

The 1996 graduates - where are they now?

AN Irishman, a cook and a dieback interpreter! It reads like the ingredients in a recipe for fun. However, it is only a brief background to the profiles of three field officer recruits from 1996—David Whitelaw, Alan Wright and Trish Nanni, who are the next to star in our feature presentation of 'Where are they now?'.
His article will take us to the southern region of Bunbury, the hills of Perth and the eastern wheatbelt town of Merredin, while looking at the situations that led each field recruit to where they are now.

David, Trish and Alan attended the CALM Dwellingup Training School for a series of training programs in July and October 1996.

Like the 1995 graduates, the three participants agreed that the programs developed relevant skills for the practical work now required of them in their work, and provided a comprehensive insight into the activities carried out by other CALM staff.

David Whitelaw: David currently works as a dieback interpreter for CALM's Bunbury Forest Management Branch, but he also works regularly in the southern part of the Central Forest Region. This means that he resides mainly in Busselton.

Born in Dublin, Ireland, David grew up in Perth and gained his Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) degree at Edith Cowan University.

David applied for a field officer position after deciding that CALM was a career option that most suited his lifestyle.

While roaming the Central Forest Region near Bunbury, David's duties include inter-

by Toni Hoath

preting and mapping the presence of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* fungus (the cause of dieback disease).

Because he interprets different areas of the Central Forest Region, David sees the diversity of vegetation as well as the effects of dieback, and particularly enjoys the ongoing learning process the forest provides.

"I find this very satisfying," David said.

"And there have been some interesting learning experiences.

"The type of work I do requires me to study the movement of dieback boundaries.

However, I've found that it is the wildlife that has 'moved me' most profoundly," David said.

"I vividly recall the time I learnt that bull ants were capable of biting with military precision in places I'd have thought were pretty well inaccessible to the little critters.

"This discovery led to another—that Hard Yakka trousers can be removed with the speed of greased lightning!"

Trish Nanni: After starting out as a dieback interpreter at Kelmiscott Forest Management Branch and moving onto Manjimup, still in the same role, Trish decided on a change of scenery and moved to Merredin as an operations officer.

Trish enjoys the scope that CALM allows in applying the principles learnt through her Bachelor of Environmental Science (Honours) Degree at Murdoch University.

"My job in particular is very satisfying, with plenty of variety and opportunities to make a

difference and help the environment," Trish said.

"The local people are also very enthusiastic about getting behind various projects, which makes the Wheatbelt an amazing environment to be a part of."

Currently, Trish has several portfolios, which provide the variety she so much enjoys in her work.

These portfolios include environmental protection, recreation, reserve management, biophysical surveys and fire control.

Rat baiting

The most interesting experience that Trish has been involved in while with CALM is the feral rat baiting of the Montebello Islands in August last year. (It's rumoured the fishing was excellent, too.)

Alan Wright: As an apprentice chef and registered nurse, Alan has an unusual background to becoming a field officer recruit, but it was a deep love of the bush that drove him finally to pursue a career with CALM.

Alan's current position as a field officer includes silviculture (tree marking) and nature conservation works. Fire management also forms a large component of his duties during Spring and Summer.

"What I find immensely satisfying is the enthusiasm of both the staff and the local community for conserving our environment," Alan said.

All three recruits were asked what their future goals were within CALM and the response was very positive.

Both Trish and Alan have a goal to work with the public in education or conservation projects while David believes that his goals are an open book at present and is happy with the



Alan, David and Trish carrying out a spot of surveying in a Field Engineering Course.
Photo by Megan Hughes.

range of prospects that CALM has to offer him.

Diverse as the backgrounds

of each field officer recruit are, there is one strong feature about David, Alan and Trish

that they have in common, and this is their total commitment to their work with CALM.

