

DUIDGEEANA

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

The Newsletter of the Toodyay Historical Society Inc. Issue No. 39 (Winter 2015)

AUGUST EXCURSION TO GOOMALLING

Sunday 9 August 2015

*****(Please note the **changed date** for this excursion)*****

Visit to Goomalling Historical Society's Schoolhouse Museum in Throssell Street
& Slater Homestead

Departing Toodyay Visitors' Centre at 11.15am

Please bring your lunch and afternoon tea.

EXCURSIONS& EVENTS

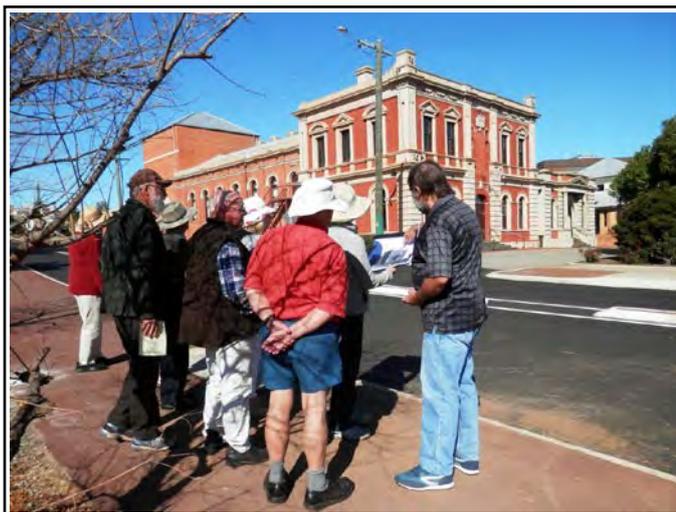
PRESENTING TOODYAY'S HERITAGE - Tidy Towns Judging - Tuesday 16 June 2015

Toodyay has been shortlisted in three Award Categories this year: Natural Environment Conservation, **Heritage and Culture**, and Young Legends, and also has again been selected as one of the 7 towns vying for the State Title. Shire Museum Curator Margie Eberle helped the Toodyay Tidy Towns Committee and Supporters (which includes some of our very active THS members Greg, Beth, Peter, Linda and Shelley) parade Toodyay's historic charms and achievements to the two Tidy Towns Judges Jo Gray and Gail Dodd. The inspiring Anzac Day events and Gaol displays and also Toodyaypedia were showcased. Linda was of particular assistance to Beth by taking last minute photos for the Judges' Powerpoint presentation, and also helping with the displays in the 1897 Shire Chambers. State Tidy Towns Awards are on 11 September.

Right: The Powerpoint Presentation for the Judges in the Shire Council Chambers. (Photo: P. Robinson, 2015)



NORTHAM WALKING TOUR - Sunday 28 June 2015



This was a very enjoyable excursion. Northam is our closest town and although we are familiar with the main streets and some of the major civic and public buildings, a number of us have never walked around the residential parts of the town. Our hosts were the Northam & Districts Historical Society who provided a superb morning tea at the Northam Heritage Centre in the former Railway Station. The walking tour, led by N&DHS members Jeff Pollard and Belle Moore included some magnificent homes set in spacious gardens.

Left: Jeff Pollard (on right) pointing out features on the Northam Town Hall. (Photo: B. Frayne, 2015)

We were fortunate to be able to enter the grounds of 'Uralia', and also peer over the garden walls of



former Premier Sir James Mitchell's house. We visited St James Anglican Church (1911) where caretaker Elaine Pollard showed us a poignant memento from the First World War. I won't say any more - some mysteries are best kept safe and secure. We finished the day in the Northam cemetery looking up past Toodyay residents. A big thank you to Beth, our Events Coordinator, for all the preparation she put into this excursion.

Left: Members of both Societies on the Railway Station platform. (Photo: B. Frayne, 2015)

FEATURE SPEAKERS

June 17 - Peter Robinson and Linda Rooney - Blewbury Inn, UK.

It was a packed house at Donegan's for a Powerpoint presentation on their recent trip to the UK. Their talk concentrated on the picturesque town of Blewbury, Berkshire, which wouldn't look out of place in 'Midsomer Murders'. Peter & Linda were on a mission to find the original Blewbury Inn that the Britt family reproduced in their Blewbury Inn (1860) on Dewars Pool Road. We know the place as Waylen Farm. They easily found the two-storey Inn which also features the unusual style of brickwork not found anywhere else. Barbara and David Gardiner who own Waylen came along as invited guests. Peter also came across a link to Culham and Samuel Pole Phillips: a garden wall with a memorial stone featuring the name John Shaw Phillips of Culham, Oxon, 1858.



Right: The original Blewbury Inn, now called King William House. (Photo: L. Rooney. 2015)



Left: Peter Robinson (left, and lucky raffle winner of some Waylen Farm olive oil) seen here with Waylen Farm owners, Barbara and David Gardiner, and Linda Rooney (far right) (Photo: B. Frayne, 2015)

July 15: Jenny Edgecombe - Catherine Sheehy (Sheahy) Irish emigrant. While Jenny's research on Catherine didn't find the connection with Toodyay she had hoped for, as she was listed on the Resident Magistrate's register as being engaged for service to Mr Drummond, she did discover a connection between Catherine and another Irish emigrant girl Madge Burke who had come to Toodyay.

Jenny talked briefly about Catherine's life in WA, the reasons for the Bride Ships that came to the colony, and the Emigrant Depot that was set up in the old town of Toodyay. The emigrants were housed in the A-frame straw huts vacated by the Pensioner Guards.

New members: We welcome Bruce Campbell of Cannington, and John Zawada of Toodyay.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

August is Family History month at the State Library - go to their website to find out what exciting events are on offer: http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/whats_on/family_history_month

Irish Catholic Records. The National Library of Ireland (NLI) has placed their entire holdings of Irish Catholic baptisms, marriages, and some burial records online. They are not indexed so you need to know where the family originated. The records come from NLI's microfilm copies and while these do not cover all surviving records in Ireland, what they have is substantial. Go to the website: <http://registers.nli.ie/>

Royal Western Australian Historical Society Inc.

Booked in for a Cuppa. On Wednesday 26 August from 10 to 11am, the RWAH Society will have four speakers talking on 'great historical reads' while the audience enjoys morning tea. It's a great line up: Dr Dorothy Erickson (her latest book *Inspired by Light and Land*); Prof Geoffrey Bolton (*Paul Hasluck: A Life*); Prof Ian Reid (*The Mind's Own Place*), and Sue Hobson (*Cast Iron Pillar Boxes of Western Australia*). Tickets \$10. Booking essential: 9386 3841; email admin@histwest.org.au

History Out and About Walking Tour of Early Fremantle - Thursday 27 August. RSVP by 21 August to RWAHS see contact details above. Meet at Cicerello's (Fisherman's Wharf, 44 Mews Rd, Freo). Walk starts at 12.45pm finishes around 2.45pm. \$20 members, \$25 non-members (includes venue entries). Get there earlier for your own fish & chip lunch.

Early Days Bound volumes of their journal *Early Days* are on special at the RWAHS bookshop, Stirling House, Broadway, Nedlands. Vol 2 (1932-1936) @ \$20; Vols 3 and 5 to 10 @ \$45 each.

THS & the Toodyay Inclusive Community Program, Friday 17 July

What a successful school holiday program this proved to be! THS sponsored one of the six sessions, held in the second week of the school holidays. Ours was entitled 'Heritage Treasures'. A number of our members (Faye, Milton, Linda, Beth, Bob, Jenny), helped the Museum Curator and Volunteers and community members to provide activities for children to learn how things used to be done in the 'good ol' days'. It's a bit of a worry when you have vivid memories of your own mother hauling the washing out of the old copper with a stick and using a mangle and washing board - now it's all part of history.

There were sixty-nine participants, and apart from the wash, there was damper making, butter churning and patting, real honey comb tasting, playing with knucklebones and throwing horseshoes. THS also assisted in creating developing a new game that featured matching items with occupations, based on Toodyay residents of the past.

Left: Linda supervising the wash board in the courtyard. (Photo: K. Jolly, Shire of Toodyay, 2015)



Right: At Youth Park, Faye (centre) assisting Roz in getting the butter out of the churn, and ready for patting. (Photo: B. Frayne. 2015)





Above: Left: Beth and Linda in the courtyard. Right: Milton directing the horseshoe throwing, behind the Stables. (Photos: K. Jolly, Shire of Toodyay, 2015)

Wikimedia Australia in town, Sunday 19 July - Last month, Peter, Linda, Beth and I were invited



to have lunch with the Wikimedia Australia President (Steven Zhang), Vice President (Gideon Digby), Treasurer (Michael Billington), and Wiki Editor Andrew Owens. The visitors (Steve and Mike from Melbourne) viewed QR codes (linking to Wikipedia articles) installed in Connor's Mill. They also checked out the Toodyaypedia plaques already in place along the main street. Later this year articles about people associated with Toodyay, currently being developed by myself with THS, Shire and Wikimedia help, will see more unobtrusive plaques put in place for visitors to access. So far Fremantle and Toodyay are Australia's only WikiTowns.

Left: Inspecting Toodyaypedia plaques and information posters: L-R: Robyn, Andrew, Michael, Steven, Gideon, Beth. (Photo: Taken on Beth's camera, 2015)

NEWS IN BRIEF

MUSEUM SIGNAGE IN TOWN AT LAST - wonders will never cease, and a cause for celebration! Years ago I was asked by a Councillor where the Old Gaol was - he had never been there. We were in the Council Chambers at the time, so I said, 'Actually, it's just behind you.' It's taken well over a decade to get street signage up to tell visitors and locals where the Museum is.

Right: One of the new signs, pointing up Clinton Street to the Gaol Museum. (Photo: M. Eberle, 2015)



THS Street Raffle - 3-4 July. A big thank you to everyone who assisted at our fund raiser, and especially to Beth who did her usual superb job of organising everything to make the event run smoothly. We raised almost \$500 and also sold quite a few books. Winning tickets: 1. Red C044; 2. Orange C058; 3. Orange C041; 4. Blue C025; 5. Blue ticket C042.

Newcastle Gaol's 150th Anniversary celebrations- Saturday 12 September, 10am-3.30pm.

A reminder to put this event in your diary. It is shaping up to be a very exciting day with lots happening. See Jenny's Museum report below, and Beth's article for the ToodyaYesterday section where she shares some funny and amusing highlights from recent research about Newcastle Gaol.

Our Vice-President Milton Baxter, who has been given the identity of one of the first inmates and his background history, will be locked up for 24 hours. We need volunteers for the roster (3.30pm Saturday to 10am Sunday) - contact Beth.

To bring some gaiety to Milton's incarceration, we will be enjoying a **Sundowner in the Gaol Courtyard** from 6pm - we may also poke some crumbs through the grill so Milton doesn't feel left out. Soup will be provided. BYO nibbles/finger food to share, and BYO drinks. Hot water available. Rug up too... it can be chilly in September when the sun goes down. Did I hear someone is bringing hot spicy Gluhwein? Wonderful - I will be there.

FROM THE ARCHIVIST:

Thank you to Beth for holding the fort for a fortnight while I was interstate. Thanks to the internet, I am able to keep in touch with developments and sometimes carry out a certain amount of research while away, but we still need the presence of members to open Donegan's Cottage.

Nina Paterson has made a welcome addition to our library resources, donating a number of books relating to Toodyay's history. Sherryl Fleay has donated some photographs of Toodyay school and sport groups.

Anne Jefferys has sent us a book about The Grange, the Irwin property of SJ Phillips, son of Toodyay's Samuel Pole and Sophia Phillips. This arose from discussion of an early photograph I had found in Battye Library, showing SJ Phillips in his De Dion motor car, the first car in Dongara.

Beth's Anzac research which appears on the Shire's website brought grateful thanks from a researcher who was thrilled to find so many of his ancestors there. He had further queries on Jeremiah Woolhouse.

Other matters of interest included photographs of the Toodyay WA Bank building in the *Western Mail*, one of which matched the Fred Harffey painting held in the bank and new information on the death of George Syred, which has been something of a mystery.

There were requests for information on Captain John Scully of Bolgart, also a Resident Magistrate and 'Bride Ships' emigrant Catherine Sheehy. (See Feature Speaker above)

MUSEUM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Plans are well in hand for celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the handover of the completed Newcastle lock-up in Clinton Street to the local colonial police on 12 September. Historical Society members Beth Frayne and Milton Baxter are both heavily involved in preparations: Beth, who is one of the Gaol Museum volunteers, is preparing a history of the gaol buildings, while Milton is preparing to spend a chilly night in the gaol, re-creating experiences of the first prisoners held there. Other THS members have been assisting with research.

FUTURE EVENTS

NB 30 Aug. 2015 event has been cancelled.

4-6 September 2015: Affiliated State History Conference, Geraldton

12 September, Saturday: Newcastle Gaol 150th Anniversary celebration

29 October, Sunday: Excursion to Mundaring Weir

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TOODYAYESTERDAY

New Stories about the Old Gaol - By Beth Frayne

There is a big push on to determine more facts about Toodyay's former Lockup and Gaol (1863-1907) and its current persona as one of the Shire's museums, the Old Newcastle Gaol Museum (opened 1962). The Shire's Museum Curator, Margie Eberle, THS members and local and former residents have joined forces to extend the existing Gaol and Museum chronology, so we know more about this heritage building and precinct, located up the hill on either side of Clinton Street.

We have already determined or rediscovered much about the site and its treasures, especially the arrival of items in the collection, and sometimes their departure. We have also started to list people who have played a role in the buildings' history, such as the Gaol Warders, site residents, Museum Curators and the many

volunteers that assisted over the years. A series of vignettes follow that show some of interesting facts we have uncovered in various sources about the Gaol Museum Precinct's history.

The Start of It All Story

The Shire is hosting a celebration in the Gaol Museum Precinct on Saturday 12 September 2015. Why is that? Because THS member Alison Cromb discovered this year, in the State Records Office, a letter declaring when the new Newcastle Lock-Up was officially completed. On 25 September 1865, Resident Magistrate Alfred Durlacher wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

"Sir, I have the honor to inform you that the Newcastle Lock-up is completed and was handed over to the Police on the 12th Inst. I have the honor to be, Sir, Yr very obedt Servt, A. Durlacher." ¹

Thus, we had an actual date on which to pin a 150th Anniversary celebration this year. The above letter was annotated with a remark about determining how the convicts that worked on the construction of the Lock-Up had been disposed of! Plans had been drawn up by the Colonial Clerk of Works, Richard Roach Jewell, in 1862. Work commenced in 1863 and was completed in late 1864. ²

A 1903 Gaol Pudding Story

The Lock-up was upgraded to a Gaol on 7 July 1879, as proclaimed by the Governor His Excellency Major General Sir Harry St. George Ord. On that date, various structures used for the confinement and reception of prisoners at York, Newcastle, Bunbury and Busselton were all declared "Legal Public Gaols and Prisons of and belonging to the said Colony, ...". ³ An extract from a Log Book of the Comptroller of Prisons, transcribed by former THS and Museum Advisory Committee member Brian Shepherd, now living in Launceston, Tasmania, gives us a glimpse into Newcastle Gaol life approaching Christmas in 1903.

"30 November 1903: Inspector of Prisons to the Gaoler, Newcastle. You are authorised to issue the usual Christmas fare to Prisoners in the Gaol viz: Fruit Pudding: Tobacco is not to be issued. Sheriff and Inspector of Prisons." ⁴

The Billy and Susie Story

The Gaol was closed in 1907, after the completion of the smaller but more modern Lock-Up, located closer to the Police Quarters in Duke Street. ⁵ A good story was published in the *Toodyay Herald* of 1 July 1922, about a recent incident up near the abandoned Gaol. This story involves Bill Bance, an amateur photographer, who was also the local chemist, optician and general storekeeper. From 1921 to 1926, Bill and his wife, Lillian, a milliner, ran The Corner Stores, formerly located on the corner block next to the Freemasons' Hotel, Piesse Street.

"Street Chatter. (By The Barber's Cockatoo.) ...

Hello! Hello! here comes Bill Bance, the Toodyay Toreador. He's clever, is Bill. Did the cowboy act on Sunday in front of a real Wild cow. The bull fighters of Spain had nothing on Bill last Sunday and he took his own cinema pictures, too. Bill was out taking photos of the old jail at the time and had just rigged up his camera ready to take a snap, his nice red cloth carefully tucked round his head, and his eyes closely glued to his peep-hole or sighter or whatever he calls it. He was just going to pull the trigger and score a bull when he heard footsteps - heavy ones - close behind him. Subtracting his head from his glory box Bill hurriedly looked round and nearly lost his eyesight. Instead of his camera scoring a bull first shot it had brought him a cow which galloped towards him, tail up, head down, intent on destroying Bill's socialist banner. Bill hurriedly shifted his focus, his camera and himself as fast as his military tans at 22/6 per pair would let him. Bill's a peaceable chap at any time and Bill argued that he didn't live in the paddock and the cow did and as he was a trespasser it was up to him to leave. But the cow didn't want Bill to leave. She had heard that Bill was an expert with cows and wanted to talk to him - Bolshevik fashion. Then they both did a tango around the paddock until, eventually, Bill's good fairy appeared, armed with a broom, and chased the family milk supply away. My, yes, but Bill earned his salary last week." ⁶

¹ State Records Office of WA, ACC 36, Vol. 562, fol. 82

² Alison Cromb. *The history of the Toodyay Convict Depot*. (TCD). A. Cromb, 2010, p.99

³ WA Govt. Gazette, No. 31, 8 July 1879, p. 175; Inquirer, 9 July 1879, p.3; TCD, p.99; Rica Erickson. *Old Toodyay and Newcastle*. Toodyay Shire Council, 1974. (OTN), p.262

⁴ Log Book Comptroller of Prisons 1903-1913, Newcastle Gaol Museum collection, 2000.3, Shire of Toodyay.

⁵ Shire of Toodyay website (viewed 23 Jan. 2009); OTN, p.202

⁶ *Toodyay Herald*, 1 July 1922, p.8

The reminiscences of Mary Fish (nee Mason), one of the daughters of the local Anglican Rector, Rev. John Mason, corroborate the above story. From 1919 to 1928, Mary and her family lived in the Anglican Rectory on Fiennes Street, now known as Whitfield House, just around the corner from the Gaol. Mary recalled:

"All the time we were at Toodyay, we had a cow of one sort or another. Our first was Susie, a red and white Ayrshire. She hated the color red and one day, Billy Bunce [sic], the chemist-cum-photographer came up to take a picture of the Old Jail. To do so he had to come into our paddock, he set up his tripod and camera and put the cloth over his side red side out. This was too much for Susie and she charged - he tried to ward her off, Mum came running with a broom and he made a hasty exit by climbing through the fence."⁷



Left: Mary Mason (b. 1914) (left) and her sister Jean (b. 1917), at the top of Clinton Street.

Rose Cottage is on left.

The Police Stables is on the right, so the shingled roof of the Old Gaol is just across the road, below Rose Cottage.

Rose Cottage.

Assume photo taken early 1920s.

(Photo: Courtesy, Peter Fish, son of Mary Mason, THS Archives, 2015)

Bill and Lillian left Toodyay in 1926, after Bill's Corner Stores business went into receivership and had to be sold.⁸

Living in the Gaol Story

We know that the old Gaol was the home of the Dorizzi family from around 1929 to at least 1942, but prior to the Dorizzis, the Wolfe family called the old place home.⁹ In 1924, Toodyay Lot 29 (the Gaol lot), an area of one acre and 25 perches, was transferred to the Trustees of the Public Education Endowment, Perth.¹⁰ This change may have prompted the new owners to rent out the place as a private residence.

William and Clara Jane Wolfe lived in Clinton Street, Toodyay, from at least 1925 to 1927. He was listed as a hairdresser.¹¹ Young Mary Mason remembered Mr. Wolfe, describing him as a "long, lean and cadaverous man." He was noted for growing passionfruit.¹² In the State Library of WA's online catalogue, there are two photos of the old Gaol, taken in 1926 by Dr. Edward S. Simpson (1876-1939), a Government mineralogist. His view of the internal courtyard shows an older man in his shirtsleeves. I wonder if this might be our Mr. Wolfe?¹³

Whose Idea Was It, Anyway?

Jumping forward to the 1950s, we wondered who first suggested the idea of restoring the Gaol. On 1 July 1958, the Public Works Dept. called unsuccessfully for tenders to purchase the old Newcastle Gaol in Clinton Street, Toodyay.¹⁴ Did this prompt some pondering? In the Shire of Toodyay records, there is a copy of a letter written on 21 July 1959 by Mrs. Kathleen Smith (nee Ewels), of Lake Hinds, Wongan Hills, to the Toodyay Roads Board Secretary, who, at that time, was Mr. A.J. Pedder. Kathleen wrote that she had read in the *West Australian* the day before (20 July 1959), that someone had failed to arouse interest in the Old Gaol. She thought the Roads Board was the fit body for the task. So she wrote:

⁷ Mary Fish's 1920s reminiscences, THS archives

⁸ *Toodyay Herald*, 3 July 1926, p.2

⁹ Wally Chitty. *Toodyay - the good old days*. (TTGOD). Hesperian Press, 2004, p.155; *Toodyay Herald*, 17 April 1942, p.4

¹⁰ Land title information: Certificate of Title Volume 868 Folio 66

¹¹ Commonwealth electoral rolls, 1925-1927.

¹² Mary Fish's 1920s reminiscences, THS archives; *Toodyay Herald*, 11 Dec. 1926, p.2

¹³ State Library of WA, BA1886/788-789 (025827PD) (online)

¹⁴ *WA Government Gazette*, 30 May 1958, p.1118

"Being an old Toodyay resident is why I am so interested & I have played as a child in the Old Gaol and it always fascinates me. If your Board thinks fit to bring the Old Gaol into an interesting historical building, local residents, visitors & tourists will always admire & find it a source of interest. It can be made into a very picturesque place & will be another show place for the town of Toodyay."¹⁵

The name Kathleen Smith (nee Ewels) rang a bell. I had researched the life of Kit Ewels and her future husband, John Alexander Smith, for a THS inquiry and also as part of our World War 1 research, as John was one of Toodyay's World War 1 veterans. Kit was the daughter of widow Clara Ewels, who had married Alfred James in 1913 in Fremantle. The James family moved to Toodyay that year, Alf having bought Mr. Mattie Doust's store. Alf later bought Padbury's store in 1917, which he owned until 1939 (now the Christmas



Shop). So we can see that young Kit Ewels, born in 1901 in Fremantle, lived, played and worked in Toodyay from 1913 until her marriage (at age 23) in 1924 to John Smith in St. Stephen's Church, Toodyay. Kit trained as a teacher and was teaching at the Toodyay State School in 1919.¹⁶

The Roads Board took Kit's plea to heart, and immediately commenced investigating how to get the resources and expertise to restore this old derelict building to the point of opening it, some years later, as a country museum on 7 October 1962.¹⁷ But that is another fascinating story!

Above: A slide of the derelict Gaol, taken by Rica Erickson, probably in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Restoration work started around May 1961. (Photo: Rica Erickson, Courtesy, THS archives)

A Building the Museum Collections Story

In a file of Shire correspondence relating to the creation of the Gaol Museum, there is a series of letters written in 1961 by South Fremantle resident Miss May Hall. May, born in Fremantle in 1887, was the owner of some personal possessions of Joseph Bolitho Johns (alias Moondyne Joe). It was delightful to read how these items (a compass and walking stick) came into her care and why she wanted to pass them on to Toodyay for the new Museum's collection.¹⁸ So who was Miss May Hall? May's father, Charles Samuel Hall, worked at Fremantle Prison, retiring from the position of Chief Warder in 1892.¹⁹ It seems Joe struck up a friendship with Charles, and would also help May's mother with the gardening. May died in 1964, aged 77 years.

A More Modern Museum Story, Involving Bricks

I was very pleased to read Museum Curator Carol Littlefair's report in the minutes of a meeting of the Old Gaol Museum volunteers held on 31 October 2002, that two well known gentleman had laid the brick floor of the Old Police Stables.²⁰ Neville Tanner (now residing in Nannup) and Toodyay resident Greg Warburton (whom we all know) were, at that time, fairly new Museum Volunteers. Their valuable paving work allowed the museum objects to be re-displayed on a hard surface. Neville was then a member of THS, but how did Greg get roped in? I have asked!

The Start of the Next 150 Years

Museum Curator Margie Eberle and her vollies have many plans afoot to make the Newcastle Gaol Precinct an even more interesting place, so do come and visit on 12 September, or any day for that matter. The Old Newcastle Gaol Museum is open 7 days a week.

Keep in touch via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OldNewcastleGaolMuseum>.

¹⁵ Correspondence, OGM, Shire of Toodyay archives.

¹⁶ *Toodyay Herald*, 20 Dec. 1919, p.3; 27 Sept 1924, p.3

¹⁷ Invitation, Shire of Toodyay Museum archives, 1962

¹⁸ Correspondence, OGM, Shire of Toodyay archives.

¹⁹ *Daily News*, 6 Oct. 1892, p.2

²⁰ Jack Hammer collection, THS archives