

DUIDGEEANA

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

The Newsletter of the Toodyay Historical Society Inc. Issue No.45 (Summer 2017)

For more about us see our new website: <http://www.toodyayhistoricalsociety.org.au/>

SUNDOWNER AT 108 STIRLING TERRACE (Bank Annexe) SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2017 - 6PM START



Please bring a plate to share - BYO drinks etc.

Sundowner at 108 Stirling Terrace: Our first excursion for the year has traditionally been a pub dinner. This year we decided it would be a lot of fun to try out the future shop-front premises in Stirling Terrace. We will be sharing this building annexe with the Toodyay Friends of the River and the Toodyay Naturalists Club, neither of which has its own 'home'. While Donegan's Cottage remains as our HQ, this location will enable us to reach the wider public and visitors to Toodyay. We have permission to use the premises while we wait for finalisation of the lease agreement. The other groups will be invited to join us as we all love a Sundowner! There will be a busy-bee to clean up the premises and front garden - you will hear from us shortly about that!

We have arranged for chairs, so just bring yourself, a plate to share, and your own plate/bowl, utensils, drinks etc.

Planning meeting - Sunday 5 February: Sitting on Secretary Linda's superb deck overlooking the town and valley was an inspirational way to make plans for 2017. We have come up with exciting places to visit, events, speakers for meetings, and a film night. The programme will be sent out to members soon. Thank you, Linda, for making this event such a pleasant afternoon, and everyone for attending with your great ideas and delicious contributions to the sundowner.

Website: One event (date to be decided), will be the launching of our new website shown at the top of this page.

Australia Day, 26 January - Congratulations to member Greg Warburton for winning the Premier's Australia Day Community Citizenship Award. Over many years Greg has worked tirelessly for the Toodyay community putting in countless volunteer hours, as well as bringing history to life with his re-enactments with his camel Warri. Prez Robyn was also a contender. I'm sure Greg joins me in thanking THS, TNC and TFOR members who were behind our nominations.

Right: Our Australia Day Award winner and nominees in Duidgee Park with the Shire President and CEO:

L-R: Kim Angus, Roz Davidson, CEO Stan Scott, Adele Luke, Stephen Ferguson, Greg Warburton (Award winner), Robyn Taylor, Shire President David Dow. (Photo: Beth Frayne, 2017)



END OF YEAR SUNDOWNER - November 2016

Additions to the old Wicklow Shearing Shed, such as the extended timber decking, were completed just in time for our end of year get-together. This year we had two special events to celebrate.

The Toodyay Clock - almost a case of déjà vu as the clock's past history and our early attempts to officially hand it over to the Shire were covered in the very first issue of *Duidgeana* (Jan/Feb 2008). In the end, we asked the Curator Moss Wilson if it could be stored in the Museum for safe keeping. THS kept the paper work, which gave the provenance of the clock, and this was handed over to the Shire President on the night. As a shearing shed wasn't the safest of places for a French clock with a glass dome, a photo had to make do.

Right: Shire President Cr. David Dow and Museum Curator Margie Eberle receiving the official paperwork for the Clock handover from THS President Robyn Taylor. (Photo: Beth Frayne, 2016)



Book launch - there were hearty congratulations for Alison Cromb at the launching of her book *The Road to Toodyay*. President Robyn did the honours and gave a brief talk about its contents. We hope to have a book review in the next issue.

Robyn suggested the title can be read to suggest both a history of the Toodyay Road, and the broader story about the circumstances that led to the settlement of Toodyay and the Avon Valley region. It's a fascinating account of the interactions between settlers, government employees and the local Aboriginal people, and includes mention of the outposts at Pinjarra and the Murray River region. Also covered is the vexatious question of when the (West) Toodyay townsite was gazetted. It seems we need to be flexible in our thinking, and look at the proposed townsite as a gleam in the Governor's eye, which he 'determined' in 1836. It wasn't until 1849 that the townsite was officially surveyed by Assistant Surveyor Alfred Hillman. What a relief! It seems we can still claim 1836 as

the 'birth' of Toodyay, even though finding the official notice in the *Government Gazette* is still proving elusive.

Right: Robyn (left) launching Alison's new publication. (Photo: Jenny Edgecombe, 2016)

Recycled Raffle: Beth had the crazy idea of running a raffle of prizes recycled or home-made and wrapped in recycled paper, as well. Members got into the swing of this idea, and happily paid \$1 a ticket and also offer up the prizes.

The drawing caused a few laughs not to mention Beth dropping some of the tickets and the takings through the new floorboards. Unfortunately, Beth's other idea of asking winners to quote a 'TooFact' had to be abandoned due to lack of time, which disappointed the few who had been well-prepared. Another time perhaps?



Toodyay Chamber of Commerce & Industry Christmas Street Party, Friday, 2 December 2016

We held our stall outside our 'new' leased street-front premises which are in an annexe of the Bendigo Bank building (to be shared with the Naturalists' Club and the Friends of the River). Members were offered a chance to have a peek inside the building. Many thanks to members



who donated goods for our Christmas Boxes, and assisted on the night. With raffle tickets and books to purchase, it was very handy being situated next to the bank's ATM. The Raffles (two prizes) raised the significant amount of \$212, with several books sold and one new membership taken. Many thanks to Robyn, Jenny and the crew who helped with the setup and also to those who stopped by for a chat, in between the noise of the popular siren of the fire engine located right next door!

Left: Alison, Robyn and Milton at the stall. (Photo: Jenny Edgecombe, 2016)

NEW MEMBERS: A big welcome to Ros Pignatiello and Stan Scott, both of Toodyay.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Meeting with Shire, 24 Nov 2016 - committee members Robyn and Jenny had a convivial and useful meeting with the CEO Stan Scott and Shire staff about establishing an informal relationship that could benefit both parties. For our part, we discussed our resources and expertise that we are willing to share, and the wish to be included in discussions about matters before the Shire where we can make a positive contribution.

Feature Speaker, 18 January Meeting - Linda Rooney. At our first meeting for the year, our Secretary Linda gave an insightful, and sobering, Powerpoint presentation on her recent volunteer experience at a refugee camp on the Greek island of Chios. The camp was run by volunteers under the umbrella of various volunteer agencies. Linda and member Zinnia Browne volunteered at a camp run by the Norwegian Refugee Council. Linda talked about the donations from Toodyay and how



these were applied to help the needs of the refugees. She delighted us with photos of children wearing woollen beanies provided by Toodyay local Roz Davidson, and the colourful cardigans and jumpers knitted by refugee women with donated wool and needles. These provided some happy moments to lighten the unbearable situation these people find themselves in. We had a full house that night. Somehow we squeezed in 16 members, which was amazing.

Left: Linda Rooney after her inspiring presentation. (Photo: Beth Frayne, 2017)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

New Information Bay

In December the Shire installed several panels in the new Info Bay behind the town's Entry Statement, near the Hamersley Street intersection. Sections headed History, Places of Interest, Events and Trails have been mounted.

Right: The new Info Bay. (Photo: B. Frayne, 2016)

Two very clear maps show the roads and other landscape features in both the Shire and the town itself. Food, Services and Accommodation signs are still to come, with the signage designed to be easily updated as these elements change.



THS provided several images which form part of a lovely frieze across the top of the inner wall, with the subjects being Newgain Farm (ca1904), Dr. Somerville Davis (ca1895-1896) outside the Freemasons' Hotel, and the old Police Quarters (1901), Duke Street. Unexpected Shire telephone number changes held up the installation, amongst other things, but the shady spot has been well appreciated in the meantime.

Reimagining the stories of Western Australia: J.S. Battye Library of West Australia's 60th Anniversary event, 14 December.

Culture and the Arts Minister John Day acknowledged the work of the State Library and its many supporters in marking the 60th anniversary of the State's oldest and most significant collection of heritage documents. THS members Beth and Bob Frayne attended, having been invited as Friends of the Battye Library. THS Member Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory gave a very interesting speech about how she has used the Battye collection over the years, for her historical research. Creative writer Amanda Curtin also spoke about the inspiration she receives from reading original documents especially diaries and letters.

Fact File, from the State Library's website:

Extra information: J S Battye Library of West Australian History

The Battye Library was named to honour Dr James Sykes Battye who commenced duty as Librarian in 1894 and who died aged 83 having been in charge of the Library for 60 years. Dr Battye was instrumental in the collection of West Australian heritage materials.

The adjective West in the Battye Library's name was deliberately chosen instead of Western to indicate that the focus of the collections went further back than 1829, when Western Australia officially came into existence.

The Battye Library collections include: 108,000 book titles; 1,000 newspaper titles; 25,000 magazine titles; 34,000 maps and over 100,000 pieces of ephemera. Archival collections include: 4,200 metres of private archives (the records of clubs, associations, businesses, churches and individuals); over 700,000 pictorial images; over 7,500 oral history interviews (comprising nearly 17,000 hours of tape); and over 12,000 films, videos and DVDs. These collections are a primary source for any information relating to Western Australia, whether historical or current.

Geographe Cycle Club walk, Wednesday, 2 November

Beth and Milton led a late afternoon Walk and Talk for 17 members of the Geographe Cycle Club, who were staying in Toodyay that week. The walk meandered down Stirling Terrace from Newcastle Park to Stirling Park, visiting the Library (former Mechanics' Institute) along the way. THS member Rev. Peggy Ludlow greeted the visitors at the end of the walk in the cool interior of St. Stephen's Anglican Church. All enjoyed the presentation.

Right: The group on St. Stephen's steps; Peggy (seated) in blue in the shade; Milton on the far right. (Photo: Beth Frayne, 2016)



VALE

Pamela Walsh (1951-2017). We were very saddened to learn of the passing of former member Pamela Walsh. Pamela was an Aboriginal elder who did so much for this town and her people. As member Greg Warburton wrote on behalf of Toodyay Tidy Towns, 'she was the Aboriginal representative for us and the go-to-person for indigenous engagement in Toodyay.' (*Toodyay Herald*, February 2017, p.11) See ToodyayYesterday at the end of this newsletter for Pamela's story.

Mena Chapman 1915-2017). With the passing of Mena Chapman on 1 January 2017, Toodyay lost one of its oldest residents. She was just nine days short of her 102nd birthday. Mena was born Mena Louvain Hodgkinson on 10 January 1915 and lived in Toodyay all her life. She married Don Chapman in 1940, and the couple eventually settled in 'Kelvedon' on the corner of Telegraph Road and Somers Street, overlooking the Toodyay Showgrounds. We have fond memories of Mena cutting Toodyay's 175th birthday cake.

FROM THE ARCHIVIST - Jenny Edgecombe

'Historical information' on the internet should be treated with caution, but late in 2016 I greeted some new information from a Youtube video with great excitement. The film showed a lecture given by Rick Mason, the custodian of the wonderful Faust collection of glass negatives showing scenes of Toodyay life ca 1917. This presentation revealed that the original find was accompanied by written material which identifies many of the people in the photographs, adding greatly to the significance of the collection. The Historical Society and the Toodyay Shire Museum both hold copies of these images.

Exciting news! Information about the collection is starting to appear on our THS website. You can now view a listing of publications relevant to Toodyay's history held in the THS library. Members are welcome to consult these items on Thursdays at Donegan's Cottage, 1-3pm. We will add to the reference material available on the site as the site is developed and training continues.

I recently submitted a Volunteers Grant application for the purchase of new storage units and furniture for Donegan's Cottage. For a relatively modest outlay, we would be able to improve efficiency and make it more attractive for researchers and volunteers to work with the collection.

Beth Frayne had a busy time dealing with enquiries while I was away travelling in late 2016. One of these came from a grandson of Jonathan and Catherine Somers, the son of their daughter Irene. Beth was able to supply a copy of her Somers chronology and an article about the Best and Kingston wagon-building business that Jonathan bought.

Beth was also able to arrange for receipt of the Rayner Collection, via another THS member, Marg Pember, who is a friend of the family. This fascinating collection contains memorabilia, including trophies and commemorative buttons, in addition to the valuable named school and sporting photographs. Marg Pember had carried out some comprehensive research on the family's history, which greatly enhances the value of the collection for future researchers.

We are in the process of dealing with two fascinating enquiries involving motor rallies and races at Toodyay. More on these in future reports.

What were they doing?

Photograph from the Rayner collection: Annotated on reverse: no date, in folder marked Dudley Palmer, Perth.

Children appear to be in fancy dress?

L-R: Bebe Atwell, Gordon Dorizzi, Joyce Parker, Frank Twine, Helen Twine, Doug Wood, Doris Hasson, Gordon Page.



Seeking John Steward/Stewart - Beth compiled information about Toodyay resident and former convict John Steward or Stewart, for an inquiry from Capel. John was buried in the Toodyay Cemetery in 1903 but his resting place is not marked. Descendent Jacqui Graham spent some days in the district visiting family sites including Mill Farm and the Drummond Mill site, and Hawthornden. John and his eldest son William were employed in the Mill in the 1860s, with William later becoming the Mill manager for then owner Charles Edward Dempster.

Right: Researcher Jacqui Graham in Donegan's Cottage. (Photo: Beth Frayne, 2017)



FUTURE EVENTS

Next meeting: Wednesday 15 February 2017, 7pm; Featuring a Whitfield Oral History. Sundowner, Bank Annexe, 108 Stirling Terrace, Sunday 26 February 2017, 6pm.

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TOODYAYESTERDAY

PAMELA RAE WALSH (1951 - 2017)

'She walked two worlds and embraced them both.'

Compiled by Dr Robyn Taylor

The following story about past member Pamela Walsh has been adapted from the Obituary I was invited to write for *The Toodyay Herald* (Feb. 2017 edition). Pamela had been a member of our Society and several of our members attended her funeral service at St Stephen's Church. This was held on Friday 27 January, to be followed by a private cremation. At Pamela's request the service was conducted by the pastor from the Baptist church she had attended in Perth. The pastor brought along some members of the choir, a group of magnificent singers from Africa. It was just what Pamela had requested, a beautiful celebration of life through song.

At the service, husband Karl summed up Pamela's life when he said, *'She walked two worlds and embraced them both.'* Pamela had strong Christian beliefs, but she also had a deep sense of her own Aboriginal culture. Karl mentioned the openness about her culture came later in life. In common with many of her generation, to be Aboriginal was to be set apart. She recalled when she went to Perth to go shopping with her father, they had to abide by the curfew where Aboriginals weren't allowed to remain in the city after sunset. Her people didn't have the vote, and her parents had to get government permission to marry.



Right: Pamela at the 2013 State Heritage Awards. (Photo: Jenny Edgecombe, 2013)

Pamela was born in Morawa on 3 April 1951 to parents Yvonne and Albert Phillips. She came from a large family with seven siblings. On her mother's side, she was Yamatji and on her father's side BallardongNoongah with connections to the Phillips family in Culham, Toodyay. For many years Pamela wanted to visit Culham homestead, and I had arranged this for her with the family. They were looking forward to meeting Pamela but when I asked Karl if she had finally achieved her wish, he said she became shy and wouldn't get out of the car.

The following biographical details have been extracted from background notes about her very full life of public service and achievement. Pamela had compiled this information in two documents, one when she decided to put her name forward for an Extraordinary Toodyay Shire election for Central Ward in May 2012. She wasn't successful in her bid, but I wonder if she had been Toodyay's first Aboriginal resident to stand for an election.

Nothing I write here can do justice to what Pamela had accomplished during her lifetime as there is so much more.

Pamela grew up in Perenjori, and as a young woman worked as a nurse's aide at the hospital in Morawa and later at Onslow where she met Karl Walsh. The couple married in 1971. Karl was a policeman at the time which meant there was a lot of moving around the state. Karl is also of Aboriginal descent on his mother's side. She lived in Sydney and had come to WA where she met and married his father.

Pamela and Karl didn't have children of their own, but over the many years of their married life they provided love and support to an extended family of children. Pamela worked with the Department for Child Protection as a volunteer foster carer.

Pamela's life of social commitment broadly covers three regions. The couple lived in Port Hedland from 1982 before moving to Perth in 1996, and then Toodyay. During her time in Port Hedland and Perth, Pamela's active participation in community affairs led to her being invited to serve on several Ministerial Advisory Councils, including those dealing with Disability, Housing, and Juvenile Justice. Karl said she wasn't just a sitter on committees, she was a doer, and illustrated this with how she helped to design Aboriginal housing that was sympathetic to the way they preferred to live. There were ingenious ways of channelling cool air through a dwelling using traditional forms of design. She also held the position of inaugural Chair of the Police Minister's Council on Police, Aboriginal & Community Relations. In 1991 she was appointed a Justice of the Peace.

Pamela and Karl came to live here at Toodyay in 2000. Their young son Ethan attended the local kindergarten and primary school with Pamela becoming an active participant in school affairs. Ethan had the makings of a fine sportsman, and his parents were passionate enthusiasts becoming members of the Avon Valley Avengers Baseball Committee with Pamela serving as Team Manager of the Under 15s. Tragedy struck the family with Ethan's premature death in 2010 at the age of 15 years. Many of us attended the celebration of Ethan's life held in the showgrounds on 1 July 2011. Hundreds attended, including a number of dignitaries from Perth who knew Pamela. A memorial seat for Ethan was unveiled near the Aboriginal burial ground site at the edge of the former hockey field. Being painfully aware of the high number of suicides amongst young people, Pamela initiated a Youth Forum on mental health and suicide prevention.



The following highlight some of Pamela's contributions to Toodyay. In 2014, together with other Aboriginal Elders, Pamela helped to plan and facilitate a three day Aboriginal women's retreat in Toodyay with the theme 'A Vision of Hope for the Future'. Women from around the Wheatbelt met to discuss common issues and concerns within their community. Three of us from THS and the Shire museum Curator were invited by Pamela to attend their first evening so we could meet other Aboriginal women, and hopefully gain their friendship and trust to enable us to discover more about Toodyay's Aboriginal history. A highlight of the evening was taking part in a women's smoking ceremony.

Left: Pamela and Karl at the 2013 State Heritage Awards.
(Photo: Joe Edgecombe, 2013)

Although Pamela had many burdens in her life, her approachable and cheerful nature meant she was often invited to help with matters relating to Aboriginal protocols. She was a good speaker and well known for her warm and generous 'Welcome to Country' speeches. The one she and Karl delivered at the Australian Tidy Towns Awards dinner in Toodyay in 2016, with Karl delivering the welcome in Noongar, was very special. According to Karl, Pamela said she couldn't get her tongue around her own language because she was taught as a schoolgirl to pronounce her 'p's' and 'q's'.

Pamela was passionate about the cause for Reconciliation. She was involved with the Reconciliation plaque unveiling in Federation Square near Memorial Hall, and had often talked about extending the Bilya Walk Track across the Avon so that it would link Nardie Cemetery with the Aboriginal burial site. One day this may well happen.