

DUIDGEEANA

(From the Nyungar language - Duidgee, a place of plenty)

The Newsletter of the Toodyay Historical Society Inc. Issue No. 38 (Autumn 2015)



ANZAC Day, 1920s, Memorial Park, Toodyay

(Photo: Courtesy, Newcastle Gaol Museum, Shire of Toodyay)

On 25 April 2015 the 100th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli was commemorated throughout Australia, and a record crowd took part in the Dawn Service at the Toodyay War Memorial. In the afternoon THS members attended the opening of 'Remembering Them' Exhibition at the Newcastle Gaol Museum.

See this issue for details, and articles in ToodyaYesterday.

2015 AGM – Sunday 12 April, CWA Hall

There was a lot happening at our AGM this year.

First there was a **change of President** as Peter Robinson stepped down as this was the completion of his 3-year term, with **Dr Robyn Taylor** taking over. Peter was thanked for his wonderful leadership and contribution to the Society since he took over in April 2012. Peter was presented with an album of photographs highlighting his active participation in all things historical and Toodyay related, and a signed copy of the new 'Wally' book, launched that afternoon (see below).

Peter remains on Committee with Jenny Edgecombe, Beth Frayne and Colin Kendall. Member Linda Rooney was welcomed as a new Committee member, and Allen Clabaugh has kindly agreed to be co-opted back into the fold. Desraé and Wayne Clarke continue as Secretary and Treasurer respectively, Len Leeder as our Patron, and Ron Bodycoat as Hon. Architect.



After the elections, three members were awarded -

Honorary Life Memberships - Dr Robyn Taylor, Jenny Edgecombe and Beth Frayne.

Keeping this a secret from all three recipients was due to some clever footwork by our Secretary Desraé Clarke who needed the help of the other two to compile the background information as to why each member deserved the honour.

Above: New Hon. Life Members Jenny, Beth and Robyn, with our Past President Peter. (Photo: Joe Edgecombe, 2015).

This was followed by **The Launch of the new Wally book!!!**



Hearty congratulations to Jenny Edgecombe for this fine achievement. *The life and times of Wally Chitty*, was produced by Jenny and Wally Chitty, and features more of his stories that weren't covered in his *Toodyay, the good old days* (2004). With this latest book Jenny undertook extensive research to provide a context for Wally's stories and photos. It was a great pleasure to have Mrs Kath Chitty and family at the launch of the book. Kath was so thrilled and excited.

To quote from the back cover of the book:

'Like Wally Chitty's famous conversations, this book takes many detours from telling the stories of Wally's life. The narrative dips into the adventures of George and Mary Chitty and their descendants from Surrey, England in 1842 to Toodyay, Western Australia. Many intriguing Toodyay byways and characters are picked up along the way ... Wally's own life is not neglected, from his childhood on a Toodyay farm to his later experiences as a stockman, farmer, family man, sportsman, tourist and local activist.'

Left: Jenny and Kath with the new book. (Photo: Beth Frayne. 2015)

Last but not least was our Guest Speaker, Dr Dorothy Erickson who entertained us with an informative and beautifully illustrated talk on 'Angels in the studio: some professional women artists in Western Australia, c1890-c1920'. Dorothy grew up in Bolgart, the eldest daughter of farmer Sydney and Rica Erickson (our former Patron and renowned historian, naturalist and wildflower painter). Dorothy is a fine art jeweller who exhibits internationally, and is also a published historian of note.

Apart from numerous journal articles she was editor of *Art and Design in Western Australia: Perth Technical College 1900-2000*, published her first book *Kings Park: A Joy Forever* (2009); then *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History* (2010).

Her latest book *Inspired by Light & Land: Designers & Makers in Western Australia 1829-1969* is being launched by the WA Museum where she has been a Research Associate since 1987.

Dorothy's talk provided insights into the social contexts that prevented, then enabled, women of social standing to become artists and run their own studios. Some, such as May Gibbs of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie fame, are well known but many others have long fallen into obscurity.

Right: Dorothy Erickson and Robyn Taylor. (Photo: Beth Frayne, 2015)



PAST EXCURSIONS

February - 2015 kicked off with a very enjoyable dinner on Saturday 28 February at the **Duke's Inn in Northam**. And to make sure we could enjoy ourselves with gay abandon, we hired the community bus with President Peter as driver.



After a superb dinner we took ourselves on a tour of this heritage-listed building that opened as McCarthy's Hotel on New Year's Day in 1907. The hotel was one of eight finalists in the 2013 WA Heritage Awards category for 'Outstanding conservation of a non-residential place'.

Left: Members enjoying a summer's night out at the Duke's Inn, Northam.

(Photo: Taken on Linda Rooney's camera, 2015)

March - On Sunday 29 March the troops headed off to **WAYLEN FARM** on the Bindoon Dewars Pool Road. This historic late 1840s property, owned since 2005 by our hosts David and Barbara Gardiner, was originally known as John and Charlotte Britt's Blewbury Farm. John and his son John Thomas built the two-storey farm house in 1860, planning to open an inn, but they were refused a licence.



Lila Pember (nee Cook), a new Member and a descendant of Margaret Cook (nee Britt), joined us on the day and shared her detailed family research with us and the Gardiners. In return we were able to share our research, undertaken by Beth, on the farm and two Britt WW1 soldiers William and Charles Thomas. The Lee, Cook and Hamersley families have connections to the property.

Left: Peter, David and Lila on the top verandah, under John Britt's initials and the building date found in the bricks by David during his restoration work.

(Photo: Beth Frayne, 2015).

The home farm block is now the Gardiners' working olive grove, under the name Waylen Farm, which was bestowed in the 1960s by former owners the Hamersley family.

Right: David (centre in grey shirt) telling us the story of the property, with the two-storey farmhouse, behind.

(Photo: Linda Rooney, 2015)



April - Saturday 25, ANZAC DAY at the Newcastle Gaol Museum. Members were invited to attend the 'Remembering Them' exhibition that was officially opened by Shire President Cr. David Dow. Attendees included descendants of Sgt William Strahan (WW1) who had gathered for a family reunion. Congratulations to Curator Margie Eberle and her museum volunteers for a great exhibition that will be on display for the rest of the year.



Above: Museum Curator Margie Eberle, with 'Nurse Edythe' and the hospital tent behind.

Below: Margie with the new secure display case supplied by the WA Museum, using funds provided by Lotterywest to assist the Remembering Them country exhibitions across the state.

(Photos: Beth Frayne, 2015)



Above: Mrs. Natalie Syred (nee Wroth) next to a life size cut-out portrait of her father Private Earl Wroth MM, one of four soldier cut-outs created by Grove Wesley for the exhibition.

(Photo: Beth Frayne, 2015).

Research was undertaken by Beth (on THS's behalf) for the Shire's online Anzac Centenary list: <http://www.toodyay.wa.gov.au/anzac.aspx>

Using this list of 293 names, two copies of a two-volume set of War Service records were produced (with permission) for the Exhibition using data from an online database created by the University of NSW for its AIF Project. See link:

<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html>

Beth created records for another 23 people that were not in that source. THS will be receiving one of the sets in thanks for its contribution. Letters to Toodyay from the various war Fronts were also transcribed for display.

May - Moondyne Festival.

May 3 saw Joe and friends run riot again on Stirling Terrace. THS ran its usual stall, telling the real story of Joseph Bolitho Johns. We sold quite a few books, one being the MJ book to MP Shane Love. Jenny's new Wally book was promoted. Greg's Carnival cut-out was again a huge drawcard. Milton made sure generous donations were given for the privilege of getting one's photo taken. Many thanks to all those Members who helped in any way as some of our Moondyne stalwarts were unable to be there this year.



At Moondyne: Left: Pres. Rob with Akira, whom THS has been helping with her house history.

Above: A motley crew: L-R: Rob, Convict Greg, Margie, Milton and Allen. (Photos: Beth Frayne, 2015)

New members:

Welcome back **Greg Warburton**! Greg continues to be one of the highlights of the Moondyne Festival. Dressed up in his grubby convict outfit, he delights in scaring the ladies into making a donation into his slotted ball and chain - proceeds to THS of course - in return the ladies get the privilege of having their photo taken with the scoundrel.

Welcome also to **Lila Pember** (nee Cook), who had made contact with THS just before our Waylen Farm visit.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Three chimneys & Mrs O'Reilly's Cottage - there is nothing like serendipity and teamwork to get a good outcome. Vice Pres Milton Baxter was waving the February edition of the *Toodyay Herald* at me (Editor) saying 'There was nothing wrong with the chimneys, the photo proves it!' Around the same time Pres. Peter Robinson was grubbing through the skip behind the cottage removing any intact bricks he could find and stacking them against the fence. There had been a severe storm in January resulting in considerable damage to the back of this heritage listed building in Stirling Terrace. Roofing iron had been peeled off and tossed across the street, and a side and back wall had collapsed. The *Herald* took a photo, fortunately as it turns out, as it showed the three chimneys in apparent good order. Then they disappeared with only gaping holes in the roof. To cut a long story short, there was an email exchange and the Shire CEO (who checked with the Regional Heritage Advisor) confirmed the chimneys will now be reinstated. The important role of THS as a watchful guardian of Toodyay's heritage was once again confirmed.

Western Australian Explorers' Diaries Project - this started in 2000 and since then ten high quality volumes of explorers' reports, diaries and journals have been published. Two more volumes are scheduled for this year. The Project's new website went online in the latter half of 2014, and includes excerpts from each of the volumes. A complete list of all Explorations to date is included. A weekly blog will complement the website. *Western Australian Exploration* is one of the few projects of its type anywhere in the world. Visit their website at www.explorationswa.com.au

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hop-along-Jenny. Our archivist Jenny Edgecombe has been hobbling around of late following some serious knee surgery. All the best for a full recovery Jenny, we have been missing you!

Turning up the heat. A big thank-you to retiring President Peter Robinson for his gift of a decent heater for Donegan's Cottage. This will be installed in the fireplace - hopefully we will not need our thermals this winter!

2015 State Heritage Awards

Letters of congratulations were sent from THS to Carnamah Historical Society for winning the Community-based Organisation Heritage Award, and the Historical Society of Cockburn for receiving a Commendation in the same category.

Maybe old news now, but the following has been recorded in *Duideezana* -

Well done Beth- for winning the Toodyay Citizen of the Year Award at the Australia Day celebrations in Duidgee Park. Richly deserved. But what agony we went through with both Beth and our then President Peter Robinson being nominated for the Award.

Well done Toodyay- for 'bringing home the bacon' in winning the National Tidy Town Award. The award night was held on 27 February in Sheffield, Tasmania, and the Toodyay contingent was said to be the largest there.

Visit of grandson of 1920s Toodyay Rector



Recently, Peter Fish, the grandson of Rev. John Mason, and Peter's wife and grand-daughter, visited Toodyay to view family places, including Whitfield House, on Fiennes Street, and formerly the Anglican Rectory (ca.1905-1981). Rev. Mason was the Rector of St. Stephen's Anglican Church in 1919-1928, during which time he started the Toodyay Scout Troop (1920). Beth led a Rev. Mason Walk for the Fish family, meeting the Ven. Peter Bourne and Trish Page at the Church, along the way.

Many thanks to our host, Whitfield House owner Ros Pignatiello, and THS members Prim, Desrae and Wayne and friend Zinnia who put on a scrumptious morning tea. Much useful information and photos have come our way through this visit. Peter and his wife Chrysta live in Virginia, USA, and their grand-daughter, also Chrysta, now lives in Perth.

Left: L-R: Chrysta Fish, grand-daughter Chrysta, Peter Fish, in St. Stephen's Church. (Photo: Beth Frayne, 2015)

Feature speakers at our monthly meetings:

January: Beth Frayne on the World War 1 Anzac project she is undertaking with the Shire of Toodyay Museum Curator Margie Eberle. It was a hot night, so we enjoyed being on the verandah where it was only slightly cooler than inside the hot box.

February: Colin Yandell and his 1/8th model of a tip-cart, a 1910-11 style 'Hermaphrodite Wagon' with the original model held in the Museum of Rural Life, Reading, UK.

March: Dr Robyn Taylor talked about her part in the Toodyaypedia, Stage 2 project and some of the identities she has been researching including those associated with the Convict Depot.

FROM THE ARCHIVIST:

Jenny still manages to research our enquiries from her bed or chair! Beth also continues working, on WW1, Rev. Mason, Whitfield House, Blewbury and Waylen Farm. Milton has collected AvonLink Working Group material.

MUSEUM ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Beth attended the Feb. meeting as an Observer, at which we discussed a detailed report from Museum Curator Margie Eberle on the museum collection being held in the Shearing Shed, Machinery Shed and Stables at the Newcastle Gaol Museum site. Beth has now joined Jenny as a community member of the MAC.

FUTURE EVENTS

Next meeting: Wednesday 20 May 2015, 7pm, Donegan's Cottage.

May: there will be no May excursion due to our participation in the Moondyne Festival, however we encourage members to attend the **Toodyay Fibre Festival on 31 May**.

June: there will be a change to the programme for our June excursion. TBA

July: Fund raiser Street Raffle - Friday and Saturday 3 & 4 July, outside IGA (we need volunteers!)

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TOODYAYESTERDAY

ANZAC DAY - 25 April 2015

This year marks the centenary of the landing at Gallipoli and all over Australia record crowds attended the Dawn Service. Each year services are conducted at a special memorial site that has long served its community as a place for contemplation and commemoration.

The following articles reflect on our own war memorial and its location in Toodyay.

Why does Toodyay's War Memorial resemble an Egyptian Obelisk? - Dr Robyn Taylor

The design of the Toodyay War Memorial is typical of those erected throughout Australia and I thought members might be interested to know more about the history of the obelisk and its use as a memorial. The following is based on an article I wrote for *Trust News* in May 2004.

The obelisk is traditionally made from stone with four sides that taper to a pyramidal tip. In Egyptian art the shaft is covered in hieroglyphs and was erected as a cult symbol to the sun god.¹

This strange form has fascinated Western civilization for countless centuries. The Romans adopted the obelisk for their funerary monuments, and during the 17th century examples from ancient Egypt were taken and erected in civic squares in Italy. The greatest of these obelisks stands in the forecourt of St Peter's in Rome, while another is a central feature of Gianlorenzo Bernini's exuberant 'Fountain of the Four Rivers' in Piazza Navona in Rome.

Napoleon Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign, that took place between 1798 and 1802, and the subsequent publication of the 21 volumes of *Description d'Egypte*, led to the adaptation of Egyptian cultural forms into Western European design.

The Egyptian obelisk came to be used as a monumental form for commemorating specific ideals. Some are on a gigantic scale, such as the 101.5-metre high Washington Memorial in the United States that was dedicated in 1932 to the principles of civic and religious liberty and orderly government. Others are more modest in scale, such as the funerary obelisks used to mark graves in cemeteries all over the world, and of course our Anzac memorials in Australia. These are usually called a cenotaph, which means a monument that symbolically makes reference to a grave, or mass grave, but where none are buried.

The largest cenotaph in WA is in Kings Park, Perth where the State War Memorial has an 18-metre high granite obelisk. The memorial was designed by WA's pre-eminent soldier-architect Sir J J Talbot Hobbs. Given the increasing reverence the public holds for Anzac Day and growing attendances at dawn services, most people would be surprised at how difficult it had been to erect the memorial in the first place. It was finally unveiled on 24 November 1929 following a good deal of resistance to the idea, public apathy, an initial lack of government support, and argument about where it should be located. Some wanted a more utilitarian memorial such as a hospital, and others complained there were already too many 'unsightly piles of stone' scattered around the countryside.

¹ Harris, Cyril M. (ed), *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*, Dover Publications Inc, New York, 1977, p.382.

Eight years earlier, on Sunday 18 December 1921, Talbot Hobbs accompanied the Governor, Sir Francis Newdegate KCMG, the Premier, Sir James Mitchell, and Lady Mitchell on their trip to Toodyay to officially open the Toodyay Soldiers' Memorial in Toodyay Park. The memorial was paid for by public subscription and built in polished WA granite by the well-known firm Messrs Wilson & Gray of Perth. As with the State War Memorial, Toodyay's memorial has been added to over time to account for the wars that have followed the war that was meant to end all wars.

Right: A photo of the Toodyay Soldiers' Memorial, taken on 18 December 1921 by Mrs. Ethel Sinclair, the widow of Private Augustus Sinclair, killed in action at Gallipoli, 6 August 1915. The new tennis courts are seen behind.

(Photo: Wally Chitty collection, THS archives)



The Toodyay Park, or, Anyone for tennis? - Beth Frayne

The Toodyay War Memorial is situated in a park on Anzac Avenue that has become known as Memorial Park. The central obelisk of the Toodyay Soldiers' Memorial was unveiled with great ceremony by the Governor, Sir Francis Newdegate KCMG, on 18 December 1921. However, before the addition of this memorial, the site was known as the Town Park, or Newcastle Park, an area where the town's public tennis courts had finally just been relocated in September that year.

The Memorial Park has been a public recreation space of a sort since 1906. As early as 1899, a Newcastle Municipal Council deputation indicated to the government that it wished to take over the piece of land on which sat the old Post Office, on Fiennes Street, opposite the Newcastle Court House. With the opening of the new Post and Telegraph Office on New Road (later Stirling Terrace) in 1897, the former office was available for other purposes. Subsequently, the local council visualised the site as a public park. Thus, in 1906, the Under Secretary of Works formally terminated the council's tenancy of the old Newcastle Post Office premises on Lot 19, on the corner of Clinton Street and Fiennes Street, with a view to having the property used for recreation purposes. The old Post Office building was then demolished.

In 1910, the Newcastle Tennis Club (established by June 1895, and probably earlier) showed a keen interest in council improvements to the 'Public Park'. At that time, the Club's tennis courts were located near the Avon River. Local historian Wally Chitty thought the courts were located on the river bank near Monger's store in what is now Duidgee Park.

A passing reference to "old tennis courts" by Mr. Lukin at a Road Board meeting in 1927 indicates that perhaps the courts were located between the Church of England and the Avon River (ie near where the current Rectory stands). Either way, the courts were often subjected to flooding, especially in 1908, hence the Club's interest in relocating uphill in 1910. Plans were developed and tenders called but it all seemed to fall in a heap, as nothing eventuated.

In 1912, the Toodyay Tennis Club called on the recently expanded Toodyay Road Board to consider developing municipal tennis courts in the Park, which was "currently rented as cow feed". So the ponderous process of planning and tendering by the Club and the Road Board started again, but over that year, apathy, good weather and a disinclination to give up free court space near the river saw this proposal also fade away. Then the Great War started in 1914. When the idea of locating the War Memorial in the Park was accepted in May 1921, the relocation of the tennis courts was once again suggested. Many busy bees later, the Memorial Garden and two tennis courts were created near the Fiennes/Clinton Street corner by the end of 1921.