

## **TOODYAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2024**

PO Box 32, Toodyay WA 6566

Email: [secretary.2j.ths@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.2j.ths@gmail.com)

### **For HistWest (RWAHS), 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024**

#### **1. Engagement with members:**

Meetings still held monthly (Feb.-Nov.) in the Anglican Hall to allow safe distancing. The August 2023 AGM featured guest speaker and President Beth Frayne, who presented historical vignettes entitled 'Bogged up in Bolgart'. We acknowledged the service (2012-2023) of past Hon. Patron Len Leeder and welcomed our new Hon. Patron, local Dr. Robyn Taylor. Our Rules of Association were updated. In May, we commenced planning for a History Forum to be held after our August 2024 AGM, entitled: 'How lucky is Toodyay! An exploration into Rica Erickson's outstanding contribution to Toodyay's history and heritage,' to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the publication in Nov. 1974 of Rica's book 'Old Toodyay and Newcastle'.

**Monthly meeting feature speakers** (all members and all audio recorded): SaferToodyay Inc., known as Rural Watch; changes in home crafts during a lifetime; State History Conference, Bridgetown; heartfelt account of life in Victoria, England and WA, working in banking/local museums; art historian's youth led to work in art and architectural history; real slides of Toodyay in the 1970s/early 1980s; life in Shenton Park, travelling around the state's aerodromes due to husband's work, convict research, public service, nature studies in Julimar and further afield; life in South Australia and WA, working in farming, banking, monumental masonry; Toodyay Friends of the River 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Storyboard photo presentation, 1994-2024.

**Monthly Show and Tell sessions** (also recorded and photographed): early 19<sup>th</sup> century gadget (mould pliers) for making lead shot for muskets; silver cutlery presented to a grandfather by an hockey club and a 1962 hockey team photo; facsimile of a \$25 Bank of Canada note depicting a rare example of a double portrait of King George V and Queen Mary; three publications based on advances in scientific and historical research about pre-colonial Aboriginal Australia; early domestic flour sifter and chocolate sauce pot; Avon Descent's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary & Food Festival photo display; treasured childhood toys; charcoal clothes iron; Universal Three Minute Bread Maker (1900); important advice on looking after the man in our lives, from a 1950s Home Economics book; two books from a boy's childhood; wooden box with a screen top and dowel base, purpose unknown; recent 70<sup>th</sup> birthday books; paperwork related to the purchase of land in the Majestic Heights subdivision, Toodyay.

**Monthly members' excursions and activities:** Digitisation Centre of Western Australia (UWA Campus, Crawley) and RWAHS headquarters (Nedlands); Uniting Church Archives (Perth); St John the Baptist Church (1963), Toodyay; member's Gidgegannup property 'Glenorchy' with replica pioneer cottage and antiques; Syred's Cottage Open Day and Picnic, Bejoording; End of year Sundowner at Donegan's Cottage; Programme Planning Meeting, St Stephen's Anglican Church Hall; lunch at the Rec Hotel (former Duke's Inn), Northam; Old Courthouse Law Museum (oldest building (1837) in Perth City), Stirling Gardens, Perth; morning tea at Donegan's Cottage with Feature Speaker retired farmer Colin Kendall; Toodyay Friends of the River 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Walk and BBQ, Donegan's Cottage; visit to York Society's archives and Sandalwood Yards precinct; and various busy bees at Donegan's Cottage (our Research Centre).

**Newsletter *Duidgeana*:** three issues published, and included feature articles: *50th Anniversary of the Avon Descent, and the International Food Festival in Toodyay*, by Beth Frayne, edited by Dr. Robyn Taylor; *If bricks could tell their stories! Makit [business premises, 119 Stirling Tce] meanders and memories*, by Beth Frayne; Book review by Committee member Adam O'Neill: *'The silk merchant's son'*, by Peter Burke. North Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Press, 2023.

#### **2. Engagement with the local and wider community:**

Visit of the WA Collections of Faith Traditions Special Interest Group (Australian Society of Archivists) to Donegan's Cottage; tour of the heritage sites managed by the Narembreen History Centre; Brennan family visit to Donegan's Cottage.

**Donegan's Cottage Research Centre** open to the public by appointment. Archival activity is still underway with accessioning and display preparation. Latest projects: compiling a list of 106 folk known to be buried or commemorated at the Nardie General Cemetery (gazetted 1856) off the Northam-Toodyay Road; researching the Mary Kennedy (then Murphy) notebook and family.

**Shared street-front premises** 'Drummond House – Toodyay Environment and History Centre' opened 2hrs a week, for book sales and enquiries; a new portable A-Frame signboard was designed and made.

**Information stalls at public events:** Annual raffle; Moondyne Festival (39th), Toodyay; Toodyay Agricultural Show Day.

**Representatives on these committees:** Drummond House Management Committee; Toodyay Shire Museum (now the Heritage) Advisory Committee; Julimar Conservation and Forest Alliance.

**Activities with the wider community:** Monthly columns and articles in *Toodyay Herald* newspaper; attended the State History Conference, Bridgetown and the State Heritage & History Conference, Northbridge; contributed first article in May to Affiliates Newsletter.

#### **3. Research activities, enquiries and other research, Publications, leaflets, books, websites etc. Collection development and management, Curation, Oral History and other areas, achievements and training etc.:**

**THS website:** <https://toodyayhistoricalsociety.org.au/> – the upgraded website (launched in Aug. 2021) continues to attract Subscribers, enquiries and Bookshop sales. **Research Team** now numbers 11 members. *Duidgeana* newsletters were shared with local Avon organisations. New project: Toodyay Herald Photo Indexing Project, to index TH print only issues, 1984-2008.

**Joint project with the Shire of Toodyay Museums** is ongoing: Toodyay Convict Database.

Enquiries answered from local, interstate and overseas locations, some involving extensive research and also requests from local businesses and the Shire, keeping the Research Team very busy. Heritage advice is provided to the Shire of Toodyay. Assisted with research for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Toodyay Sub-Centre of the St. John's Ambulance.

**Publications:** Toodyay research articles are posted Free to View and download on the website: eg THS significant achievements, 1980-2023.