

DUIDGEEANA

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

The Newsletter of the Toodyay Historical Society Inc. Issue No. 41 (Summer 2015)

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SEASONS GREETINGS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS
AND BEST WISHES FOR 2016

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End of year function in Wicklow Shearing Shed, Old Gaol Complex - Sunday 29 November

This was a great night with lots of members and their partners enjoying a relaxing evening on a barmy moon-lit evening (as seen in above photo, taken by Taia Sinclair on Linda Rooney's camera). Invited guests included Shire CEO Stan Scott and his wife Laurel, Shire President David Dow and his wife Judy (a recently elected Councillor), Museum Curator Margie Eberle and husband Keith, and Shire Visitors' Centre staff member and Museum volunteer Taia Sinclair and her two children. Bales of straw helped with extra seating. Colin Kendall brought along his portable gas BBQ while Peter Robinson provided the lighting. Following the bbq we were entertained by Peter and Colin who related their experiences as sheep shearers. Peter brought his shearing comb and was attired in his former shearer's jacket and singlet, a fetching off-the-shoulder number that drew a lot of tongue-in-cheek comments.

Peter was invited to write the following article about shearing, and what and why shearers wore what they did.

Shearing - Peter Robinson

Because we were having our Christmas wind up at the old Wicklow shearing shed I decided to arrive in some shearing clothes. The coat I was wearing was nothing particular apart from it having been manufactured for Westline, the shearing supplies company for many years. It featured big pockets and is made of wool. The singlet, which had Lois excited, is known as a Tarzan singlet.

With just one shoulder strap it is cooler than an ordinary singlet. The stitched in piece of denim on the right side is manufactured that way to protect the shearer's side from the sheep's left front foot. In my time the normal shearing position was having the sheep on its backside with its back against your legs. For me, a left-hander, the start position was with the left leg tucked under my right ribs over the hip. That allowed access to the belly, the first part of the fleece to be shorn. Reverse all that for right-handers.

Right: Peter 'sporting' his Tarzan shearing singlet. (Photo: Taia Sinclair, 2015)

Shearing trousers have double thickness material on those places that wear the most. They are made from cotton and synthetic fibre. The cotton is mostly on the inside against the skin, with the harder wearing synthetic on the outside. With double thickness material they are quite hot to wear, but the cotton is better against the skin.

Shearer's shoes are called moccasins. Mostly made of leather with flat soles and a leather flap across the instep to a buckle on the outside well towards the heel. Laces could easily be cut and contaminate the wool as well as leaving loose footwear. Leather is strong enough to protect the foot if a handpiece (the wool cutting tool) is dropped onto a foot.

Back-aides are now widely used. They are like a half circle lightweight aluminium tube with a wide strap joining the two ends. After the shearer has dragged a sheep out next to the shearing stand he puts his arms and torso through the 'D' shaped device. This has long expander springs from the device to an anchor point above the shearer. The idea is for the back-aide to carry some of the shearer's weight. Being bent over sheep for eight hours a day has ruined many a shearer's back.

At its peak in the early 1980s Australia had 180,000,000 sheep. I think there is less than half that now.

Some history about the shearing shed - Beth Frayne

In 1999, the Old Wicklow Shearing Shed was constructed on its present location, near the Old Police Stables (1891) in Clinton Street. The materials came from a much larger but derelict shearing shed on the old Wicklow Hills property, part of the original Whitfield grant Avon Location U2. This is located south of the Goomalling-Toodyay Road, not far out of Toodyay. Later owners of the property included the Connor, Hayes and Guest families. In 1934, the roof of the original shearing shed was blown off in a great storm.



Left: The original Wicklow Hills shearing shed in the 1990s. (Photo: Teddy James, THS collection)

Initially, in 1998, Michael and Mary Guest donated a six-stand shearing plant to the Old Newcastle Gaol Museum, then later offered elements of the whole shed, which were transported and re-erected using labour from the Work for the Dole Scheme. Site work uncovered a 1850s well and bread oven. Archaeological investigations at that time retrieved much interesting material from the well, which has been retained by the Museum, and recently analysed.

Until this year, the Shearing Shed was used to store large Museum artifacts, and was not open to the public. With space being made in the Old Shire Depot buildings, and the imminent 150th Anniversary Celebrations of the Old Gaol, the Shearing Shed was emptied, re-organised, and items of relevance to sheep and wool production and shearing relocated to the site. The Shire is considering making the space suitable for public educational and social events.

Garage Sale at Donegan's - Saturday 14 November

A hearty thanks to all those members who assisted with our fund-raiser. There was a great collection of items for sale donated by members and their friends that were cleaned, sorted and priced ready for sale on the Saturday. A pity about the sudden burst of hot weather which may have kept the expected numbers down from last year, but we raised over \$500. With Donegan's still packed to the rafters with leftovers, we were most grateful to member Colin Kendall for making his home available for our meeting on the following Wednesday.

Right: Jenny pricing the books. (Photo: Beth Frayne, 2015)



NEWS IN BRIEF

New member: A big welcome to Graeme Ferguson who has rejoined THS.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Online Biographical Register of WA MPs

The Western Australia Parliamentary Library recently launched an online Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia:

(<http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/library/MPHistoricalData.nsf/LookupBios?Openview>)

The Register includes both past and present MPs. Researchers will find a wealth of information, including details about MPs' birth and death dates, parents' occupation, MPs' early life, education, employment before their election to parliament, and the year they arrived in the state if they were born elsewhere. Very usefully, MPs inaugural and valedictory speeches as well as condolence motions are included as pdf attachments. Links to relevant Australian Dictionary of Biography entries of MPs are also being made.

Exhibition program for the Newcastle Gaol Museum in 2016

January - April: Remembering Them - How WW1 affected a rural community.

Working with the WA Museum, Lotterywest & the Royal WA Historical Society, this exhibition presents stories about the impact the 'War to end all wars' had on Toodyay. The three main topics covered are William & Ruth Strahan - a family at war, Herbert Matthews & Trench Fever, and On the Home Front. A parallel research project has been to find the names of soldiers associated with Toodyay during and immediately after the war. This information, collated for the first time, is

available at the exhibition and on-line on the Shire of Toodyay website. The exhibition, updated for 2016, will remain open until April 25. *Tuesday April 26: exhibition will be closed.*

May - October: Not Just Barefoot and Pregnant - But Much, Much More'. Searching for women's stories in Toodyay, Western Australia. *Official opening Monday 2 May.*

Uncovering some lesser-known histories of women from Toodyay (formerly known as Newcastle). Topics include establishing schools, forming associations (CWA), retailing foods & beverages, one of WA's first female chemists, the migrant experience, entertaining for profit, and playing sport. *Monday October 10: exhibition will be closed.*

October - December: Hurting and Healing - Health care in Toodyay. *Official opening Monday 17 October.*

Themes proposed: Newcastle/Toodyay Hospital & Matrons; Ambulance service; Medical Practitioners: Doctors - Richard Walkey, Patrick O'Reilly - also contribution of doctors to the life of the community in other areas; Midwives; infectious diseases and when immunizations became mandatory by law; and Aboriginal medicines & healing (to be discussed with local community).

New book: *History of Costume: Nineteenth-century Western Australia (2015)*, by D. Eluwawalage. An interesting new book has just been published which looks at the economic, sociological and cultural aspects of fashion and clothing in colonial society. The author seeks to explain how clothing was used socially and economically to establish class, status and power in the colony of Western Australia. The book also analyses the major social and geographical impacts on early Western Australian clothing.

FROM THE ARCHIVIST - Jenny Edgecombe

'NEW' TOODYAY PHOTOS & REVISITING ESTABLISHED 'FACTS'

Have a look at 31 great images of Toodyay 1984 recently digitised on the website of the State Library of WA. You will see the Toodyay Society (later THS) in Stirling Terrace and the now burnt-out former Ray White building when it was the Village Shoppe Deli & Café. Find them with a keyword search on 'Toodyay 1984' and narrow it to State Library Pictures, at <http://catalogue.slwa.wa.gov.au/search~S6>

New information about Toodyay is always coming to light, especially in this digital age, when more historical records are digitised every day. We should never take any local stories for granted.

A classic case of lost memories occurred in the 1990s in the naming of the building which now houses the town's bakery. Beth Frayne and I had long wondered if it really was a Mr **Unwin** who was the first tenant of this store, since it seemed a fairly uncommon name, and we could find no trace of him in the town's history. Recently the gradual appearance of more newspapers and other records online allowed Beth to confirm that it was actually the draper, Robert **Urwin**.

At other times, the worker bees in THS have all been recent arrivals, enthusiastic and hardworking, but without a 'corporate memory' of the town and its families. I recently came across a very old enquiry (well before any current members were involved) where the reply had been that we could find no record of the 'Greecly' family at 'Mount View'. Our current members would have immediately recognised a misreading of 'Greedy', but before computers, for someone without a network of contacts in the town, the error was understandable.

Confession time: I broke my own rule recently, of allowing researchers to discover things for themselves wherever possible. When a lady inquired about her discovery of an old book belonging to Mr Paull of Bolgart, I became so interested that I have scarcely left her any new material to discover online. I will develop this fascinating story for a future *Duidgeena*.

Donegan's Cottage was visited recently by a great-granddaughter of Charlotte Donegan (née Herbert) with connections to the Roach family. She was thrilled to be able to locate the Roach property, Malkup Brook. We have since had a fruitful exchange of photographs and information.

Right: Agnes Roach (daughter of Charlotte Herbert and Thomas John Donegan) with her daughter Beatrice. (Photo, courtesy of J. Johnson.)

Other recent enquiries included Ferguson records, the Lynches at Pell Mell, identification of 1929 Road Board members in a photograph, historical sites in West Toodyay and Whitfield House.

Dating Donegan's Cottage & correcting histories - Robyn Taylor

Following on the theme of Jenny's report about how mistakes are made about people and places, and the value of going back over old sources with fresh eyes, I was very excited to read an article about Newcastle (Toodyay) in the 22 December 1888 edition of the *Western Mail*.

'North Newcastle is certainly looking up, as Mr James Ellery has erected three very handsome cottages ... and has planted ornamental as well as fruit trees, which considerably add to the improvement of the place.'

James Ellery was the brother of Charles Ellery the town's bootmaker. Barnard Drummond Clarkson had released land in the vicinity of the town's sporting grounds for development, and Ellery's cottages were the first to be erected. Rica Erickson's *Old Toodyay & Newcastle* briefly mentions this, but we didn't know what cottages were being referred to, or indeed if still standing. A look at Ian Chitty's c.1976 survey of historical buildings in Toodyay showed three listings of cottages built by James Ellery. The poor quality photocopies of black and white photos taken in the 1970s made the unrestored cottages hard to recognise. However their locations on a map with their lot numbers indicate these are the Donegan and Parker cottages, with the other cottage being opposite Parker. The 1888 article provides proof of their date of construction as 1888. There had been theories of a much earlier date for Donegan's, but we thought somewhere in the 1890s. A lot more is also known about James Ellery and together with his brother Charles, is worth another story in *Duideeana*.

FUTURE EVENTS

Next meeting: Wednesday, 20 January 2016, 7pm, venue to be advised.

Planning day: Sunday, 7 February 2016, 2pm, at Linda Rooney's home, 14 Henry Street, Toodyay.

TOODYAYESTERDAY

Greg Warburton, a THS member and intrepid explorer of historic journeys, kindly agreed to write up an account of his re-enactment of Ernest Giles' arrival at Culham homestead (north of Toodyay) on 13 November 1875. With 13 November 2015 being the 140th anniversary of Giles' arrival, it was too good an opportunity to dust off his travelling gear and coax his camel Warri into leaving the comforts of home and pastures for a couple of days.

Giles wrote about his explorations in his book *Australia twice traversed: the romance of exploration, being a narrative compiled from the journals of five exploring expeditions into and through central South Australia and Western Australia from 1872 to 1876*. This was published in 1889. Greg has a copy, which he used for this article.

Further details about Giles can be found in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Vol. 4, MUP,

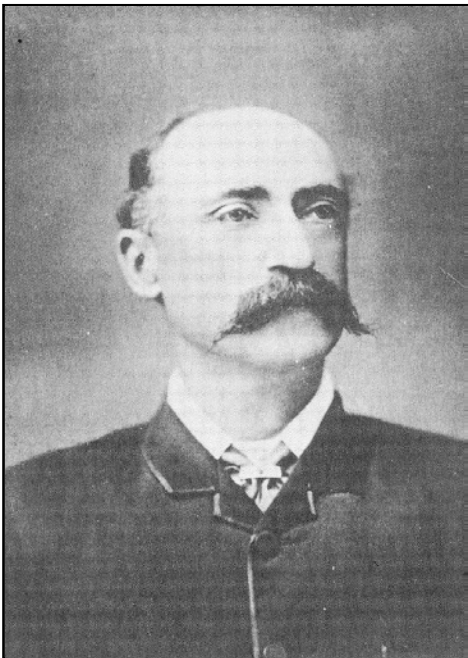


1972) or go to <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/giles-ernest-3611>. Wikipedia also had a good reference list for those who want to find out more about Giles' remarkable achievements. Best of all is Lesley Brooker's recently published book, *Giles 1875 Expedition* (Hesperian Press, 2015) that contains the now iconic photographs that were taken when Giles stayed at Culham.

CAMELS at CULHAM REVISITED by Greg Warburton

Ernest Giles was born in Bristol, England, on 20 July 1835. At the age of 15 he emigrated to Australia and in 1852 went to the Victorian goldfields obtaining valuable experience as a bushman.

In 1865, Giles explored the north-west of the Darling River looking for pastoral country. However he did not attempt an organised expedition until 1872 when, with two other men, he left Chambers Pillar in Central Australia on the 22 August traversing previously unexplored country to the north-west and west. Finding their way barred by Lake Amadeus, and with their horses very weak, a return was made to the Finke River eventually reaching Adelaide in January 1873.



Left: Ernest Giles (1835-1897). Photographer unknown, from the Frontispiece of Giles' publication 'Australia Twice Traversed'.

Giles' friend Sir Ferdinand Baron von Mueller who was the director of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens raised a subscription so that a new expedition could be mounted. The services of William Tietkens as first assistant were obtained and with two other men they struck out into the western desert on 4 August 1873. The country was extremely dry and it was a constant struggle to get enough water for the horses. Giles is reputed to have said during this expedition 'Oh for a camel'. The farthest westerly point was reached on 23 April 1874. Giles and one of the men, Alfred Gibson, had been scouting ahead when the latter's horse died. Giles gave him his own horse with instructions to follow their tracks back and

obtain assistance. Giles made his way back to their depot on foot in eight days, completely exhausted only to find that Gibson had not reached the camp. A search was made for several days without success. Giles named the desert Gibson Desert after his companion. Giles was the first European to see the rock formations of The Olgas, now known by their Aboriginal name of *Kata Tjuta*. Giles supposedly discovered Uluru (formerly Ayers Rock) but was beaten to the claim by a competing explorer, William Gosse.

With the generous help of Sir Thomas Elder providing a team of camels Giles began his fourth expedition. He set out from Beltana in South Australia on 6 May 1875 with Tietkens, again his lieutenant, along with five other members including Saleh Mahomet and plant collector, Jesse Young. The party was saved the continual excursions in search of water for horses that had caused so much difficulty during previous expeditions.

Towards the end of September over 323 miles (520 km) had been covered in 17 days without finding water when on 25 September the native Tommy found an abundant supply in a small hollow between sand dunes at Queen Victoria Spring, saving their lives. After a rest of nine days the journey was resumed and headed west. Ten days later, the expedition was attacked by Aborigines and Giles was compelled to fire on them. On 4 November they met a white stockman at Tootra out-camp, east of Bindi Bindi. Their course was west to Walebing Station, then south-west, and on 11 November they arrived at New Norcia where they were welcomed by Bishop Salvado.

On the 13 November 1875 the party arrived at Culham Farm 10 miles north of Newcastle. Samuel Pole Phillips, known as the Squire, invited the explorers to stay and the next day they attended Culham Church. The arrival of the camel team caused much interest with people coming from across the district to view the unusual animals that had not been seen in the colony before. It was during this time that the extraordinary photographs of the expedition posing with Phillips family members and farm workers were taken at Culham. Two days later on 15 November 1875 the party arrived at the town of Newcastle [today's town of Toodyay] and was received by Premier John Forrest at a civic reception at what is now the Freemasons' Hotel. Meanwhile the camels were hobbled out to feed along the river bank.



Above: The Ernest Giles Expedition reaches Culham Homestead, 13 November 1875. (Photo: reproduced from 'Giles 1875 Expedition'(2015), by Lesley Brooker. Source: State Library of Western Australia, 4699B/2)

140 years later

Inspired by the historic photographs taken at Culham and Toodyay's rich history, I saddled up Warri the camel, a veteran of the 1996 Carnegie Centenary Expedition, and walked to Culham on 13 November, exactly 140 years later to commemorate the event. We were joined by THS members Milton and Faye Baxter, and with the three of us decked out in period costume, we re-created the historic photograph by posing on the exact spot. After the photo shoot Warri and myself retraced Giles' steps into Toodyay arriving home the next day. Many thanks to Robin and Debbie of Culham (who are direct descendants of Squire Phillips) for their welcome and support for the event.

Right: Greg, Milton and Faye with Warri outside Culham Homestead. (Photo: Robin Yost, 2015)



On the afternoon of 18 November Giles' caravan arrived in Perth to a hero's welcome and many more official engagements and ceremonies. Giles stayed for two months at Perth and on 13 January

1876 began the return journey via Culham, spending time with his friend Squire Phillips. He then took a course generally about 400 miles north of the last journey.

Giles arrived at Adelaide in September 1876 completing a double crossing of the western deserts and proving beyond doubt the suitability of camels to the outback. Giles was enthusiastic about camels and wrote, 'These mighty ships of the desert by whose strength and incomprehensible powers of endurance enabled us to leave the desert behind.'¹

During the 1880s Giles published books about his expeditions including the iconic *Australia Twice Traversed* in two substantial volumes. He made a number of other minor journeys and his last years were spent as a clerk in the Inspector of Mines' office at Coolgardie, where his great knowledge of the interior was always available for prospectors.

Giles was made a Fellow and awarded the Patron's Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1880. After a short illness he died of pneumonia in Coolgardie on 13 November 1897, the day and month being the same as when he had triumphantly arrived at Culham 22 years before. He is buried at the Coolgardie Cemetery. An article published in a journal after his death said of Giles, '*He has left behind a name that will be long remembered and held in honor as one who had devoted the best years of his life to one of the noblest causes that man can engage.*'²

In his book, *The Red Centre: man and beast in the heart of Australia* (1935), H. H. Finlayson wrote, '*All who have worked in that country since Giles's time have felt both admiration and astonishment at the splendid horse craft, endurance, and unwavering determination with which these explorations were carried through.*'³

Ernest Giles will always hold a special and important place in Toodyay history and it was an honour to commemorate his historic arrival in our town 140 years ago.



Left: Greg and Warri on the Bindi Bindi-Toodyay Road on their way to Culham. (Photo: Jenny Edgcombe, 2015)

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¹ Ernest Giles, *Australia Twice Traversed*, Vol 2. Published by Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington Limited, London, 1889.

² 'Ernest Giles', in *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 20 November 1897, p. 8.

³ 'Ernest Giles', quoted from Wikipedia. Retrieved 16 December 2015.