



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2020

THE CHALLENGE

Pioneer Challenge, it is a fun heritage hunt with the aim of discovering the pioneers of Western Australia. The game is a hybrid of a clue finding treasure hunt and a car rally that encourages people to explore our regional country towns. The game is designed and funded by an innovative Rotary group from Perth who has been looking to beat Covid-19 and assist in the recovery of Western Australia's tourism industry.



Photo: The "grafjag" (grave hunt) team of Larry and Kay Schneider and Tom and Dawn Grieve spent a week on the Pioneer Challenge exploring and learning the history of Mt Barker, Katanning, Woodanilling, Wagin and Beverley

HOW TO PLAY

Once registered, players are assigned three Pioneer towns and nine Pioneers to investigate along a chosen segment of Route 120, (Southern Highway). Within these towns, players begin by finding and photographing the graves of these Pioneers at the local cemetery. Search for historical clues around town that will reveal information about the Pioneers.

Answer questions online and upload pictorial records of your trip. The game is played on mobile devices and the Pioneer Challenge website. Explore unique and charming towns along the Great Southern Highway (Route 120). Learn about the town, enjoy the local fare and flavours and bring to life the amazing Pioneers of our state!

SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH

The Pioneer Challenge was launched on the 1st of July 2020 with several media releases distributed to various news organisations. The story has been number one on news and website searches and has provided good prominence on the internet. The Pioneer Challenge video on its Facebook page has had nearly 12,000 views in the first two weeks since its launch date demonstrating successful social media reach. The Pioneer Challenge Instagram page has begun to attract gamers posting their trip photos with the associated hash tag #pioneerchallenge.

Since the launch, Pioneer Challenge founder, Chris Oakeley has appeared in three radio segments, including 6PR, ABC Radio and Radio WA. Pioneer Challenge is a member of three tourist associations; Destination Perth, Great Southern, and South West Tourism Association; and was able to distribute the launch media releases to these associations' membership base. The launch has generated lots of interest and many teams have already registered to play the game. Organisers have been really happy with the response.

Rotarians enlist pioneers, kids for tourism fillip

The Rotary Club of Matilda Bay has designed and funded an adventure game that could help revive WA's ailing tourism industry in the light of COVID-19 restrictions. Members have developed the Pioneer Challenge, to be played in our WA backyard. It is a fun pioneer heritage hunt with the aim of discovering the pioneers of our State. The game is a hybrid of a clue-finding treasure hunt and a car rally that encourages people to explore our regional country towns. Once registered, players will be assigned three surprise Pioneer towns along trip of their choice on a Route 120 (Southern Highway). Within these Pioneer towns, players need to find three given pioneer graves at the local cemetery and historical clues within the town. The game is played on a smartphone and involves uploading photos of graves and towns, and solving clues on the Pioneer Challenge website. July Tim, who played Pioneer Challenge, said that it was one of the most fun (Oakeley from Perth) did last weekend. "We visited three regional towns that we had never visited before," she said. "To our surprise, we found local history and our local pioneers, while having a great day in the country. The locals were so friendly and we were delighted to be able to support local businesses in our regional areas. So often we are going from point A to point B and never take the time to explore beyond the Perth city. I thought as just there is more to life than just being in a hurry. Game founder Chris Oakeley said that the objective of the game is to get people to visit regional towns. "In only a few short months, WA tourism has gone from enjoying record international and interstate visitor numbers to a complete industry shutdown," he said. "Pioneer Challenge is a fun way of ensuring that regional towns and businesses can get back on their feet and be operational as soon as possible." "It was a non-profit venture and all funds raised would support Rotary projects, especially the refurbishment of the King Edward Memorial Hospital infant remembrance gardens. "At this stage, the game covers York to Albany but depending on the success and popularity of the game, we may be looking to extend the game to all parts of the state," he said. "So, gather a team together and start your discovery, exploration and adventure today."



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AND THE WINNER IS...

For July, the monthly winner is Team Mighty Mighty Martins. The team members consisted of Sue, Mick and their daughter, Grace, who were allocated the towns of Narrogin, Pingelly and Popanyinning. The team completed the challenge in day trips and receives a dozen bottles of Cabernet Shiraz from Ironcloud Wines. Sue said that they had a wonderful day playing Pioneer Challenge. *‘Popanyinning is an absolutely gorgeous little town so small but with so much history We really enjoyed reading the historical plaques around the town We love how it is affectionately referred to as Popo and the slogan “Hard to say nice to stay”.*

DONATIONS TO KEMH HOSPITAL MEMORIAL ROSE GARDEN

The Pioneer Challenge is a non-profit initiative of the Rotary Club of Matilda Bay. All proceeds go to worthwhile Rotary projects with funds set aside for the refurbishment of the King Edward Hospital Memorial Rose Garden, a memorial garden on the hospital grounds where the ashes of stillborn babies can be interred. Donations can be made at www.pioneerchallenge.com.au

INDIGENOUS CONTENT

The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) agreed to collaborate to increase the indigenous Noongar historical content along Route 120. Game developers were excited with the prospect of identifying significant Aboriginal Pioneers and incorporating them into the game. Ms Heidi Mippi, member of SWALSC, said that the Pioneer Challenge was a fantastic initiative to help revive the tourism in



Noongar Elder, Gary Bennell,
at the old family well in Pingelly

these country towns. *“We are delighted to be able to help incorporate some Noongar history to the game”, she said.*

CHALLENGERS’ FEEDBACK

“It took us around an hour to find all the graves and answer the questions about the deceased pioneers and about the towns themselves. We found the people in the towns very friendly in particular the owner of the café in the old railway carriage on the river in York. The weather was perfect, the coffees were nice and the challenge was wonderful. We hope to do another run further south in the spring. We hope this challenge continues and wish you all the very best with the rose garden at King Edward Hospital., Bob and Robyn.



WARMER WEATHER IS COMING

Explore the amazing wildflowers along the route in the coming months. In July, teams chose to visit towns equally along the northern, middle and southern sections of Route 120. We look forward to sharing photos and impressions from participants in upcoming issues. It is easy to incorporate the Pioneer Challenge in your next adventure:

- Have a fun day trip with friends
- Include a holiday destination along the way
- Travel the whole length of Route 120

THANK YOU

Thank you for your support. Please forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues – encourage them to participate! Register a team at pioneerchallenge.com.au and plan your unique experience.