which swept through the Park area. The first was in 1939, a huge fire that originated in Walpole and the other in the 1950's.

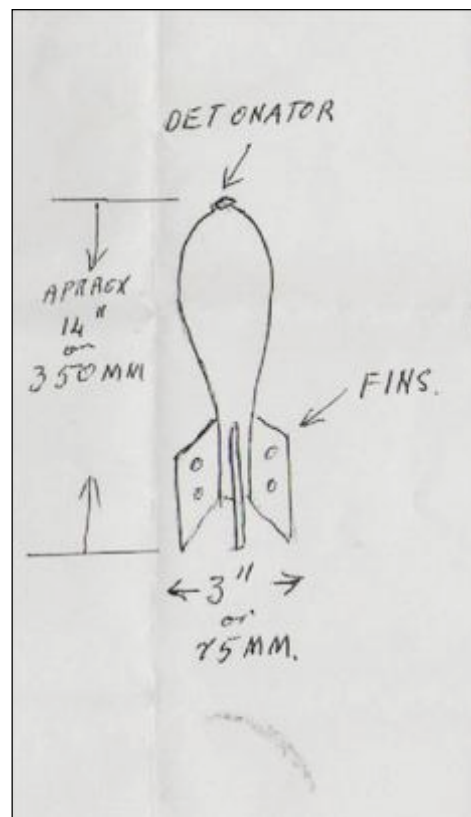
Correspondence with Eric Kingdon in 1996:

We heard a vague comment in town that the **Petrified Forest** (or Sand Patch) had been used as an Artillery Range during WW 2 and Eric responded:

...I raised this subject and was told by my brother (Guy) that on one occasion the VDC (Volunteer Defence Force) had a practice shoot on the sand patch with a 3 inch mortar and live shells.

This would have taken place late 1943 or 1944While this 'shoot' would hardly put the sand patch into an 'artillery range' category it would be prudent to warn members that they will possibly find a few metal fragments and there is a VERY REMOTE chance that they will stumble on to an unexploded shell... Perhaps of interest – machine guns were fired on golf course greens and a .22 range was set-up on the 'Green' behind the club house. Live grenades were exploded in the bush just west of club house and some big gelignite explosions nearby....

Eric then added the following sketch 'just in case':



You have been warned !!

NB. Local Fred Richardson, whose property borders the National Park, told us in an interview at his home on the Old Nornalup Road (bottom of Wentworth Road) that the Petrified Forest was used as an artillery range during World War 2 and also used for target practice from aeroplanes!

Further Reflections:

Gordon Harris

With the growing number of regular swimmers and walkers at Greens Pool and beyond (mainly westwards) I am occasionally asked how long I have been swimming there every day, and what was it like when I started over twenty years ago.

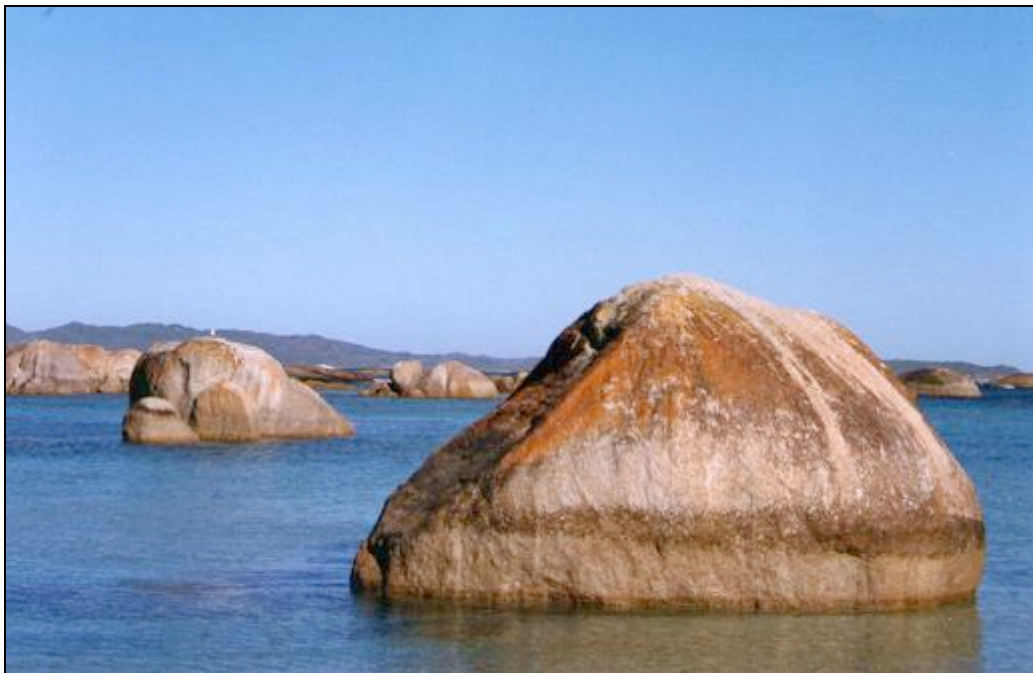
Very occasionally, I saw the odd fisherman and walker, and at one time around 1993 a few lads would surf out from Mazzoletti Beach, which was rather worrying knowing there are sharks out there. Also on Mazzoletti Beach, younger boys would 'surf' down a big sand-hill, laying on their boogie boards, into the breaking waters, which looked like great fun. However, these activities did not last long and soon disappeared - not to be seen since.

On another occasion, around the same time, I alerted the Ranger at that time - dear old Keith Moon - of what I thought was an injured Fur Seal stranded on Mazzoletti Beach, and when we came to check it out, it turned-out to be more than OK as it began chasing us. Thank goodness it had flippers and not legs!

The amount of litter laying on the beach in those days was appalling, and for some years I would return from my run with two supermarket bags of rubbish every morning. At that time, I was with the Denmark Lions and the daily clean-ups earned the Lions a donation of \$200 from the Keep Australia Beautiful organisation, which was a bonus for what was a back-breaking chore at times. Later, Katie Syme and Moira Brodie took-over, arriving for their walk before I had left the water, and often Katie would come back, proudly displaying an artistic layout of shapes and colours in the plastic bags. Further on, there is a photo of a mosaic of plastic pieces that Katie artistically made-up. Later still, Gary Schwab came down earlier still and took over the collection of litter, which he has done for some years, aided by local Jessie Healey and most of the other Members of the WBNPA . Some of the rubbish in the early days was surprising and, at one stage, for some weeks I was carrying fluorescent tubes back by the dozen, and many years later, the odd one still turns-up on the beach. Other unusual items were knives, pocket lighters, clothes – even ladies' underwear, which could have been a very interesting story. In those isolated days, I was always expecting to find a body washed-up! As Keith Moon would often say about the litter-collectors ..'their blood should be bottled' !



Tower Hill Rocks wearing a rainbow on a rainy day



Greens Pool looking from the eastern end towards Point Hillier

courtesy DEC

One interesting point was at West Rocks, where I could run straight through on the beach as it still existed on the right (coast) side of the rocks until Ranger Chris Hart put-up a line of posts on the west side of the rocks to drop wind-blown sand at the open 'fence' and build-up the dune which is there today. A separate mini-dune that existed on the west side of the rocks (some 10-20m away), which I used to traverse as part of my run disappeared, most likely due to the newly-



developing West Rocks dune preventing easterly winds getting through. As far as we could ascertain, the objective for blocking this passage was to deter beach buggies and four-wheel drives from easily reaching the more popular beaches from West Rocks to Greens Pool where they could cause damage to the sand-hills and resulting erosion – not to mention the rubbish and broken bottles that have been left there,

and sometimes dangerously buried in the sand, by errant fishermen.

I used to climb up onto the high sand-cliffs west of West Rocks, and sit for ages, soaking-up the magnificent views of the sea and surrounding Bay coastlines - it felt like being on a deserted island.

Swimming in Greens Pool has had its moments to remember. Some years ago now, on a grey Sunday morning, I was first in the water to find an Australian Fur Seal on its back in the middle of the Pool and we swam, some metres apart, up to the ocean rocks at the top end (south) and then back again. The seal eventually left the Pool at the western access to the open sea. Talking to the Ranger later, he warned me that the seals carry the tuberculosis virus and can transmit in their breath, which took some of the gloss off the event! A year or so ago (about 2008), we had two dolphins in the Pool for a few days and a number of us were able to enjoy their company, and watch them diving, twisting and turning under the water, which were magical moments. There was also a pod of about twenty that were surfing just outside the Pool and another pod west of West Rocks in 2009. Coming across an Eagle Ray or Wobbiegong in the narrow and shallow south-eastern channel through to the old Greens Pool was also an experience that swimmers were glad to surmount - especially after Steve Irwin's infamous demise.

An interesting phenomenon occurred in the Pool some years ago when we noticed air-bubbles rising from the sand-bed at a couple of spots 20m or more from the open sea. Not being able to work-out 'why' we contacted the Maritime museum in Fremantle to see if they could provide an answer, and they wrote back to say they were sure it was air being forced into the reefs by ocean breakers, and finding a way out under the sand and rocks inside the Pool. The Maritime museum has always been most helpful, and it was the author's pleasure to work with them some years later when they were down to carry-out a Heritage Project on the estuaries of south-coast waterways (rivers and inlets). There are so many good memories....



Many regulars' favourite rocks ☞ which are located in the sea, just a little on the Greens Pool side (east) of West Rocks, part of which is seen in the photo on the right. The red lichen is just one of the 15 000 varieties of this phylum of fungi.

Locals

Bev Blechynden and Amy Chandler related how they enjoyed swimming in Greens Pool, despite an understandable concern of the sea, which quite a number of people have, and the regular swimmers recognise how plucky they are to venture in to the water under those circumstances. **Ian Macrae**, another regular swimmer feels, like most of us, how lucky we are to have such an amazing place to enjoy.

Sue Goldsmith, wife of Barry the incumbent President (2009-10) reflects:

*I know how it feels to leave my cosy bed before sunrise on a cold wet morning
to have a cold nose with a drip on the end and how difficult it is to tug off wet bathers
I now know how wading into 15 degree water feels
and the frustration of swimming in the same spot
or being swept backwards while trying frantically to swim forwards
I now know the names of all the fish in the pool
and the excruciating wait, anticipation and anxiety watching the nesting Plovers
I now have special friends who also know and love Greens Pool
As I do.*

Gordon Harris - again:

Other interesting occurrences I remember around 1995 were seeing a waterspout out to sea from Greens Pool (the one and only occasion to my knowledge) and again, at about the same time in a June storm, I remember being chased up the old steps by huge waves which I saw break clear over the top of Bomby Rock, after which I ran for my life! Again, I have not seen huge swells like that since.

I also remember, many years ago, seeing a fishing boat enter Greens Pool from the top (south) end, stay in the Pool for a short time and watching the skipper expertly navigate his way back out through the narrow channels to the open sea. On another occasion I was swimming in the old Greens Pool (south-east end) to be confronted by three holiday-makers entering the old Pool on surf-boards from Elephant Rocks, the first and only time I have seen anyone come through that way.

Simon Parry, proprietor of Odyssey Bookshop in Strickland Street wrote, in an Essay competition in 1999 My Path to Denmark, the following thoughts on William Bay:

....Growing up in Perth, from the age of nine,...the south coast came to have significance in my life during my teenage years when my family began a series of regular summer vacations in Walpole....At least once per holiday we would drive the 65km to Denmark, but especially to the unforgettable Green's Pool at William Bay. If I had to nominate one image that has been indelibly etched in my mind since teenage years, it is the image of Green's Pool – that magical lagoon of white sand, crystal waters and sentinel-like granite boulders. It is in fact this image that haunted me through the years and this same image which finally drew me back to Denmark to settle.... Nor was it just the reality of standing on the beach at Green's Pool again after all those years....Whenever I return to Denmark from trips to Perth, I truly feel like I am returning home....It has also become a kind of ritual to walk along the beach at William Bay...to reclaim that 'grounded' feeling to reset my compass and get my bearing.

Sally Seminara's (Parryville Chalets) innermost thoughts:

*Emotion incarnate
The sound of crashing waves..
The smell of salt air...
The rainbows on stormy days..
The salty sea-mists on cold, clear mornings...
The many moods of the ocean through the different seasons of the year....
Pristine, energising, unique,a sanctuary from the outside world..
The wonders of different sea creatures as you swim in the ever-changing oceans....
Cathedral-like rainbows...
The full moon glistening on the water just as the day turns to light...
A place to swim safely in all seasons every day....*

It makes me mad that people (DEC) want to change what we have without experiencing in fullness of what it is in its uniqueness. A car-park will never be big enough – for what price? Something worth preserving, not exploiting...

A sentiment echoed by most of the regular beach users.

A closing remark in the 2010/11 summer struck a chord with me when a local resident, **Chris Mills**, said to me when we met in the middle of Greens Pool: *You know, I've travelled the world many times and there is nothing like this any where...*

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Unusual 'Finds'.

Early morning visits to Greens Pool are always interesting as there are often surprises to be found – even in the car-park.

Recent 'finds' by the Author included:



When I found this currency-note one morning at the entrance to the toilet block, I thought I had found a fortune and conjured-up visions of 1 000 francs being a veritable fortune. However, it transpired that this was a New Caledonian note from the Melanesian islands in the south-west of the Pacific. New Caledonia is a French Protectorate and the value in Australian currency was only about \$ 12.50 ! No other car was in the car-park at the time so I kept it as a 'souvenir'.

I was fascinated by this strange creature on the roof of my car one morning after my swim. Not being a country lad, I thought it might be something exotic, or rare, but again I was disappointed to find it was a common old weevil, one of around 50 000 different species of weevil. This one was about one cm long.



This strange object was again found near the entrance to the toilet block and I just could not make out what it was or meant to be. It was a soft plastic sphere, a little smaller than a tennis ball, filled with a liquid close to the top and with an 'eye' floating inside – the blue object facing to the right and with red blood-like veins to its rear. The weirdest thing was that whatever surface I placed it on it rolled away, so to take the photo, I had to jam it between the handle of the donation tin and against the 'Thank You' sign. I am still trying to find out what it was.

A 'stop press' item worth recording concerns a most unusual sight in late 2010 when early-morning beachgoers saw a manned jetski heading westwards along William Bay about 100metres or so offshore. It transpired to be Chris Shanahan, a local from Pit Road, William Bay, who, apparently, checks-out the early morning surf, reporting back to local enthusiasts.



Even on a grey day, William Bay is quite beautiful



A stormy sky to the south of William Bay threatens a sunny day



Mazzoletti Beach seen through West Rocks



A lovely corner of Elephant Rocks, complete with small trees and waterfalls.