

# DUIDGEEANA

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

The Newsletter of the Toodyay Historical Society Inc. Issue No. 40 (Spring 2015)

## \*\*\* NOVEMBER EVENTS \*\*\*

### THS GARAGE SALE - DONEGAN'S COTTAGE

SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER - 8am to 4pm

### SUNDOWNER IN THE OLD WICKLOW SHEARING SHED

SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2015, 6PM

#### TIME TO SPRING CLEAN YOUR SHED AND CLUTTERED CUPBOARDS!

Our fundraising **GARAGE SALE** is happening on **Saturday 14 November from 8am to 4pm**. Please deliver your pre-loved items to Donegan's Cottage on Thursdays (1pm-3pm) or on pricing day, Friday, 13 November, 9am-12 noon. If you would like to come and help on either or both days contact **Jenny on MOB 0417 910 050** or **Beth on 9574 5971**, or just come along and pick up some bargains.

**SUNDOWNER**—Old Wicklow Shearing Shed, Old Newcastle Gaol Museum - **Sunday 29 November 2015, from 6pm**. Parking outside the Old Police Stables off Clinton Street.

This will be our last function for the year, and what a great venue to relax and just enjoy ourselves. After the shed had a thorough tidying up for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Newcastle Gaol, and The Trial of Thomas Shaw, its potential was revealed as a venue for a great end-of-year knees-up. The Shire has kindly given permission for us to use it. There will be a gas bbq available. Bring your own everything, and something to share, and to sit on, although there are some covered hay bales. The photo [on page 2] shows the large crowd that huddled into the shearing shed on that wet and blustery day.

**NEWCASTLE GAOL'S 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations - Saturday 12-13 September 2015.**

[also see ToodyaYesterday]



The Gaol's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cake, made with flair by the Toodyay Bakery.

*Left: L to R: Shane Love MLA, Shire President David Dow, Museum Curator Margie Eberle and THS committee member Peter Robinson.  
(Photo by Gnangarra, 2015.)*

Milton wrote his own script.

*Right: The trial of prisoner 'Thomas Shaw' took place in the former Wicklow Shearing Shed. (Photo by Gnangarra, 2015.)*

If you look carefully you will see the two dead ducks in front of 'Thomas' that surprised everyone when they came crashing down to earth in the Gaol courtyard following volleys of fire from the Perth Volunteer Rifle Regiment. 'Thomas' had many tricks up his sleeve that day.



Thomas was kept warm during his overnight stay by his wagg! Local seamstress Roz Davidson made the wagg from significant remnants, as well as the outfit worn by Thomas.

*Left: L-R: Bindi (Milton and Faye's daughter), Milton and John Zawada, in the Gaol Courtyard after Thomas's release. (Photo: B. Frayne, 2015)*

Many thanks to the Shire for donating funds to the various community groups including THS that were part of the Big Day.

More pictures of the Big Day can be seen on the Old Newcastle Gaol Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/OldNewcastleGaolMuseum/>. Museum vullie Taia Sinclair has already created a Scrapbook, and set up Thomas's cell with mementos of the day.

### **MY THANK YOU SPEECH by Thomas Shaw aka Milton A. Baxter**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Girls and Boys...(before I commence any accolades I would like to say you may have observed a semblance between myself and a certain character who has been quite prominent of late, but please be advised that any likeness is purely coincidental... but I digress). I would like to point out that who else but the historically minded people of Toodyay would commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of a gaol.

This weekend has been a remarkable example of how the efforts made by those who spoke the supposed words of our forebears, and the many helpers involved, made sure that the whole presentation was something that will long be remembered with fondness.

We need to say a special thank you to *Margie Eberle*, our *Museum Curator extraordinaire*, and also our anchor person *Taia Sinclair*, and their band of willing helpers and volunteers. Also to those societies and organisations that include *Arts Toodyay*, *Avon Valley Wood Turners*, *Bush Poets*, *1860 Rifle Regiment*, *Hand Tool Preservation Society of WA*, *Toodyay Community Singers*, *Toodyay Festivals*, *Toodyay Historical Society*, *Toodyay Scouts*, *Toodyay Spinners*, *Wiki Town Toodyaypedia Project*, and all who assisted. Not forgetting the food providers, our head seamstress, *Roz Davidson*, and a special thank you to my wife *Faye* for her

forbearance. They all gave forth and combined under the banner of the *Shire of Toodyay* who financed the effort.



And now a word for the future. We hope that in 25 years' time those people planning the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Newcastle Gaol (I must pencil that in on my calendar) will look at our efforts and say, that was a job well done. We struck some obstacles, such as needing to observe the strict insurance regulations, to enable us to do what we did, especially for that character who spent the night rugged up in his cot, out of harm's way, while our incredible 'after lock-up' volunteers, *Alison Cromb, Prim Allen, Colin Kendall, Margie Eberle, Elizabeth and Bob Frayne, Robyn Taylor, Greg Warburton, John Zawada, Linda Rooney and Peter Robinson*, braved the inclement weather to keep vigil to make sure the incarcerated person did not fall over. Our profound thanks go especially to those folks, they really deserve a mighty thank you, for all this effort enabled us to present a brief glimpse of 24 hours in the life of a convict's story.

*Left: Thomas in his cell. (Photo: M. Eberle, 2015)*

And, personally, it was my chance to sample a small sliver of just what my legion of ancestral miscreants went through, and how most of them made a new life for themselves, and their families, and their descendants, mostly by just simply turning over a new leaf. This occasion is really memorable, as something of its ilk has probably never been attempted before. We the presenters thank you the audience, and our sponsors, and helpers, and hope you enjoyed our presentations as much as we did providing them. Thank you all.

**Affiliated Conference - Geraldton, 4-6 September 2015.** Members Beth & Bob, Robyn and Anne Jefferys, who is also a member of the Irwin District Historical Society, had an enjoyable time at this year's state conference held at the Wintersun Hotel/Motel. The Geraldton Historical Society organised a very interesting range of speakers presenting illustrated talks on subjects ranging from the sandalwood industry in WA to the work of priest architect Monsignor Hawes. A visit to the amazing Geraldton Cathedral was part of the Sunday excursion. It would be wonderful if more members came to these annual events instead of the 'usual suspects'. Each year members of the Wanneroo Historical Society come by the busload - literally!

*Right: Don Garden (President of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies), Robyn, Anne (holding Irwin DHS's Merit Award), and Beth at the Conference venue. (Photo: B. Carter on Beth's camera, 2015)*



**Fast Forward: Oral History in a Time of Change', Oral History Australia National Conference, Perth, 9-12 September 2015**—Robyn was invited to present a paper based on her 2009 Toodyay Bushfire Project that included a number of oral history interviews. The theme of the section in which the paper was presented was 'Recording the history of disasters - and the right time to interview survivors'. THS member Doug Ayre was the State convenor for the conference. Congratulations Doug on a very successful and well organised conference.

A number of conference delegates came to **Toodyay for their Saturday excursion**, which coincided with our 150<sup>th</sup> Old Newcastle Gaol birthday party - what a surprise for them! After enjoying morning tea provided by Linda and Zinnia, Robyn took the delegates on an excursion of the town and firezone.

NB Many thanks to THS members Zinnia and Linda for donating \$100 to THS from their tea takings.

### **PROFESSOR GEOFFREY BOLTON AO, HISTORIAN (1931-2015)**

On 5 October 2015, West Australia farewelled its most eminent and well-loved historian at a memorial service held at St George's Cathedral. Geoffrey's life and work would have touched the hearts and minds of just about everyone in WA who studied or had an interest in history. His output by way of published books and articles, lectures and talks was prodigious. He was an engaging writer that meant his histories were very readable as well as erudite. Farewell Geoffrey, you will be much missed.

### **EXCURSIONS & EVENTS**

**Goomalling excursion, Sunday 9 August.** There was a good turn out with members being made welcome by the Goomalling Historical Society at their Schoolhouse Museum in Throssell Street. Although it has a small



membership base, the Society is very active and its achievements truly impressive. There was a lot to see including the Headmaster's House, the old Konnongorring School, the school bus and machinery shed. Some members were in their element looking at the 'best collection of windmill gears in the West', and the Fordson tractor. And, there is a new West Wing air-con working and display space. Eat your heart out, Jenny!

*Left: THS and GHS members outside the old Konnongorring School, with its impressive murals.*

Then it was off to the historic Slater Homestead with its museum and barn and photo gallery. Well worth a visit, to view the new landscaping around the site, and enjoy a lovely afternoon tea.

*Right: A select group on the Slater Homestead verandah. Did Milton get his 'dead ducks' idea during this visit? (Photos: B. Frayne, 2015)*



No sooner had one milestone birthday been celebrated in Toodyay, there was another -  
**Toodyay Race Club 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Picnic Races - Sunday 27 September 2015.**

Some great memorabilia was produced for this event resulting in a photographic display and a short film using Max Heath's footage of Governor Sir Wallace Kyle opening the new Members' Stand in 1977. Beth produced a Powerpoint and a 32-page illustrated booklet about the Toodyay Race Club titled 'Challenges and Champions'. This was commissioned by the Club. A big thank you to Jenny and Joe, Beth, Peter, Milton and Faye for their work and attendance at the event.



*Right: Faye, Milton and Peter, with former Race Club Chairman Alan Heath's racing silks, kindly lent by Roma Heath. Jenny's display can be seen in the background. (Photo: Jenny Edgecombe, 2015)*

## FEATURE SPEAKERS

The above celebrations provided plenty of material for presentations by Jenny and Beth before our meetings.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Congratulations to Beth** for being a finalist in the Royal Agricultural Society of WA's annual Rural Achiever Award. Beth was nominated by the Toodyay Agricultural Society, which is very appreciative of the work she has undertaken over the years establishing their very lengthy history, and her work generally for the Toodyay community. The Award winner Mrs Cynthia McMorran, of Moora, was announced at a special dinner hosted by the RASWA at its Headquarters in the Claremont Showgrounds, during the Perth Royal Show. The TAS was presented with a cheque for \$300 to go towards its community project of producing a published history in the future.

**Peter features in prize-winning portrait.** We had a special event at the end of the October meeting when member Greg Warburton presented Peter Robinson with his prize-winning portrait of our 'Local Litter Legend'. Peter was captured standing on the roadside 'Keeping Australia Beautiful'. Congratulations Greg for winning the Portrait section at the Toodyay Agricultural Show.

*Right: Greg handing over his portrait to its subject Peter at the October THS meeting in Donegan's Cottage. (Photo: L. Rooney, 2015)*



**New members:** We welcome Zinnia Browne and Frank Farmer, both of Toodyay.

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### *Wendouree - end of an era - a new one begins*

Wendouree has recently undergone a facelift and a new name: Amy's Café Lunchbar. You may have seen Amy at the Newcastle Bridge Roadhouse in former times. The Wendouree Tea Rooms and Bakery was built by George Haymes in 1925 and featured the first shop awning in town without supporting verandah posts - so very modern at the time! Posts were subsequently added, no doubt because it was thought that was how it used to be, or should be, given just about every other old shop and pub in town has verandah posts. The holes in the

façade where the original supports were anchored were briefly revealed when the Wendouree signboard was taken down. The new signage was up before we had a chance to take a photo.

**A 200 year old boundary tree** was recently added to WA's State Register of Heritage Places. According to the Minister of Heritage's announcement, the tree is a rare surviving boundary tree growing on the banks of the Upper Swan. Adding to its significance is the tree's association with the marking out of the Perth area and the colony's founding members Captain James Stirling and the Surveyor-General John Septimus Roe. The tree was discovered by archaeologist Dr Shane Burke and local historian Harold Loton. Some years ago Shane kindly provided copies of pages from a 19<sup>th</sup> century surveyor's notebook used when working in the [West] Toodyay area. When reading old land grants with their references to links and chains, you will find these measurements are often connected to landmark features such as trees or posts. It would be interesting to find out if Toodyay has any remnant trees or markers that should be recorded. Any takers?

**The diaries of Mathew Blagden Hale & St Stephen's Church, Toodyay** - Hale was the first Anglican Bishop of Perth and the diaries he kept between 1856 and 1875 have now been lodged with Hale School. The school had its origins in the school Bishop Hale founded in 1858.

Having the diaries in WA will be very useful for researchers. In 2008, Rev. Doncaster emailed some extracts from Hale's diaries to me after reading my article about St Stephen's Church in *Duideeana* (Issue 4). Bishop Hale had consecrated the church in May 1862. I had been trying to pin down the history and dating of the stained glass windows, which I felt may have been installed at a later date. According to Hale's diary, on 17 December 1864 he visited the church and inspected the new windows which had arrived from England and were installed at the east end. On 17 June 1866 he reported, 'All the coloured glass windows are in this Church now except the two nearest to the door. They look very well. Church altogether very neat.' The joys of research!

#### **Free on [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk)**

In recognition of this year's Remembrance commemorations [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk) has announced it is offering **free access to all military records** - from around the world - **from 6-11 November**.

#### **FROM THE ARCHIVIST: HISTORY AT OUR FINGERTIPS?** - Jenny Edgecombe

For a small town like Toodyay, you might be forgiven for thinking it would be a simple matter to gather information on everyone who has ever lived here since white settlement and list all the events that have taken place.

I am here to tell you that our recent enquiries show this is a long way from reality. Sometimes, yes, we do have the information at our fingertips, such as the chronology Beth was able to supply recently on the Somers family, or the location I was able to give for the blocks farmed by the Lynch family.

However, Toodyay has had a varied and populous past. Every month brings new enquiries which send our research group members off to discover yet another place, event or person none of us has heard of previously. Recently we have dealt with the origin of Donkey Crossing Road, which introduced us to two landowners, Malachi Hogan and J Charlton, new names for Toodyay researchers, even though this didn't solve the riddle of the road's name. All we learnt of that was that a lessor of the Crown Land kept donkeys there. Then there was Robert Ewels who probably only ever visited Toodyay briefly - his mother Clara was a widow who married Alfred James in Fremantle in 1913 before Alfred became a Toodyay storekeeper.

Have you ever come across Maynell Huntley, a Ticket-of-Leave man who was here for a time and eventually became a valued barman at Bennett's Northam hotel? How about Bernard Lee Crampton, an expirée who coincidentally settled quite near today's Donkey Crossing Road and is buried in Nardie Cemetery with his wife Julia? We even have his photograph now, courtesy of the researcher who asked us about him.

Sometimes a new enquiry challenges earlier information. One such question led us to the recent intriguing discovery that we cannot be certain whether it is Clara Butterly or her sister Lucy in a photograph which appears in *Old Toodyay and Newcastle* and *Toodyay Homesteads*. It might even be someone else altogether.

Occasional questions do stump us, but we never fail to add something of interest to the collection for future reference.

## TOODYAYESTERDAY

### *BIG BIRTHDAY FOR THE OLD NEWCASTLE GAOL AS IT CELEBRATES ITS 150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY*

Robyn Taylor

In our last issue we had an article by Beth Frayne titled 'New Stories about the Old Gaol' based on research leading up to the anniversary celebrations. For this issue I thought I would reproduce the article I submitted to the *Toodyay Herald* on behalf of the Museum that gives a summary of that event and a bit more about why the Resident Magistrate wanted a new lock-up.

---ooOoo---

On Saturday 12 September, right to the day, we celebrated 150 years of Newcastle Gaol history with an enthusiastic community event at the museum precinct on Clinton Street. Around 250 to 300 people came along to enjoy the occasion.

The day started wet and blustery, but fortunately it was fine enough for the cutting of the big birthday cake by the Museum Curator Margie Eberle, Shane Love MLA and Shire President David Dow.

The many attractions included the pop-up village with artisans creating historic tools, delicious Cocky soup cooked over an open fire, spinners and wood-turners showing their skills, and artists, poets and singers joining in to make this a festive occasion.

Adding to the colour and noise were members of the 1860s Perth Volunteer Rifle Regiment firing volleys.

A special 're-creation' on the day included the trial and incarceration of Thomas Shaw, one of the early inmates of the Newcastle Lock-up as it was first called.

**What finally prompted the building of this new lock-up?**



It was the daring escape of Moondyne Joe from the old one - it was the last straw for the frustrated Resident Magistrate Alfred Durlacher. Joe had the audacity to steal not only a horse for his get-away, but also the Magistrate's saddle and bridle. A furious Durlacher wrote to the Government, 'Now perhaps my representations as to the lock-up will be believed'.

*Left: The Old Newcastle Gaol as it looks today (Photo: M. Eberle, 2013)*

Plans for the lock-up were drawn up by the Government architect Richard Roach Jewell, and finally the buildings we are familiar with today were underway using the labour of probationary convicts.

So it was in 1865 that Durlacher was able to write, no doubt with much satisfaction, a short letter to the Colonial Secretary advising him the Newcastle Lock-up had been completed on 12 September and handed over to the Police for their use. In 1879 the Newcastle Lock-up was promoted to the status of Gaol.

Since then the Gaol has had a varied history. At different times families lived in the Gaol.

Between 1888 and 1902 PC Michael Leary (or O'Leary) and his family lived there; then from the mid 1920s William and Clara Wolf called it home; followed by the Dorizzi family that moved in around 1929.

Changes in the Gaol precinct included the old wooden police stables being replaced in 1891 with the stone stables that stand opposite the Gaol; and the new lock-up built in 1907 for male and female prisoners. This was built behind the Police Quarters on Duke Street and remains a part of the museum site.

In the 1940s the Newcastle Gaol was abandoned and became derelict. A number of locals recall enjoying playing in the ruins as children.

The building was then restored by the community to become the town's museum in 1962. It was one of the first regional museums to be established in WA.

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



Half a block of land behind the Gaol was donated by Mac Wroth, which was landscaped by John Oldham, famous for the landscaping of the Narrows Interchange in Perth.



In 1990 the Wicklow Shearing Shed was re-located onto the museum site and in 2002 a purpose-built office, workroom and climate controlled store was created to assist in the care of the Museum's collections.

There is a special cell in the Old Newcastle Gaol that evokes the sad and darker side of its history.

This is the Native Cell, and with the help of modern technology it conveys the plight of the Aboriginal prisoners that had once been held there.

In 2013 the Newcastle Gaol Museum won a Heritage Council Award for being an Outstanding Interpretation Project that Enhances a Place for its evocative Native Cell experience.

The Old Newcastle Gaol has come a long way since 12 September 1865.

*Left: Thomas showing off his socks in the Gaol Courtyard prior to his Trial. (Photo: A. Cromb, 2015)*

## FUTURE EVENTS

**November 14 - Saturday Garage Sale, 8am - 4pm**

**November 18 - General Meeting, 7pm - Donegan's Cottage (last meeting for the year)**

**November 28 - Sunday Sundowner, 6pm, Old Wicklow Shearing Shed, Clinton Street.**

**There will be no THS stall at this year's Christmas Street Party in the main street.**

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