

Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp → Victoria Dam Historical Facts Approx 3.6km one way

Take the grey gravel track that heads **east** from the gates of the Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp. This track is known as the ***Mason and Bird Heritage Trail***.

Mason and Bird Heritage Trail

In the early 1860's, Perth merchant Benjamin Mason established a timber station on the Canning River at Mason's Landing. Timber was transported to Fremantle or Perth via the Canning and Swan Rivers. After realising the limited potential for Jarrah in the Canning River area, Mason applied for a licence to cut timber near the Bickley Brook. He obtained his permit in 1864 and began his second timber mill; the Hills station (also known as Mason's Mill). In 1870, Ben Mason and Francis Bird became partners. Francis Bird was a well to do architect who had recently arrived from England. Bird was considered the designer of the timber tramway which stretched from Mason's Landing to the Hills Station. The sharp bends in the tramway were part of the design as a way to slow down the carriages. This 14km track was built by convicts and took 7 months to complete. This tramway, which was the second railway to be opened in the state, was opened by Governor Weld on February 8, 1872. Due to the number of accidents on the tramway, including transportation problems after two laden ships carrying full loads of timber sunk, the business of Mason, Bird and Co. was forced into bankruptcy in 1882. Due to the construction of a new tramway in Midland in 1881, the use of the Mason and Bird tramway was discontinued. Mason, Bird and Co helped to fuel growth in the timber industry and although the company failed, it assisted in increasing the value of Western Australian exports and provided jobs whilst it was running.

Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp

The Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp is alongside the Bickley Brook Reservoir. The reservoir's construction was completed in 1921 and was the second reservoir ever built in WA. The reservoir can hold 60 000 kilolitres* of water. In the past, the water from the reservoir was used for local irrigation. It is currently used for recreational purposes by the Department of Sport and Recreation WA.

The Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp was officially opened in June 1945 by the National Fitness Council of WA. Their key objective was to improve the youth's individual physical fitness levels throughout the nation as well as create awareness about the importance of physical fitness. The Department of Sport and Recreation WA continues to support the main objective of the National Fitness Council through its camps chain which includes Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp.

Munday Brook Bridge

The old wooden bridge that you will come across is the Munday Brook Bridge. This bridge was an important part of the Mason and Bird Tramway. The bridge is reinforced with railway sleepers and is a restored part of the Mason, Bird and Co. Tramline. It is believed to be the oldest standing all-timber bridge in Australia at 142 years old (written in 2014). On the west side of this bridge is a plaque with further information.

* 1 Kilolitre = 1000 Litres

Devil's Pinch

Devil's Pinch was the name the teamsters who drove the timber-laden carriages gave to the steep hill on the eastern side of the Munday Brook Bridge. Carriages loaded with timber were free-wheeled where possible but otherwise pulled by horses. Derailments were common, with a number of serious accidents occurring. One accident saw the death of 8 horses. There is a hand-written plaque still located in a tree just after the bridge on the eastern side remembering all the horses that died at the site. The brook that runs under the bridge is called Munday Brook. The northern side of this site was once used by a pioneer of the Orange Grove district, Jabez White in 1862 to lay wheat fields.

Munday Brook

The Munday Brook was named after the Aboriginal guardian of the area. It is believed that Munday was a leader of the Perth Aboriginal people and the traditional owner of the lands found between the Canning and Helena Rivers. This area was known to him and his tribe as "Beeloo". Munday became outlawed along with two other Aboriginal leaders, Midgegooroo and Yagan who were the traditional owners of the land adjacent to Munday's. They were all accused of the ambush and murder of two Europeans for which a reward was being offered for their heads. All three were captured. Midgegooroo and Yagan were both killed; Midgegooroo was captured and shot without trial while Yagan was shot by two young Europeans. Munday was pardoned.

Information Hut

This concrete building contains a picnic table and two maps showing the layout of the area and surrounding walking trails around both the Old Victoria Dam Wall and New Victoria Dam.

Treatment Plants

These buildings are located adjacent to the Old Victoria Dam Wall and are used to treat the water contained within the New Victoria Dam.

Old Victoria Dam Wall

The Old Victoria Dam Wall's construction was completed in 1891. It was the first permanent water supply for Perth City. The large, middle section of the Old Victoria Dam Wall was removed but the outer sections of the wall were retained and are still intact to this day. The remaining parts of the wall are a great example of olden day dam construction. After 100 years, the aging of the dam structure and the need to fully develop Munday Brook's full potential for water supply saw the Victoria Dam redeveloped.

New Victoria Dam

The New Victoria Dam's construction was completed in 1991. The New Victoria Dam can hold 9.5 million kilolitres. This dam is used to supply drinking water to the shire of Kalamunda and sometimes the eastern metropolitan areas when needed.

Information sourced from the following references:

City of Gosnells Historical Society – Heritage Walk Information Sheet (Sunday April 5th, 1987)
W.A. Heritage Trails Network brochure – Mason & Bird Heritage Trail
W.A. Heritage Trails Network brochure – Kattamorda Heritage trail
Water Authority of Western Australia brochure– Bickley-Victoria Redevelopment

Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp to Victoria Dam Historical Walk

Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp

From the gates at Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp, turn east to follow the grey gravel track that is behind a white boomgate.

Bickley Brook
 Devil's Pinch
 Munday Brook Bridge (Mason and Bird Tramway Bridge)
 Munday Brook

At the Munday Brook Bridge, turn right onto the bitumen road. Continue along this road until you reach the Information Hut



Legend

- Bushland
- Creek/Brook
- Road or Gravel Track
- Path
- Building
- Boom Gate/Gate
- Bridge
- Dam Wall
- Drinking Water
- Dirt Track
- Walking Guide

Approximate Distances

Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp → Victoria Dam
 Approx. 3.6 km one way

Bickley Outdoor Recreation Camp → Munday Brook Bridge
 Approx. 1.2 km

Munday Brook Bridge → Information Hut
 Approx. 1.4 km

Information Hut → Dirt Track
 Approx. 40 m

Dirt Track → Old Victoria Dam Wall
 Approx. 200 m

Old Victoria Dam Wall → New Victoria Dam
 Approx. 700 m

Walk approx. 40m along the bitumen road from the Information Hut until you reach a dirt track on the right hand side. Follow this track for approx. 100m and you will reach a chicane barrier. Continue for about 100m and you will reach the Old Victoria Dam Wall.

Follow the steep road up towards Victoria Dam. You will see a set of stairs to the left at the end which is the lookout. To the right is a water fountain and a gazebo.

Information Hut
 Treatment Plants
 Old Victoria Dam Wall
 Toilets
 Gazebo
 Viewing Lookout
 Gazebo
 New Victoria Dam Wall
 New Victoria Dam

This map is an approximation only and is not drawn to scale

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