

Sam's Creek view Berowra side

BEROWRA BUSH RUNNERS

If you search the meaning of the word 'club'; amongst other definitions, such as 'a heavy blunt instrument', you will find the true essence of the Berowra Bush Runners - "A group of people organised for, and who contribute to, a common purpose".

Well, there is no truer way to describe our club. With very humble beginnings 25 years ago, when 5 mates decided to get together on a regular basis, at a regular time, for a common purpose. What was their common purpose? To have a few drinks and compare war stories of course, well after a run through the beautiful bushlands surrounding Berowra, that is.

To this day, we still have some founding members strongly active in the club and still sharing their knowledge and experience with us on many of the runs. Luckily for us, that love and passion of running has grown into what is today a small, supportive, competitive and very sociable club with the membership age ranging from between 8 and 80 years old.

The club is not limited just to Berowra locals however, with many of the regular runners coming from other parts of Sydney and the Central Coast. We have even enjoyed the company of a few past Olympians and other well-known athletes, such as James Lloyd.

Every Sunday morning at 7:15am, a group of like-minded, enthusiastic, although slightly asleep, runners with varied abilities get together for a common purpose at Warrina Street Oval in Berowra, rain, hail or shine. And that's when the real fun begins....well that is, after all the chitter chatter and catch-ups, injury complaints, discussions on books like Born to Run or the latest tip/technique read about in the R4YL magazine.

We are lucky; Berowra is blessed with

WRITTEN BY GAVIN MARKEY

IMAGES COURTESY OF REBEKAH MARKEY & TED WEST

one of the best locations and settings for running in all of Sydney. And, yes, despite the "Welcome to Sydney" sign at the base of the big dipper on the F3, Berowra is actually part of Sydney. So waking up and taking a run through our bushland is not so much of a chore, but more an enjoyable experience.

A suburb totally surrounded by bush, Berowra has a variety of beautiful trails which make for perfect running. Whether its north to Cowan, south to Mt Kuring-Gai, east to Waratah Bay, or west to Berowra Waters, there is a bush track within easy reach. And of course, the regular staple being the fire trails surrounding Berowra that once formed part of the Bush Bash Fun Run, all within 200m of our start point. Even a complete lap of just the fire trails yield a total run of 18km around the suburb (including Berowra Heights).

One of our favourite runs would have to be down to the Berowra Waters Ferry, via the 'Kokoda' trail, and back up via the bush (as if the 'Kokoda' trail hasn't got enough bush). A total of around 12km which can take anywhere from around 50 minutes for the 'awake' runners, to around an hour and a half for those that take awhile to get warmed up. This would have to be billed as one of the most scenic runs in Sydney, and quite possibly one of the hardest too, with breathtaking views of the Berowra Creek and bush, and breathe taking hills to get



BBR original Ted West still turns out for handicaps.



Handicap winners for the 2011 competition. Back L to R: George Munro, Peter Fallows; Mark Livy, & Nathan Claypole. Front L to R: Leo Peterson, Rebekah Markey, Michael Simms, & Kevin Heaton.

We believe, as always, the emphasis is on participation and enjoyment, after all no matter how slow you run, you are still faster than someone sitting on the couch.



Warwick Johnson.

course every month through the streets of Berowra. It's a great way for members to track their fitness levels over time, or for beginners to get a starting point from which to work.

The annual handicap trophy has been fiercely competitive over the years, with much work done by the handicapper to 'fairly' work out a handicap time. This is yet another unique feature of the club, as it not only motivates each runner to compete and better their own time, but gives everyone, no matter what their ability or speed, a chance to win through their own efforts and perseverance, against their own time. Although, it is a common misunderstanding that being kind (read, generous) to the handicapper can improve one's chances quite considerably!

Another great feature of the handicap race is that each month the course is reversed, making the ups, downs and the downs, ups and believe me, there are a number of ups and downs no matter which way you run, so I guess that evens things out, making it a flat course.... although it is almost guaranteed to leave you nowhere near your PB for 10km.

In the halcyon days of the 1990s, apparently 50 people would regularly attend the handicaps - or, maybe, that is just early stage Alzheimer's playing tricks on the minds of some of our 'more experienced' runners. Either way, the handicap is a great way to see how you are running each month, and is easily the most popular run on the calendar.

Way back in 1996, Bob Smith, Bush runner and sometimes poet, penned his 'Ode to the Handicap'. I guess 'the Ode' is a great example of the camaraderie, fun and the central thread

there and back, all included at no charge.

Apart from the regular fun/training runs through the bush and fire tracks that surround Berowra, a feature of the club for many years has been the monthly handicap, with a time delayed start system. Your 'official' handicap is worked out by the handicapper after your initial 2 runs or roughly your 10/5km time, if a new runner. Your handicap time is your start time, after the clock has started and the gun has gone. The idea being that (if the handicapper gets it correct) everyone should be finishing around the same time, with the winners being those that have improved the most by running the best against their own handicap.

The monthly handicap races (first Sunday of each month) run over the same 10km



Michael Sims

When and why did you join the Bush Runners? I joined in January 2011. I have always enjoyed running but never ventured into bush running until I was asked to join a team for Oxfam last year. Like many I was a bit hesitant to run in the bush due to the perception of getting ankle/knee injuries but I soon found out that bush running actually strengthens your legs! I really enjoyed the bush running and knew about Berowra Bush Runners, but never thought of joining.

What is the best part of being a bush runner with BBR? Like joining any group, you join because you have a common interest. In this case, it is running. But to stay with a group there has to be a reason, the members of Berowra Bush Runners are friendly and there is a great cross-section of people from all walks of life and all running abilities, most of all trying to see how long a run I can get in before the Sunday morning run.

What is your biggest BBR challenge? I will always remember my first run with BBR, it was the longest run I had done for some time and I was stuffed for days after. I did the Glendale Road Run and then decided to join Pete Fallows and Dave Gallagher for an extended run to Buijwa Bay Cowan. It was an amazing run, especially since I grew up in the area and had never been down there. Mind you, I have never been back since.

What is your goal/motivation? A great quote I heard, "A Goal is a dream with a plan". I love exercise and I what I love even more is a challenge. I have always wanted to do an Ironman and I was stupid enough to enter the race in Port Macquarie in May 2012. The only problem is that I cannot swim so this will be my challenge, and trying to fit in more time to train.

What is your running highlight? I would have to say running into the MCG with a few hundred meters to go in the 2010 Melbourne Marathon knowing if I just ran the same pace to the finish line I would break 3hours 30minutes. I have never felt my heart rate increase so much; I thought I was going to have a heart attack.

What's your best running tip? A great motto, "If you fail to prepare, then you are preparing to fail". Easier to say than follow, as I always go into a race wishing I did more training. I always have a high protein meal after training to help aid recovery for the next training session.

Interests/Hobbies? Spending time with my family and watching my 2 daughters grow up. Camping, travelling and of course going to work.

1 year from today I will.....still be running with BBR



Jackie Watts

When and why did you join the Bush Runners? In the last century which makes me feel very old! I joined BBR in 1996 which, after 16 years, I think makes me the second longest serving member after Ted West. I was encouraged to join BBR when I was out for a Sunday morning run and a group of BBR runners passed me on their regular Sunday morning run.

What is the best part of being a bush runner with BBR? The friends I have met along the way. There are 3 in particular that I still run with on a regular basis, Jackie Walford (former BBR member), Jane Rorke, and Jodi Gallagher. We have shared both laughs and tears over the years of running together.

What is your biggest BBR challenge? It would have to be the monthly handicap – it never seems to get any easier!

What is your goal/motivation? Keep active and fit to enjoy life.

What is your running highlight? My highlight would be two events where running a marathon was just one part of the event – Port Macquarie Ironman Triathlon (1997) and Busseton Ironman Triathlon (2009). At Port Macquarie I amazed myself with a 4.15 marathon.

What are you currently training for? Nothing – I need to get over a spate of injuries and get a new goal.

What's your best running tip? "Take time to smell the roses". We have some lovely runs to enjoy around Berowra (my personal favourite is Kokoda).

Interests/Hobbies? My family – with 4 'kids' there is always something happening.

1 year from today I will..... hopefully still be enjoying the lovely trails around Berowra

“We are lucky; Berowra is blessed with one of the best locations and settings for running in all of Sydney.”



BRR runners before the 1999 Six Foot Track, (l to r) Dave Hatley, Dave Cannings, Dr Allan Miller, Ted West, Bob Smith

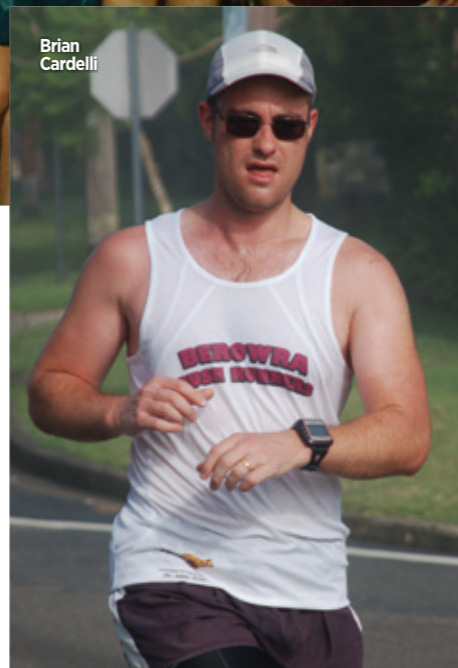
was bigger than the last one. Runners came from far and wide to do this run, and they found out exactly how tough it was when they exited the fire trail and came face to face with the Berkeley Close Hill - just what they didn't want at the 8km mark.

There was also a 3km kids run as part of the event, which was popular with the local schools. From small beginnings the race grew to become one of the must-do runs on the Sydney calendar. At its peak, the Bush Bash attracted over 500 entrants, including some elite runners. The event was also well supported by local businesses and the community. After the race there were prize giveaways, which often lasted longer than the race itself (but then again which organiser doesn't like the sound of their own voice?).

The Bush Bash was last held in September 2001, and was cancelled due to the increasing cost of staging such events. At around that time, many local fun runs ceased for similar reasons, but who knows, with current membership and enthusiasm on the strong increase, a revival could well be within reach.

The Berowra Bush Runners have had a long history of supporting events such as the Oxfam Trail Walker, entering in most years and being successful in winning in 2004 and 2009, as well as first past the line in 2008. The Berowra 'Team 71' (Berowra Bush Runner teams have represented the team number 71 for most entered years) 2009 team was the first time in the event's history that a female was part of the first placed team.

Not that the Trail Walker is a race, but it certainly helps that it is held in part of our backyard. Whether it is the southbound course starting at Brooklyn or another variation, the Bush Runners should not have any excuses for getting



Brian Cardelli

lost in parts of the course that we run each week.

We have a great presence in the trail running world with many of our members starting out running 5km and building to longer distances with the help of like-minded members.

The club has been well represented in the Six Foot Track, for a relatively small club, with a high proportion of members competing each year. For a club of its size, the Berowra Bush Runners has punched well above its weight in these and many other events in terms of results and this year's GNW100's was no exception. Seven percent of the field was from the Bush Runners, and all finishing inside the top ten for the 100km event, with an age group record to boot, and one going on to complete to 100 miler.

Results and strength of running aside, some of the greatest facets of belonging to a club such



The young and the old! Mark Peterson with Founding Member, Bob Gunning, and youngest member Ryleigh Markey (age 8).



In 2000, the BRR Oxfam Trailwalker team of David Cannings, Edward West, Robert Smith, Alan Miller finished fourth.

as the Berowra Bush Runners would have to be the camaraderie, support and willingness to share amongst fellow runners. There is openness like in no other sport, all runners share and help each other, no matter how experienced they are, even with those 'special' secrets and remedies or that mind trick or nutritional advice. Even if that sharing means that fellow runner may take the last points on offer, at the next handicap, away from you. Yes, it's more than just a club, it's friends.

Members all join for different reasons, some to improve their running skill, some to spend time running with others, some to lose weight, some just to meet new people or a New Year's resolution, but no matter what the initial reason, they all seem to keep coming back because of the common purpose, a healthier outlook on life promoted by organised runs through the beautiful Berowra bush with some great people.

We believe, as always, the emphasis is on participation and enjoyment, after all no matter how slow you run, you are still faster than someone sitting on the couch.

So please feel free to pop in and join in on one of our many and varied runs, or perhaps even test yourself on the 'guaranteed to be nowhere near your 10km PB' handicap.

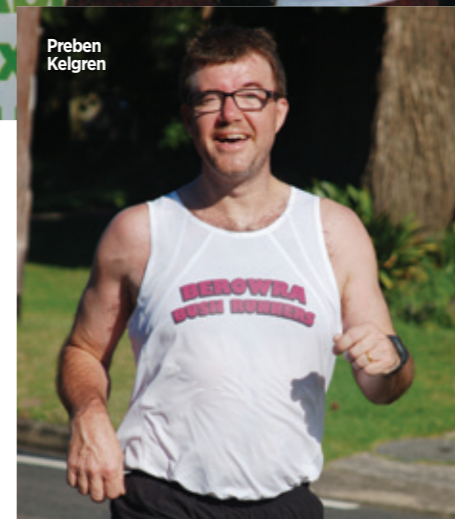
FURTHER INFORMATION..

ESTABLISHED: 1987
MONTHLY HANDICAPS: First Sunday of the Month, starting at 7:15am from Warrina Street Oval, Berowra
WEBSITE: <http://berowrabushrunners.com>
CONTACT: info@berowrabushrunners.com

Fastest Times

*Official handicaps are after two runs. Until that time, results are unofficial.

Year	Men	Time
1995	John Lang	35.32
1996	David Harris	35.34
1997	Geoff Berkeley Andrew Forsythe	35.50 35.51
1998	David Hatley	37.42
2004	Chris Graham	36.58
2005	Chris Graham	37.14
2006	Ray Wareham* Leo Peterson	35.21 36.33
2007	Leo Peterson	35.48
2008	Leo Peterson	36.09
2009	Chris Graham	38.06
2010	Fabrice Brady* Noel Annett	37.45 38.18
2011	Leo Peterson	36.51



Preben Kelgren



Steve Mills - February 2012 Handicap winner.

Year	Women	Time
1995	Marie Bleakley	45.38
1996	Jackie Watts	45.50
1997	Jackie Watts	43.36
1998	Dawn Tiller* Jackie Walford	39.05 49.03
2004	Katrina Gorton	43.14
2005	Katrina Gorton	43.50
2006	Katrina Gorton	43.54
2007	Jackie Watts	45.49
2008	Sarah Trehy	42.49
2009	Beth Cardelli	44.44
2010	Beth Cardelli	41.31
2011	Sarah Trehy	43.05



Dave Gallagher

When and why did you join the Bush Runners? After many years just living up the road from Warrina Street Oval but 7:15am was way too early, but once we had kids, 7:15 was mid-morning, so by 2005, I thought, why not. Now all 5 of us come along!

What is the best part of being a bush runner with BBR? The camaraderie, training buddies, always finding someone to run with, the team events, handicap and the competition, of course.

What is your biggest BBR challenge? Run the handicap in under my age.

What is your goal/motivation? Always run the handicap in under my age, racing, keep running for many years to come.

What is your running highlight? Without a doubt 2009 Oxfam Trailwalker win, also the previous Oxfam runs and training was good fun, running a 10km PB.

What are you currently training for? Nothing imminent, but keep a good base for another crack at 6 Foot Track and the Canberra Marathon.

What's your best running tip? Never put off a training run through slackness (and that includes rain), ease-up between race campaigns and just run without regimented or planned training to put fun back into running and freshen up body and mind.

Interests/Hobbies? Watching my kids enjoy sport, NRL, sport in general (because too much sport is not enough), cooking because I love eating, sitting back on a summer afternoon, acting as lifeguard at our pool, BBQ sizzling and a few cold home brews!

1 year from today I will..... be 26 just like Gav, trying to stay in front of Ely and Jemma, maybe just finished another Oxfam Trailwalker with BBR's.

