



Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.

# THE TNC NEWSLETTER

ISSN 2207-8479

Number 27 December 2018



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*The Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.  
is grateful to the Wheatbelt NRM  
for their support in producing  
the TNC Newsletters*



**wheatbelt**  
natural resource  
management

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thank you, Brian, for leading the Club over the past three years and to the support and assistance from your lovely wife, Robyn.

The excursion to the Stirling Range Retreat was voted a great weekend with some lovely surprises that Charmian and Andrew have covered in their article. Having the company of Professor Stephen Hopper and his wife, Chris, who drove from Albany to be with us, was an added bonus and thoroughly enjoyed.

**2018, the Nat's 50th year, is concluding on a high note.**

Member, Georgina, has won yet another prestigious award on the world stage of nature photography! Read what the West Australian Newspaper reporter, Tim Clarke, has to say on page 3 of the newsletter.

To Georgina, and also to Chris who is ever at her side as support and bag-carrier, sincere congratulations!!

With the significant year in the history of the club what is its aim? It is that of encouraging education for the respect and love of the environment and all that it envelops!

The celebration at Robyn and Brian's home, the meeting up and interaction of all who attended, the incredible assistance from so many in a myriad of ways, made the celebration one to remember. There would have been many "remember whens" in the conversations, I am sure!

It was wonderful to meet Donna Jefferson (nee North) daughter of the inaugural president of 1968, Albie North. Donna remembers the excitement of being taken on Nat's Club excursions by her Mum and Dad as an 11 year old in those very early years.

Thank you to everyone for the wonderful comments made of the day. A file is to be developed to include comments, photos, etc, and to be at Drummond House.

The book to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> year, *'The guide to exploring Toodyay.....naturally'* was launched at the celebration. The project was a massive undertaking with 'club member ownership' of articles, photos and lots of support.

The book of letters written by James Drummond (1787-1863), Western Australia's first government botanist, to the *'Enquirer'*, the *'Perth Gazette'* and the *'Guardian'* in the 1800's is well on the way to the initial draft stage thanks to Patron and HLM, Dr Neville Marchant. Once again, a significant undertaking that hopefully will be completed in 2019.

Wednesday 5th December saw Brian (Foley) receive an Award from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service with the following citation:

'Thank you for your ongoing commitment and service to conservation'. Brian's award follows that of wife, Robyn, received two years ago. Congratulations to you both on receiving acknowledgement for such dedication to caring for orphaned, sick and injured wildlife.

Thank you to all members for the support given to the Toodyay Nat's Club in so many and varied ways. This support includes the administration of the club, members paying of membership, supplying supper and the financial gain from the supper and raffles, contributions to the newsletter and assistance with manning Drummond House on a Saturday morning, opening of member homes for meetings and to Brian for continuing to write the monthly Herald article. Your joint loyalty maintains the club.

Desraé Clarke

*Front cover: Cutting the Anniversary Cake. Watching on are (left to right): Finn Ruoss, Patron Dr Neville Marchant AO, Rob Boase, Pam Masters and Donna Jefferson.*



Wasps in the mud on a hot summer day at Walyormouring Nature Reserve. Picture: Georgina Steytler

## Busy wasps shot wins world prize

They are the Oscars of wildlife photography — and WA shutter-bug Georgina Steytler's stunning picture of wasps playing in the Goomalling mud has won her one of the coveted gongs in London.

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year awards, run by Britain's Natural History Museum, attract the best natural photographers from across the globe

every year. This year, it drew 45,000 entries from 95 countries.

In the Invertebrates Behaviour category, Ms Steytler became the first Australian woman to win in the 54-year history of the awards.

Taken at Walyormouring Nature Reserve, two hours east of Perth, the shot shows industrious female mud-dauber wasps, turning mud into balls

to create egg chambers for their nests.

"I was actually there to photograph the birds when I noticed the wasps digging out then carrying off little balls of mud. The most amazing behaviour," Ms Steytler said.

"I feel so lucky. Not only to get the shot, but then to get it chosen at all. To win, it's pretty huge."

**Tim Clarke**

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Congratulations are extended to Georgina on this incredible achievement.

# TOODYAY NATURALIST CLUB MEMOIRS: 50 YEARS AGO

*by Donna Jefferson (nee North)*

Whilst reading the article in The Toodyay Herald, 'Naturalists farewell founding member, June 2018' I felt very sad to see the passing of Ray Paynter, a special person who was a truly knowledgeable, professional lady who was strongly devoted to her work in bringing about the preservation of our unique flora. I also felt very proud of my father Albie North who was the first president of the Toodyay Naturalists Club and was one of the founding members. The members of this remarkable little club were a small group of dedicated, hardworking, down to earth, nice people. They had a common goal and were committed to the preservation of local flora and fauna. They complemented each other with their various skills and gave up their valuable time freely and unconditionally. I felt a great sense of pride to have known them all as I was growing up. At age 11, I was the youngest member of the Club and was taken along to each meeting by my parents. Along with my parents, the club's passion and knowledge evoked my love of our bushland and with great respect I hold it very dearly even today.

Looking back, I now realise how very privileged I was to be a part of this group of inspirational adults. The meetings were held in the hall near the Church of England. I remember that some evenings for an 11 year old appeared to drag on and would often finish very late. On many occasions when my dad was about to say, "I now declare this meeting closed", Mr Wally Chitty would stand up and tell us another of his stories. He knew so much about the local history and has since written some very interesting books. He was a very passionate and valued member of the club. After the meetings finished, the chairs were stacked away and everyone stood around chatting whilst enjoying a light supper. I think this was the part I enjoyed the most as I loved special treats and I enjoyed feeling included in the group. I also enjoyed the many varied topics that were discussed at the end of the evening in that little hall.

Invited speakers were always received with open arms. I remember meeting a very nice lady by the name of Rica Ericson, I felt very excited when she gave me a signed book called, Old Toodyay and Newcastle. I still have it today. Occasionally my uncle who was a professional bird photographer would bring his colour slides along to show us (at that time we had a black and white TV). On another evening we watched a nature film which was held at Mr Masters' property which was situated on the way to Northam. We also went on outings to collect seeds or find different plants growing in a certain area. On these days a picnic lunch was enjoyed by everyone.

This club began 50 years ago in very humble circumstances and I am so proud to see it is still very much alive and going strong today. Thank you to all the past and present members who have taken on this very important legacy. I wish you good luck in your future endeavours. Without dedicated people like you to preserve and protect our precious and unique Flora and Fauna I can only imagine a dreadful loss to future generations if it were destroyed and lost forever.

Tourism has become so popular these days and people from all walks of life flock here to see our beautiful wildflowers. This boosts the economy in many small towns throughout the state who would otherwise struggle to survive. More and more people are realising the value of our precious resources and the dream of four local farmers who 56 years ago sat around a kitchen table discussing how they could make a difference in their community.

I've enclosed a speech that my dad wrote in 1970 concerning the opening of The Drummond Memorial which was organised by the Toodyay Naturalist Club.

### **Quote:**

"The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Perth, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Toodyay Naturalist club and Toodyay Shire council to welcome you all here today and to thank all who have helped to make this venture a success.

"I stand here overlooking the town of Toodyay, a part of the famous Avon Valley. It is from here to Midland that the Standard Gauge railway passes through some of the most picturesque scenery in the Commonwealth.

*... cont Page 5*

# TOODYAY NATURALIST CLUB MEMOIRS... cont

(cont. from Page 4)

“A few years ago we were afraid the land adjoining much of this railway would become grazing properties and the scenic environment lost.

“A group of local people got together to try to convince the Shire and Government bodies of the importance to preserve this country in its entirety. That is why the Toodyay Naturalist Club was formed and came into being. I am pleased to say this venture was successful and much of the area involved is now a national park.

“In 1968 it was decided to find some further Project to keep interest among members and the Toodyay Shire council was approached to allow us the use of this water Reserve for the introduction and preservation of Native flora.

“In due course permission was granted by the Public Works Dept. and with the help of the Shire and the interest of their foreman Mr Cedric Ferguson, a number of loads of suitable soil was placed here for us to level and use. This was in June 1969 and the first plants were planted in August of that year. However these were all eaten by sheep grazing in the area.

“At one of our later meetings, Mrs Rica Erickson, the author of the book *The Drummonds of Hawthornden*, addressed the club on the subject of James Drummond, with particular reference to his various journeys; as this world renowned botanist lived for a considerable time in Toodyay and eventually died here. The club felt it was up to the district to do something to commemorate him we then approached the Shire for support to build some suitable memorial possibly at this site. With their approval plans and costs were gone into and a water supply system installed. The Shire by now had agreed to the financing of the building of this memorial and this big rock selected by club members was transported and placed in position by Cedric Ferguson and others of the Shire staff.

“In November 1972 Mr and Mrs Ernest Wittner of Kings Park and Mr Barry Moss, President of the WA Wildflower Society visited the site and offered suggestions regarding the stone wall and future planting. Mr Moss later addressed the club on the planting and maintenance of wildflowers and then a collection of suitable seeds were received by us from the Kings Park authority.

“In December 1972 Mr Dominic Speciale, a Stonemason from Northam, built the wall with local materials delivered by the Shire Council and paved the rock surrounds with Toodyay Stone donated for that purpose by Mr Peter House. The present temporary fence was put up at this time after much of the earlier efforts to plant the garden and arrange a suitable water supply had been damaged by the public, particularly children sliding down the bank.

“We are very fortunate to have amongst our honoured guests today many descendants of the Drummond family. I can assure you we are very happy to have you with us and I trust you will all live many years to remember this day.

“Ladies and Gentleman, the Shire President Mr Murray, would now like to say a few words”.

“We are also very fortunate today to have with us the present owner of Hawthornden. He has lived here with his family for as long as I can remember and now like James Drummond he has risen to fame. I realise the number of engagements you have to fulfil and the little time you have to spare but on behalf of Toodyay I would like to say thank you for doing us the honour of unveiling this Memorial”.

## *Unquote*

(Mr Ernest Lee-Steere - The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Perth and present owner mentioned above)

Hoping this article is of interest to current members and the Toodyay community in general and again I wish you all success in future endeavours.

*Donna*

# AN OASIS NEAR TO YOU????

*by Jennifer Donegan*

Have you ever wanted to travel to an oasis in Western Australia and it's only a day's drive away?

The Murchison Oasis is a caravan park and is located in the only shire in Western Australia with no town and is equipped with lovely grassed areas for caravans, self contained units with or without an ensuite and the food in the shop is really good.

From here you can explore the great museum, wildflower walk, Errabiddy Bluff, Butcher's Track or do nothing.... No mobile reception but there is television reception. You must bring your own drinking water as there is no potable water at the caravan park.

The road was quiet with lovely green crops and a hint of wildflowers blooming between Wubin and Ningham Station where I was to spend my first night. The station homestead was behind the biggest Moreton Bay Fig tree and a creek with red-tailed cockatoos.

The station is surrounded by rocky hills and the tracks were still a little wet but very rocky. We looked at the low lying area north of the homestead with yellow, white and cream everlastings in full bloom. There was a lot of water in the creeks and we were able to watch a wedge-tailed eagle sitting low on its nest. Our afternoon tea stop was spent investigating different looking ant holes and various bird species.

We travelled to the south of the homestead along the side of the hill with lovely views towards Yalgoo. We saw white spider orchids and little snail orchids flowering in different spots. The crested bellbird's song was often heard but the bird was not always seen. The rock formations and colours were amazing.

The next day we travelled through the Karara Rangeland Park. We stopped at the information sign and explored the area. A flock of pied honeyeaters passed through and we saw a breeding black honeyeater. The area was a bit drier through and past Yalgoo.

At our lunch stop we watched a female black honeyeater eating ash at an old fireplace; we searched around the Murchison River Crossing with the water being low. We had a magnificent view of a pair of black-breasted buzzards flying overhead and saw Major Mitchell cockatoos. We arrived at the Murchison settlement just in time to order barramundi, chips and salad!

We looked at the old ruins and had our usual cooked bush breaky on the way to Errabiddy Bluff. The female black honeyeaters were literally swarming to eat the ash from an old fireplace again. The everlastings were still good with sightings of crimson chats and Bourke parrots. The Eremophilas were in full bloom and therefore the black and pied honeyeaters were abundant. There is also a section of road which has been cornered off where there are Dawson's Burrowing Bees.

It's a great place to visit as there are lots of claypans to explore, creeks, rock formations and a wildflower walk; at the settlement is a fantastic museum with great displays. It's a wonderful place to visit and we saw 75 different bird species on this trip.



Left: A female black honeyeater.  
Photo: Jennifer Donegan

# YELLOW DAY ON THE FARM

*by Ivana from Serbia*

On a yellow day of a yellow month  
I stayed on the farm for its quiet charm.  
In the yellow field lying on the ground  
with the yellow flowers on my face and hair  
I listened to the distant bird's sound  
with one eye open to the blue sky's glare.

A red robin's dancing in the sky  
and a second later there was a butterfly,  
a heart from the flowers hidden in the grass  
for all the yellow moments I wish they can last.

Going to the farm for a yellow tea  
with a yellow jam on this yellow day  
the bright yellow glow brought warmth  
to our hearts and many smiles to stay.

We found a yellow orchid under a yellow sun  
its petals fully open, the life has just begun,  
walking and laughing we painted the day  
in each and every moment of nature festive play.

I am still thinking about the yellow day and the  
yellow moments of a quiet farm stay.  
And when I close my eyes I see the yellow glare  
and the yellow field ... I am still lying there.

Ivana, originally from Serbia and now an Australian resident, loves to visit Nat's members, Lyn and Ian's, Dowerin farming property.

She is a keen photographer and poet and makes an annual pilgrimage to the Reynoldson's Reserve for the Wongan Verticordia Festival

# THE BOOK LAUNCH



Above: Pam Masters, Donna Jefferson and Robert Boase accepting the club's new book from Patron, Dr Neville Marchant AO. Below: Neville, Pam, Donna and Robert pose with the book.





# CELEBRATION PHOTOGRAPHS



Above and right: Candid photographs taken during the Golden Anniversary Celebrations at Brian and Robyn Foley's home. Lots of memories were exchanged on the day, complimenting the wonderful feast provided by members, and the club. The excitement of the book launch topped it all off.

# MORE CELEBRATION PHOTOGRAPHS



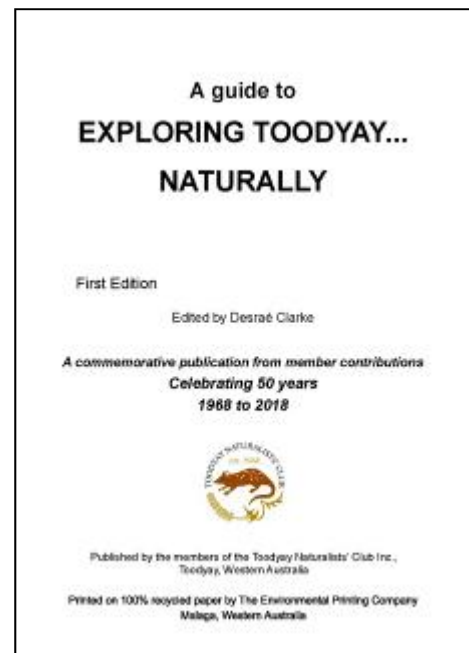
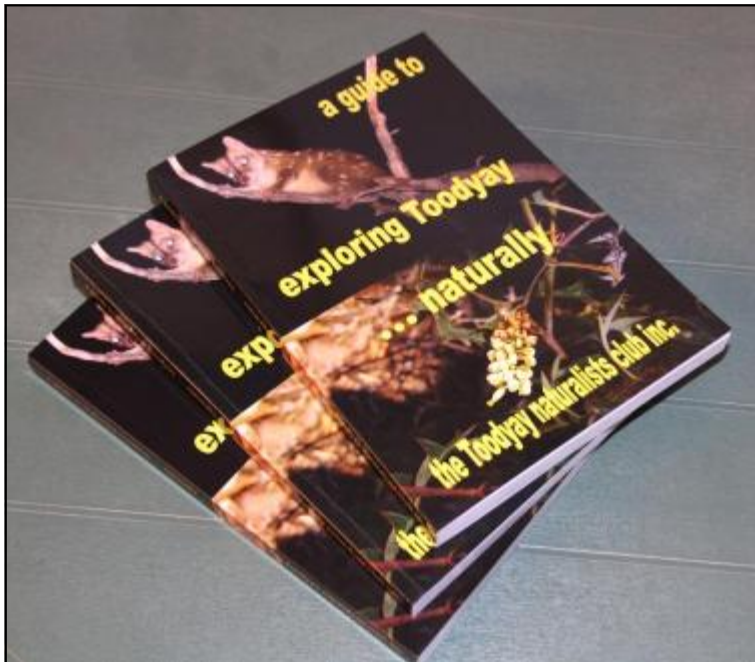
# A GUIDE TO EXPLORING TOODYAY... NATURALLY

The Toodyay Naturalists' Club's Golden Anniversary celebrated a new publication, 'A guide to exploring Toodyay... naturally,' launched by Patron Dr Neville Marchant AM, representing our three Patron's. Unfortunately, John Dell PSM and Dr Stephen Davies were unable to be present because of illness. This book has been dedicated to the Ballardong people of the area.

The project has been a culmination of four years work and contains articles and photographs contributed by twenty-six club members. With a Foreword by Inaugural and Honorary Life Member Pam Masters, it contains over 175 pages; has a comprehensive index; over 160 member colour photographs; the history, flora and fauna of Toodyay's nature reserves; fire regimes; Noongar word names; first aid for wildlife; reptile relocation; significant flora roads; and much, much more.

Priced at \$15 for members and \$27 for non-members, plus P&P, it is for those who have an appreciation of our local wildlife and environment. There were 200 copies printed of this 'First Edition' and they are selling fast. I have a feeling there will be a re-print as the book becomes more widely known.

It is for sale only through the club with payment made by cash or direct debit. For further details email [info@toodyaynats.org.au](mailto:info@toodyaynats.org.au) or phone 9574 5574.



ISBN 978 0 9595569 0 2 (pbk.)

## DID YOU KNOW...

... that the 'Guide to exploring Toodyay... naturally' is available to members for **\$15** or non-members for **\$27**.

That means - for an extra \$3, a non-member can become a member, and buy the book! [limited to one book per member at the reduced price].

At \$27 the book is a bargain, and a great gift for birthdays, Christmas or just to have in your collection.

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Did you also know that in 2019 the club will be publishing another book - on the letters of Toodyay's James Drummond to Perth newspapers between 1834 and 1848. Edited by Patron Dr Neville Marchant AO, the book will be full of footnotes and 'Information Boxes' providing a fascinating history on this remarkable man from Toodyay.

# A RESCUE OPERATION



Georgina and Chris found this carpet python at Balladonia. They caught it and then had their vet check it over; it had been hit by a car on its jaw. It had surgery, then after-care for two weeks, including a week's daily antibiotic injections by Amy Griffiths. It was then released in the Julimar Conservation Forest.

Not to miss an opportunity, the camera was there to record it all. It is these chance shots that win her the prizes (see Page 3)

You need to go low for the perfect shot, as Georgina demonstrates.



What a lucky python to be rescued by Toodyay Naturalists' Club members, and then to be re-homed in the Julimar.

# DOUG'S MAGPIE EXPERIENCES



Above: A local magpie comes in to get its daily morsel or two



An aggressive Willie wagtail is not happy about sharing (both photos by Doug Blandford).

# PHOTOGRAPHERS PAGES



Above: A honey possum feeding on grevillea Photo: Lyn Johnson

Below: *Leschenaultia formosa* Photo: Charmian St John

Both photos in the Stirling Range excursion, September 2018



# PHOTOGRAPHERS PAGES



Above: Salt lake in Dowerin

Photo: Lyn Phillips



Above: A *Varanus tristis* found in a cupboard under a laundry sink.

Photo: Lee Francis

# ENVIRONMENT MATTERS



Toodyay Nats Club President Desraé Clarke and Shire President Brian Raynor after the presentation to the Shire of the club's new book - 'A guide to exploring Toodyay... naturally'. The book is helping to increase awareness of how much the ENVIRONMENT MATTERS.

## MAJOR SPONSORS



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**(next to the Bendigo Bank ATM).      Opening hours: Saturday 10am - 12 midday**

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