



Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.
THE TNC NEWSLETTER
Number 16 - April 2015



*The Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.
is indebted to the Wheatbelt NRM
for their support in producing
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Michalíe Foley

THIS YEAR kicked off with a bang in February with a talk from Honorary Life Member, Pam Masters. Pam shared with us her experiences from her time living in Derby. Pam took members on a wonderful adventure through her 17 years in the Kimberly. She took us on some of her favourite trips, sharing her knowledge of the local area and local aboriginal heritage. Pam also shared many excellent bird photos from her favourite place on Earth, *Munkayaara*, which is about 20km from Derby. It was great to get to see an area so few of us have visited.

March saw the first of our regular litter pick-up days. Twelve members congregated early to beat the heat of the day to pick up litter along Toodyay Road next to Morangup Reserve from Morangup Road to Fernie Road. It has been a long tradition of the TNC to conduct the pickup in this location. Each year the stretch of road gets longer. This March the TNC picked up 56 bags of rubbish. An amazing effort but still indicates the need for people to be more considerate when it comes to disposing of their rubbish. Following the pickup a fantastic morning tea was enjoyed at Nats member Sharon's house. Thanks Sharon for offering your place.

The March meeting was also very interesting with a talk given by Toodyay local Greg Warburton. Greg talked about his epic walk from Buckland Homestead in the Shire of Northam to Bungalbin (Helena Aurora Range) north-east of Southern Cross. Greg embarked on this journey to emulate the exploration trip of Toodyay locals in 1861. Giving details of the early history of Toodyay, Greg gave an excellent recap of the Dempster expedition. Interspersed with this information were details of his own trek. From photographs of cold nights, treks along the pipeline, and the final arrival at Bungalbin, Greg provided us with a feeling of being part of this imposing walk. Greg also was raising awareness for the Helena Aurora Range which is threatened by mining. This is a stunning piece of Western Australia that contains many threatened and priority flora that would be a shame to lose to mining.

April was a little different. We conducted a members night. It all started with a bring and share dinner. There was some wonderful food on offer provided by our members. It was a great chance to relax and have a good chat amongst the group.

Following dinner we had a number of members share photos with the group. I shared some photos Sacha and I took on our birding honeymoon around the Northern Territory. Jen shared some of her favourite photos of Toodyay and surrounds as well as of the many trips she has taken throughout the state. Ross showed us photos of his trip to the Broome bird observatory and Don showed us some great shots of animals and birds found on his property in Toodyay. Desraé presented some amazing pictures of her and Wayne's trip to Greenland and Wayne shared photos and video of their trip to Christmas Island. Last but not least Brian showed some footage caught with camera traps on his property. It was fantastic to see Chuditch and possums but a bit frightening to see a very large cat also sniffing around. This was a splendid opportunity to catch up on what other members have been up to as well as to understand what they find interesting.

The next few months are going to be just as exciting. We have some interesting talks and excursions lined up from learning about the geology of the shire, reptiles, eagles and a campout.

Michalíe

Cover photograph: Gould's monitor (Varanus gouldii) about to re-enter his home, within a few metres of the Clarke's front door. Eventually a pair were seen (and photographed) at the burrow.

Photo: Wayne Clarke

TETRATHECA PAYNTERAE RESEARCH



Research Grows in Tough Conditions

It takes a tough little plant to grow out of a rock that gets blistering hot in summer and with very little water.

This hardy little plant is *Tetralthea paynterae* and is the centre of a research program between Cliffs and Kings Park.

Research is being undertaken to see if the rare plant, which has purple flowers and looks like grass, can be successfully grown on rock faces – both natural and artificial, like pit walls.

Kings Park researchers recently visited Windarling to establish seed trials in rock crevices on the main Windarling Ridge and the exposed wall between W1 East and West.

About 4,000 seeds, previously collected from the ridge, were planted.

The trial will look at a number of different treatments for the plants to see the best conditions for growing, including watering for different durations until winter next year.

Monitoring will take place regularly to check germination and survival.

Cliffs Environment Manager Jeremy Shepherdson said the research aims to support the ongoing survival of a species that occupies a very small and specific niche in the ecosystem.



Kings Park research scientists planting seeds on Windarling ridge.

Gratitude is extended to author, Jeremy Shepherdson, Environmental Manager Operations, and Anthony Miller, Senior Community and External Relations Advisor of Cliffs Natural Resources Pty Ltd, Asia Pacific, for permission given to reproduce this article and photograph in the Toodyay Naturalists' Club newsletter. The article is significant in the research that continues on the *Tetralthea paynterae* named for one of the four founding members of the Naturalists' Club, Mrs Ray Paynter.



Left: Mrs Ray Paynter from the Toodyay Naturalists' Club photographing the plant that was named in her honour.

Right: Tetralthea paynterae growing in the harsh climate of the Windarling Range.

Photographs by Wayne Clarke taken in 1994



CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY , 1st March 2015

by Lyn Johnson

WAKING TO a fresh cool morning making an early start of 6.30am to beat the heat, a group of volunteers from the Nat's Club and Friends of the River drove to a meeting place at Morangup Reserve to begin our road verge clean up. The morning was beautiful with clear blue skies and the Marri trees all flowering.

When all warning signs were in place and the group had signed in, we then collected our high visibility vests, rubbish bags, gloves and then moved to different areas in pairs.

While collecting rubbish we had some motorists give us a friendly wave and had slowed down while others just went flying by. We collected **56** bags, which included many bottles, an old blue tarpaulin partly covered with gravel, a huge wool bale with 'unknown' in it, truck tyres and the usual food packaging and paper. Also found was an emblem in good condition from a Harley Davidson bike.

Although everything was very dry and dusty, when you walked off the road verge to behind the scrub it was so peaceful, seeing green grasstrees and dried plants that will flower after the rain.

Talking of rain, the group had no sooner signed off and were just putting things away when the thunder came rolling in from very black clouds. While all chatting, before we left, some of the group was delighted to hear the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo fly over, the best news of the day.

The work done, most of us retired to a member's home for morning tea, which was most refreshing. While there from a high outlook we watched big black clouds move in while having our cuppa amongst two Great Danes, Gypsy and Nelson.

A most productive morning, enjoyed by all.



Above: Hard at work

Photo: Wayne Clarke



Above: The workers at the 'weigh-in'

Photo: Lance Bennett

MORANGUP NATURE RESERVE DEVASTATED BY ARSON

by Wayne Clarke

ON THURSDAY 26th March 2015, the eastern end of the Morangup Nature Reserve was severely damaged by a hot fire. This included the historic Beelaring Spring, gazetted on 7 March 1882, from which horse and bullock teams were watered on their way to the Yilgarn goldfields.

The area is well known to some of the older members of the club, who in the early 1980s successfully campaigned to have the area saved from development; it was then created as an 'A Class Nature Reserve'.

The club also assisted CALM (now DPaW) with a biological survey of the reserve, predominantly in the area where the fire was, from the spring of 1992 to the spring of 1993.

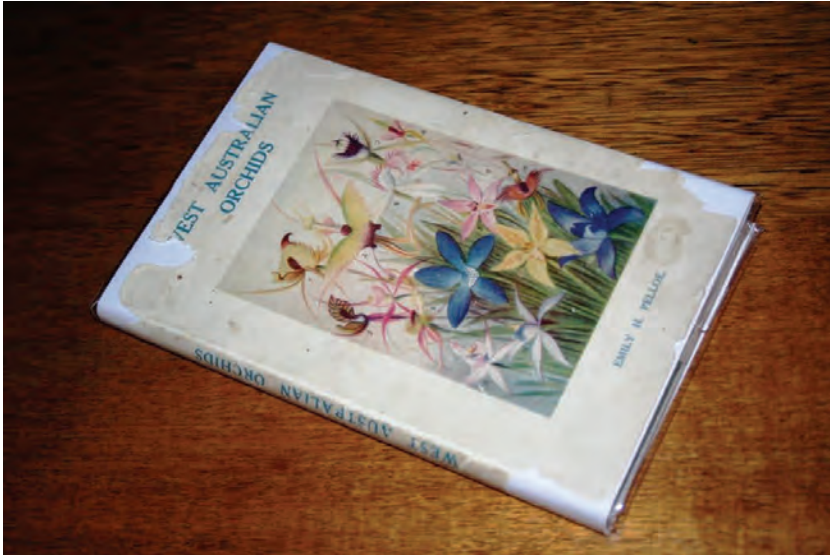
During the next few months, contact with DPaW to repeat that survey, possibly next year when some of the habitat has returned, would be prudent. Having been a member of that original survey team it would be a great opportunity to provide newer members of the club the experience of undertaking biological surveys.

WEST AUSTRALIAN ORCHIDS

by Emily Pelloe

IN FEBRUARY of this year a gift of the 1930 publication, 'West Australian Orchids' by Emily Pelloe was given to the Club by member, Dr Brian Shepherd, who now resides in Tasmania.

Emily Pelloe (1877-1941), wildflower watercolourist, author, naturalist, journalist and equestrienne, was born in Melbourne and came to Western Australia with her parents in 1901. She returned to the eastern states with her banker husband the following year to return to Perth in 1916 where she began to study botany.



In 1921 and in collaboration with mentor and State Government Botanist, Charles Gardner, 'Wildflowers of Western Australia' was published and in 1930 she published 'West Australian Orchids'.

Emily was a very early member of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club (established 1924) and was a strong advocate 'of live and let live' opposing the wholesale picking of orchids but more the study of the different characteristics of species.

Her delightful little book, comprising of 77 pages of data and interspersed with exquisite watercolour plates and pen sketches of plants, was written for amateur botanists.

It will be noted there are some plant names changed. Also, that a *capital* letter is used at the commencement of a second part of the name of a plant if named after a person, e.g. *Caladenia Patersonii*; it would now be written as *Caladenia patersonii*.

In 1942 Emily's husband, Theodore Pelloe, gave 400 of her watercolours to the University of Western Australia with the paintings now held in St Catherine's College, the State Library of Western Australia and the Botany Department of the University of Western Australia.

This delightful small book is a pleasure to read and I know the Club members are extremely grateful for the kind donation from Brian.

Desraé Clarke

Toodyay Naturalists' Club Mugs & Logos



THE Toodyay Naturalists' Club have beautiful high quality stoneware mugs for sale which have been made by the Sandalwood Company, Hope Valley, Western Australia.

The Sandalwood Company is a family concern and has been in operation for many years. As can be seen the mugs have the Naturalists' Club emblem of the Chuditch and are beautifully boxed in gift packaging. The mugs are priced at \$10.00 each and are held by Treasurer, Beth Frayne.

The Club also has logos that may be sewn on a top or attached with Velcro at \$10 each, available from the Secretary

'An angel was watching over this little possum'

by Robyn Taylor

THERE MUST have been a guiding spirit that interfered with my task of photographing flats in the Crawley area near the University of WA. I had a list of specific buildings to research and somehow missed a block of flats in Cook Street. That was in January. On a return trip in February for an evening meeting, I had to stay overnight with friends. So the following morning I went to look for the flats before returning home to Toodyay.

I had to drive along Fairway to get to Cook Street, and in the process I negotiated a round-about at Caporn Street. A block of flats down that street caught my eye, so I decided to check them out. I took a photo, and on a whim walked down to look at the back of the property. On the way I heard a rustling sound amongst the dead leaves in the native garden. Probably a wattle-bird, I thought, feeding on the flowering grevilleas or a bobtail after snails. I will have a look on my way back.

The rustling was still going on. Surprisingly it didn't go still and quiet when I searched through the leaves. And there it was, a strange little creature, totally hairless and so young its eyes hadn't opened. It had ragged ears. I had never seen such a thing before. So I scooped it up in my hands and then a long thin tail tried to wind itself around my finger. A baby possum! I was thrilled to find it, and alarmed at the large number of ants attacking its tiny body.

I sat on a low brick wall and with the wriggling possum in my lap I started to pick off the ants. No



wonder he was stressed and struggling amongst the leaves. His cool body responded to the warmth of my hands and soon he was trying to climb inside my blouse. The sunlight must have worried him. Now what should I do!

I knew there was a veterinary clinic only five minutes away on Stirling Highway, and I needed to put him into something safe and secure, but what? Its occasions like this when a Bendigo Bank insulated lunch bag with a zippered top proves handy. So out went the biscuits and water bottle. But he also needed to be placed on something soft. My pyjamas made a perfect nest. He curled up happily, ant free, while I tackled

the ants inside my blouse, all the time hoping I didn't make skin contact with those grevilleas. On the way to the vets he started to make small 'chittering' noises. He wanted his mum...

Possum was soon safe and warm on a heated mat, and a call made to Native Animal Rescue. After a fortnight I rang NAR and heard the good news that he was with a carer and doing well.

There had to be an angel looking after that baby ring-tailed possum. So many chance events led to his timely discovery. And now when I go to Perth I will make sure I have that BB lunch bag and a soft towel - just in case.

Reintroduction of the Western Quoll to the Flinders Ranges National Park South Australia

BACKGROUND

DURING APRIL AND MAY 2014, forty-one (21 females and 20 males) Idnya (Western Quoll) were released into the Flinders Ranges National Park after an absence of more than 150 years. The release heralded the start of a partnership between the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered species (FAME), the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) and the Western Australian Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW).

Following the successful 'denning' of females between June and August 2014 juvenile Idnya were observed and recorded on den site cameras exploring outside the burrows and tree hollows used as den sites by the females.

The team were ecstatic to capture ten new sub-adult Idnya and 12 original release animals with all the adult females having large post-lactating teats suggesting successfully raised young. All radio collars were removed from the adult Idnya and monitoring is now by remote cameras and cage trapping.

11 of the known 12 surviving females were recorded with pouch young between June and October and a comprehensive trapping program occurred during December 2014 to determine whether any new Idnya had successfully survived to weaning. Radio tracking data indicates that 13 of the 41 released animals that have been lost, 11 have been taken by cat predation.

The sub-adult Idnya were fitted with radio collars to monitor them over the summer months.

The team had an exciting week which included the sighting of a rare python, capturing an un-collared original release female, two film crews arrived to film the trapping and the capture of a large male cat in the area of young Idnya.

The seven orphaned Idnya taken to the South Australian Zoo for hand rearing and mentioned in the December TNC Newsletter have been re-released back into the wild. They were fitted with 'drop-off' collars and are reported to be doing well.

This is a 'trial' release and all information obtained will be used to guide future reintroductions.

[Permission given to use the notes taken from the Report by Ecological Horizons Pty. Ltd
Katherine Moseby, Ecological Horizons.]

If you would like to follow this exciting project and to receive these regular e-updates please email SAAridlands@sa.gov.au with the subject - 'Quoll update' and you will be added to or contact the Natural Resources Centre in Port Augusta 08 8648 5300

Data from the fourth e-Newsletter Katherine Moseby, Ecological Horizens



Left: Measuring the head length of a new sub-adult Idnya for age.

Photo by permission of Katherine Moseby

Donate now!

The other partner in this project is the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered species (FAME) is leading the drive to raise approximately \$1.7 million over a five-year period to fund the recovery of the Western Quoll (Idnya). They greatly need your help to continue this vitally important project and make it the success it deserves to be. Donations to the Western Quoll project can be made by visiting fame.org.au/projects/western-quoll or contacting fame@fame.org.au

For more information, contact:

Mary Rayner, (Director of Business) on
0414 634 094

TIDY TOWNS NATIONAL TITLES, SHEFFIELD TASMANIA 2015 by Hanna Morrison

Dear Keep Australia Beautiful and Tidy Towns Committee,

Thankyou for supporting me with the opportunity to go to the National Tidy Town Awards. I thought this was a great experience and traveling to Sheffield was wonderful. It was brilliant hearing about other towns from different states and learning about how they make a difference to their environment. I heard about a small town called Titjikala from the Northern Territory with a population of around 300 people. I especially liked when they talked about how the children in the community would re-use rubbish as entertainment and then dispose of the rubbish after.

I really enjoyed being there in Sheffield with other towns but especially my town, I'm very proud of what we've accomplished as a community. We've had people help gather litter, including our school and many groups with both younger and older people working together. It also made me appreciate how lucky we are to live in Toodyay, with our river track, bird hide, tip shop, and also activities like the Youth holiday program and the Christmas street party.

It was great to be there with a bunch of people that are just as passionate about Keeping Australia Beautiful, so I'd also like to thank them. It was nice to have other youth members there, with 4 others attending some older teenagers and Jasie from Cooktown who was 10. Jasie won a competition run by the school to see who could collect the most bottles, She collected 5000, also the school donated a prize of an iPad to the winner.

TIDY TOWNS NATIONAL TITLES

(continued)

I really loved visiting Tazmazia, I found it very exciting seeing Lower Crackpot with it's statues, my favourite and highlight would have been standing near the Eiffel Tower Statue. The mazes were outstanding and were hard to find our way out of, but in the end we did. Each turn in the maze had a different saying or joke and there were eight different mazes with different themes and buildings in each one.

Sheffield had lots of Murals that were creative and such beautiful art, I remember Mum and I reading about all the murals each one had an inspirational story. My favourite story was about a mural called stillness and warmth. It has the man who was responsible for Cradle Mountain being declared a National Park in the painting and the theme has come from his diary. When the ground is covered in snow, he would build a big fire, open the door, and sit very, very quietly in front of the blazing logs and one by one, the wild animals, without their usual fear of him or of one another, would come and share the warmth.

The award night was brilliant I especially took great pride representing my town and going up as they announced the winner. US! I was also very happy for the other towns, seeing them get up for certain awards just reminds me that there is still things we can improve on.

After we left Sheffield the main highlight would have been Cataract Gorge at Launceston. It was an amazing view and so green, Mum and I went on a chain lift around the gorge. I videoed it and Mum was so scared I was going to drop my iPad. Luckily I didn't drop my iPad

Typo

TIDY TOWNS NATIONAL TITLES (continued)

because I caught so many great time and I'll love to look back at these wonderful memories.

So I'd just like to say thank you again it was such a great opportunity and I had a wonderful time.

Gratefully,
Hannah Morrison

Eucalyptus recta by Lyn Phillips

APPROXIMATELY 100 trees of *Eucalyptus recta*, also known as the Mt Yule Silver Mallet, have been counted on the property of Lyn and Ian Phillip's, thirty five kilometres north of Dowerin, by Bree Phillips, Rare Flora Officer with Northam Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW). Specimens had been collected in 2010 for the State Herbarium but were lost in transit to the new building.

There has been considerable death of these handsome giant trees in previous years from age, dry rot or destroyed by phellinus sp. fungi; when the fungus was collected for identification slug-like creatures were found beneath it.

Malcolm French's *Eucalyptus* publication does not include our population, although he states that "a survey of the Cadoux area revealed *Eucalyptus recta* is more common in the area than previously known" – page 180.

Eighty seven year old Father-in-law, Don Phillips, remembers farmers of the district using the saplings of *Eucalyptus recta* for horse yards as they were strong and straight (recta - Latin for straight). Don also remembers his father cutting the saplings for the 'high jump' pole when the Moonijin School was open 1934-43.

They are majestic trees and I always feel like I am in a cathedral, or some place quite spiritual, when I stand among them.

DID YOU KNOW...

... THAT THE NEXT Australian Naturalists Get-Together will be held in Western Australia, hosted by the Western Australian Naturalists Club. It will be from 10th to 17th September 2016. Preliminary planning is underway, and a trip to Toodyay to look at wandoo and northern jarrah. We have asked if we can assist to arrange lunch. There will be pre and post tours to various places of interest, and maybe one or two special guided tours.

Put those dates in your diary - the WA Nats Club will keep us informed of progress. The last time the Get-Together was held in WA was 2004, when the Darling Range Branch hosted it. This is our opportunity to show -case Drummond Territory!

PHOTOGRAPHER'S PAGE



Top left: Although not in good shape, this Chuditch was found in Sandplain Road! This is a first, considering they were released in Julimar in 1992.

Photo: John Hanson

Above: A carpet python in a fern pot was photographed by Jim Bush

Left: This Grey Shrike-Thrush was photographed by Sandy McKay in her garden.

Below: A Southern Half-girdled snake was captured on film by Sharon Richards.



ENVIRONMENT MATTERS



*Left: Young Legends, Josie (Queensland) and Hannah (WA) beneath Mt Roland, Tasmania
Photo: Beth Frayne*

TOODYAY TIDY TOWNS by Beth Frayne

YOUNG LEGEND Hannah Morrison's letter will tell you about our marvelous wins - **four!** at the National Tidy Towns Awards in Sheffield, Tasmania on 26-27 February. So, what are we doing now? Still catching our breath and amazed at our good fortune!

While we were swanning around Sheffield, Toodyay TT'ers were working on the 'Clean Up Australia Day' (CUAD). For the first time in my memory, Toodyay registered for all three CUAD events this year: Community, School and Business. Supporter, Toodyay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was Site Supervisor for Stirling Terrace on Business CUAD, February 24, with help from Sommerville Gallery and our Community Bank. Bev Ellis had the Toodyay District high School (TDHS) students out in force on School CUAD, February 27, and the Toodyay Nats' and Friends of the River did a massive clean up on Toodyay Road, Morangup, March 1. Well done, all!

Arriving home from Tasmania, the TTTC has had three meetings, discussing what to do next as regards cleaning up our local environment, planning a 'Thank our Supporters Celebration' and what we can do to help Toodyay host the National Awards early next year.

So first up, please put in your diary: **Toodyay Tidy Towns Community Celebration**, Saturday, 9 May, 12 noon to 3pm, Memorial Hall Foyer, with speeches, certificates and story presentations at 12.30pm. And cake after!

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