

The fishing hamlets with their camping grounds have given way to towns and cities with multi-storey luxury accommodation.

There is a large marina for ocean-going vessels at the Mandurah Ocean Marina and there are smaller marinas at Dawesville and Mandurah Quay, with another marina planned for Point Grey.

There are extensive residential canal developments in the Peel Region, and homeowners in these developments can park their boats at their back doors.

Although in 1909 it was legal to shoot waterbirds, there is now hope that the more than 20,000 waterbirds that each year utilise the waterways will be protected by the implementation, under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, of the Ramsar Management Plan.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was the first of the modern international agreements on conservation. It is an international intergovernmental treaty that aims to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve those that remain through sustainable use and management.

In 1990, the Peel Inlet and the Harvey Estuary were listed as part of the Peel-Yalgorup System, which is listed as a 'Wetlands of International Importance' under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

3/09



Coopers Mill circa 1930

CANOE CLUBS

- Mandurah Over 55s Canoe Club (Inc). The club paddles three times a week, mainly on the Peel Inlet and the rivers. For inquiries, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to: PO Box 5214, Falcon, WA 6210.
- Mandurah-Murray Vietnam Veterans Group. Members meet for a paddle on Thursday mornings at various locations in the Peel Region. All veterans and ex-service people are welcome. Contact Mick, m: 0417 984948 or website: www.mmvvg.asn.au.
- Mandurah Outrigger Canoe Club Inc. Competitive and recreational paddling for teams and individuals. Contact Colin, m: 0428 468 884 or website: www.mandurahoutriggers.blogspot.com.
- Mandurah Paddling Club Inc. Membership: competitive; recreational, social and junior recreational. Inquiries Paul, m: 0419 048467 or website: www.mandurah.canoe.org.au.

CANOE & KAYAK RETAIL & HIRE

For all your paddling needs:

call in and say hello to Wayne or Jenny at **KAYAKS 4-U**, the Paddlers Pitstop, Western Foreshore, Mandurah.
M: 0419 885 710 or website: www.kayaks4-u.com.

CANOEIST-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

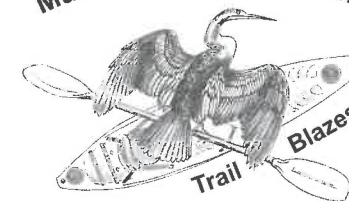
- Estuary Hideaway Cabins, 2151 Old Coast Road, Bouvard, on western foreshore of Harvey Estuary. M: 0407 838 061.
- Herron Point camping area, Herron Point Road (26km from Pinjarra) on eastern foreshore of Harvey Estuary.
- Pinjarrah Park & Country Camping, Williams Road, Pinjarra, on banks of Murray River, 3km from Pinjarra.
- Pinjarra Cabins & Caravan Park, 1716 Pinjarra Road, Pinjarra, 2km west of Pinjarra Post Office.
- Tathams Holiday Cottages and Caravan Park, 16 South Yunderup Road, South Yunderup. Ph: 9537 6844/m: 0407 192 327. Located on bank of Murray River.

CANOE GUIDE COMPANION C

Human History

Compiled by

Canoe Trail Friends of
Mandurah & Pinjarra Inc.



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GOVERNMENT OF
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PEEL
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION



The Canoe Trail Friends of Mandurah & Pinjarra Inc. is a non-profit organisation run by volunteers who wish to promote the establishment and maintenance of recreational canoe trails on the waterways of the Peel Regional Park and to advocate awareness of and care for the natural environment.

Inquiries. send a **stamped** self-addressed envelope to:
PO Box 3188, Mandurah East, WA 6210 or visit:

<http://canoetrailfriendsmandurahandpinjarra.blogspot.com>

CANOE TRAIL FRIENDS OF MANDURAH & PINJARRA INC.

Human history of the Peel-Harvey Waterways

A supplement to the canoe trail guides produced by the Friends

Fishers of the waterways

The fishers of the Peel waterways before colonial settlement were the Binjareb people of the Bibbulmun Nation. The Bibbulmun Nation occupied lands from near Geraldton in the north to east of Albany in the south.

The Binjareb people travelled centuries-old tracks to maintain their food supplies and they built moveable small shelters, called mia-mias, from branches, leaves and skins.

A feature of the lifestyle of the Binjareb people was the abundance of fish available, along with turtles, crabs and birds. Apart from spearing fish in shallow waters with gidgees, the Binjareb people used mungahs or fish traps. These traps were made of brush and sticks which were laced together. After heavy rains, sea mullet (kwulla) migrated downstream from the lakes to the ocean, and the Binjareb people would trap the fish in the mungahs. They did their best to catch all the fish so that none could escape and warn the other fish.

The best-known of the mungahs was on the Serpentine River downstream from the present-day Barragup Bridge. Near the Barragup mungah was a meeting place where many hundreds of people would meet annually for a festival where they fed on fish and discussed community matters.

There are important Aboriginal heritage sites around the Peel Region's waterways which are protected by the Western Australian Aboriginal Heritage Act (1972). Campsites at Island Point and the Serpentine River mouth are included, as is a ceremonial site at Egg Island.

The Bibbulmun Nation's practice of walking long distances for ceremonial gatherings is recognised by the naming of the Bibbulmun Track. This world-class long-distance bushwalking track from Perth to Albany, a distance of 963 kilometres, traverses the Peel Region near Jarrahdale and passes through Dwellingup.

Thomas Peel

The Peel Region is named after Thomas Peel, who is regarded as the founding settler of the area. Thomas Peel arrived in Western Australia towards the end of 1829, and in 1830 obtained an initial grant of land stretching from Cockburn Sound to the Murray River. Peel received an additional grant of land in 1834.

The original Peel settlers were hard-pressed to succeed; labour shortages, lack of good farming land, and poor organisation by Thomas Peel were just some of the hardships faced. As often happens, a nucleus of families stuck it out and a community was established.

After living in Mandurah for 34 years, Thomas Peel died at the age of 69. He is buried in Mandurah.

Further fishing of the waterways

The plentiful supply of mullet, cobbler and other fish species led to a fishing industry being established. By the late 1870s, the first cannery had been opened and eventually four canneries were in operation. A modern factory incorporating refrigeration was built at Yunderup in 1897.

Well-known generational Peel families were heavily involved in the fishing industry as fishermen, cannery owners and fish transporters.

As early as 1889, concern was raised over the fish stocks, and nine years later, in 1898, the industry was in decline.

It is estimated that, during 1901, 100 tons of fish was packed at the canneries.

Regulations were introduced in 1906 restricting the areas where nets could be used and net size. Fishermen were licensed and a fishery inspector was appointed.

In 1909, fishermen were allowed to kill pelicans and cormorants, as these were considered to be eating too many fish.

There was also conflict with the Aboriginal fishermen who were using the mungah, as it was wrongly considered to be a threat to fish breeding upstream. However, the government ordered the mungah destroyed and all traces removed.

Transport on the waterways

The first steamship on the Peel was the Coolanup, which was built in 1898. The Coolanup was specifically built to transport fish from the freezing and canning works at Yunderup. Brought down to Mandurah, she crossed the dreaded sandbar at the ocean entrance, but then had difficulty getting into the Murray River because of the sandbar there.

After the Murray River sandbar was dredged and there was further clearing of the river upstream, the Coolanup became a tourist steamer, taking passengers between Mandurah and Pinjarra.

A landing was built at Pinjarra and trips could then be taken in 'supreme comfort' to the old Coopers Mill, on Mill Island at the mouth of the Murray.

Another idea was to bring patrons by the steamer to a luxury hotel to be built on Mill Island. This was in line with the vision for the area to become the 'Saratoga of Perth' – a summer resort; a great place for fishing and hunting. Subdivision of the island was also considered.

Until the 1920s, the main transport servicing Mandurah was by sea to and from Fremantle. Small sailing vessels were used, as they were able to cross the sandbar at the mouth of the Mandurah estuary.

One vessel of note, which certainly was not small, was the Leviathan. It was an open cutter, 50 feet long, with two masts built of jarrah. The jarrah was cut from the surrounding bush and then shaped by broadaxe. It took four years to build the Leviathan, and she was larger than any vessel plying the 'Freo run'.

Twenty tons of timber per trip was carried from Boltons Mill at Soldiers Cove to Fremantle. The return trip would bring back to Mandurah general cargo, which was discharged on the government jetty on the Eastern Foreshore near Smart Street.

The Leviathan was wrecked on the sandbar at the estuary mouth in the mid-1920s.

Modern history

The first fishers and settlers would be amazed by today's Peel Region. For a start, the population is now 92,000.

On today's waterways there are very few professional fishers plying their trade, while recreational fishers now focus on crabbing. Even crabbing has had to have more restrictions introduced so as to prevent crabs becoming just a memory, like other fish species in the area.

Recreational power boating is by far the biggest user of the waterways and supports commercial businesses of various types; for example, sales, servicing, hiring, and tour operations.

Canoeing and kayaking is also on the increase, with paddlers enjoying the magic of the waterways and watching the birdlife – and let us not forget the opportunity of having a one-on-one encounter with a dolphin.