



Toodyay Naturalists' Club Inc.
THE TNC NEWSLETTER
Number 11 August 2013



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

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wheatbelt
 natural resource
 management

President's Report

In early May the Club received a certificate to recognise the great work the members do, on an annual basis, of litter collection. The Bendigo Bank has an Adopt-a Spot initiative which recognises a program that the Nat's Club took up several years ago on both sides of the road at Morangup Reserve from Black Swamp Road to Fernie Road, a distance of 3.6kms.

Those who attended the May General Meeting enjoyed an excellent presentation on Feral Focus Part 2 – Weeds. Rachael Major, Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management (NRM) Project Officer of Weeds of National Significance from the Northam office, and Jacquie Lucas, Nat's member, botanist and also a member of the Northam office staff, gave a joint presentation which was thoroughly enjoyed by all present.

On Saturday morning of May 25 the Shire interacted with the local veterinary staff to organise an education on the Cat Act Law and to provide discounted micro-chipping and sterilisation for animals whose owners were eligible. The result was an excellent turnout from the community. The Nat's Club supported the programme and had a presence on the day.

The long weekend in June saw members and friends enjoy a wonderful excursion to Dryandra Woodlands and the Barna Mia Wildlife Eco-sanctuary. It was also a time of interacting with members of the Central South Naturalists' Club, based in Narrogin, reciprocating their visit to Toodyay several years ago.

Nat's members were saddened to learn of the passing of Honorary Life Member, Mr Fred Boase of Goomalling, on June 9. Four members attended the funeral June 15 and were honoured to hear the Toodyay Naturalists' Club, and Fred's love of natural history, mentioned by three speakers during the service.

The major 'litter collection,' along the Toodyay/Perth Road, was conducted from 2pm till 4pm on Saturday June 15. This was followed by a 'bring and share' tea prior to a Club Member's evening and a short General Meeting. It was exciting to acknowledge two young Club members, Michalie Foley and Sacha Ruoss, in gaining their PhDs in their chosen fields of natural history.

Acquittal of the funding grant signified the completion of the building of the beautiful Bird Hide along the Bilya Walk Track (the latter, a project of the Toodyay Friends of the River) on the Avon River at the Red Bank Pool! Gratitude is extended to the Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management for the funding of both the design and the bird hide building. Gratitude is also extended to the builder, Michael Shepherd, for his extraordinary feat in the completion of the hide within such a tight time schedule which, unfortunately, was out of the control of both the Club and Michael. The Club is also extremely grateful for the support and guidance from the Toodyay Shire.

The opening of the Bird Hide and the Bilya Walk Track was held on Saturday 10 August highlighting the completion of two extremely exciting projects by two community groups. Guests on the day included several Honorary Life Members including Mrs Ray Paynter, one of the four founding members of the Club.

The August meeting was held as guests of Clare and Ron Dadd of Jennacubbine. Ron, with his 'picker's licence', searches out Eremophilas from far afield resulting in approximately two hundred and fifty, plus, species. The range and variety of these exquisite plants is amazing. They are primarily an arid-loving plant and do not appreciate too much water - a truly 'water-wise' plant species!

A Nat's Club monthly article continues in the 'Environmental Matters' section of the local community paper, the Toodyay Herald, together with the four monthly newsletter which will be ready for distribution at the end of August. Both are full of interesting activities of Club members.

Desraé Clarke

Front cover photograph: John Masters admiring the new signage in the 'John Masters Bird Hide', during the opening of the hide and the Bilya Walk Track., on 10th August 2013.

DRYANDRA VISIT 1 - 3 June 2013

by Brian Shepherd

It was a big welcome to winter when Toodyay Nats Club members ventured south to the Dryandra Woodlands for a weekend of adventurous discovery in association with the Central South Naturalists Club from the Narrogin area. Despite never spotting the sun and having to rug-up daytime as well as at night, the warm welcome we received from the local group and the heart-warming conservation initiatives being taken in the area, together with Robyn Taylor's mulled red wine, ensured that all present felt very warm on the inside even if the outer extremities remained a bit chilly.

Arriving at the Lions Village, located in the middle of the 28,000 hectare Dryandra Reserve on Saturday, we were greeted by the sight of grey kangaroos grazing peacefully on the cleared oval close to the cottages. After settling in we began our discoveries by following one of the many walk-trails designed to accommodate varying levels of fitness and the length of time walkers have available. We chose the modest Blue Wren Trail as the day was drawing to a close. Cooking for eight in a small kitchen that evening with everyone catering for themselves made for some chaotic close encounters, but also encouraged conviviality so that by the end of the weekend we had all learned some new skills in communal living!



Above: The Lions Village accommodation.

Photo: Desraé Clarke



Above: Joining in with the Central South Naturalists Club

Photo: Desraé Clarke

Our numbers swelled on Sunday morning with the arrival of members of the Central South Naturalists Club led by President Fran Alcock. The day was one of varied experiences as we travelled in convoy throughout the Dryandra Forest stopping frequently to explore biodiversity hot-spots and to benefit from the specialist knowledge of the Central South Naturalists Club members. We were able to learn something of the conservation measures in which their members have been engaged, including planting the endangered *Darwinia carnea*, propagated from seeds raised in the Kings Park herbarium, in a specially fenced area under a dense canopy of *Dryandra banksia*.



Left: *Drosera ramellosa*

Photo by Sacha Ruoss

Right: *Eriochilus dilatatus* subsp. *multiflorus* (Bunny Orchid)

Photo by Michalie Foley



DRYANDRA VISIT June 2013 (cont)

by Brian Shepherd

The Dryandra Woodlands are very impressive in their extent, beauty and diversity. They are not comprised of a single block of land but exist as several titles and are interspersed with agricultural land. A major on-going project is to acquire corridors from farm holdings so as to more easily link all parts of the reserve allowing wildlife to range over the whole and thus ensure their on-going survival. Stands of Wandoo, Powder-bark Wandoo, Marri and Mallet are prolific. Other highlights of the day included visiting former sites of tree-top fire look-outs, learning of the uses to which Mallet trees had been put in tanning leather and their being manufactured into handles for axes and other tools. Mallet trees were planted in a plantation in the Dryandra forest during the 1930s Depression as part of a program to give work to the long-term unemployed. We all enjoyed a picnic lunch in a woodland grove.



Left: Powder Bark Wandoo woodland

Right: Banksia nobulis

Photos by Sacha Ruoss and Michalie Foley



Perhaps the major highlight of the whole weekend was our visit on Sunday night to *Banda Mia*, a wildlife sanctuary in the heart of the forest. Built in 2001, with funds from the Regional Tourism Development Fund and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), it is part of the Western Shield fauna recovery program. It consists of a fenced enclosure within the forest and an impressive interpretation and education centre designed to represent a burrow. This was constructed by a local builder and has an magnificent stained glass entrance depicting local fauna and flora, also created by a local artist.



*Above: Bilby under a Mia (hutch).
[the digital camera has been used to pick it up with the infra-red torch]*

*Above right: Woylies making short work of the food
Right: The entrance to Barna Mia, viewed in the winter dusk.*



DRYANDRA VISIT June 2013 (cont)

by Brian Shepherd

We were given a short power-point introduction by our excellent guide, Lynette Carroll, before being taken via pathways through the bush to four different stations where we sat silently on logs waiting, with illumination provided by animal-friendly red lights, for the stars of the show to appear. These are the endangered species being protected and bred for eventual release into the Dryandra Reserve with the ultimate aim of re-establishing them into what was their natural habitat prior to widespread clearing for agriculture and the introduction of predatory animals. The five threatened species able to be observed at *Banda Mia* are: the dalgyte or bilby, wurrup or rufus hare-wallaby, marl or western barred bandicoot, boodie or burrowing beetong and the neenine or banded hare-wallaby. Many of us thought the arrival of these animals into the illuminated circle resembled actors coming on stage and they certainly held their audience in rapt and admiring attention. Despite sitting still outside in the increasingly cold evening, we were all sorry when the visit came to an end.



Left: Afternoon tea with the Narrogin Nats Photo by Desraé Clarke

Right: All dressed for the cold, and feeding up. - Wayne, Brian, Michael and Don Photo by Eva Smith



On Monday morning, after the usual competition for space while preparing our various breakfasts, there was a rapid clean-up of the cottage and loading of vehicles before travelling to *Boyagin Rock*, some thirty kilometres west of Pingelly, situated in another impressive reserve, one in which camping is permitted. Signage indicated that local Noongar belief was that anyone climbing to the top of the rock without stopping would enjoy a long life. Without naming them, it would seem that we have several members who are likely to be around for a long time yet! It was then time for a quick picnic lunch and heading for home.



Left: All packed up and ready to leave, after a great weekend. Photo : Beth Frayne

Right: Boyagin Rock towers in the background. Photo: Wayne Clarke



A weekend such as this is never possible without a good deal of planning. I join with others present and those who would like to have come but for various reasons were not able to participate, in thanking those who made it possible, both from the Toodyay end and those in Narrogin. Particular thanks are due to Desraé and Wayne Clarke and Central South Naturalists' Club President, Fran Alcock, and her husband, Grant.

Morangup Nature Reserve

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Condensed data has been taken, with permission very kindly granted by Penny Hussey who prepared the original text for the Eastern Hills Branch of the Wildflower Society of Western Australia's 50 year event, to use in our newsletter.

History of the 'Morangup A Class Nature Reserve – 38924 – for the Conservation of Flora and Fauna' dates back to 1882 when gold was discovered in the Yilgarn. The popular route to the area was through Toodyay with watering points at two excellent perennial springs, located close to each other, in the Morangup Hill region of the Red Hill/Toodyay.

Beelaring Spring, a 40 ha reserve, (No. 529), was gazetted 7th March 1882, and the nearby Goonaring Spring, an area of 53ha, (No. 659), was recognised 13th March 1884 with both for the purpose of a 'Watering and Stopping Place for Teams'. Wells were constructed on the reserves.

In the second half of the 20th century local residents brought the reserves to the attention of the, then, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife because of the abundant birdlife and good quality vegetation found in the area. The Shire of Toodyay supported this move and on the 23rd October 1970 the purpose of both reserves was amended to 'Conservation of Flora and Fauna' and vested in the Western Australian Wildlife Authority. However, there was the land between the two small reserves that was unprotected and, if cleared, would adversely affect the quality of the springs.

This particular parcel of land was part of the Wundowie Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry and, with the need for timber to be made into coal to power the furnaces for smelting the iron ore, the company was allocated extensive areas to log east of the Darling Range which included approximately 4,000ha of the Morangup region. Vast areas were denuded of hollow butts and any standing living or dead tree. ***The land between the two small reserves was unprotected – if cleared it would adversely affect the two springs!***

The area was also used as a dump for slag, obsolete pieces of machinery and the disposal of carcinogenic tar, a byproduct of the making of charcoal. The industry wound down in 1975 and Agnew Clough Pty Ltd purchased the land and, in 1977, put forward a proposal to subdivide it for 'hobby farms. However, the 700ha south of Morangup Hill was considered 'environmentally sensitive' because any disturbance would have effect on the springs. Approval was given in 1983 for the subdivision to proceed but with the 700ha to be preserved as 'public open space'.

In 1985, the area to be preserved as 'public open space' was created an 'A' Class Nature Reserve No 38924 for Conservation of Flora and Fauna' incorporating the two smaller reserves; the whole is called Morangup Nature Reserve'. It is vested in the Conservation Commission of WA, and managed by Department of Conservation (DEC) Perth Hills district.

Unfortunately, a subsequent owner did illegally clear much of the area. This was noted in 1984, when travelling to Toodyay, showing no tree growth and piles of rocks and gravel. However, in subsequent years the soil disturbance produced carpets of Blue Leschenaultia (*Leschenaultia biloba*) which were a sight to behold as shown in Arthur Blundell's beautiful photo.

In later years there were complaints made to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) following the detection of pollutants, from the tar, which had leaked through the soil into the water of local streams. The complaints prompted the EPA to order a 'contaminated site cleanup' which occurred in 2001.

The variety of plants found in the Morangup Nature Reserve, is amazing! Included are the beautiful Blue Leschenaultia, Isopogon, Verticordia, Hakeas, Conospermum, Calytrix, Dryandra, Acacia and Orchids the latter including the *Diuris amplissima*, found well out of its range by a Nat's Club 1992/93 survey participant and identified by Stephen Hopper.

A follow-up of the Toodyay Naturalists' Club involvement and research of the area will be included in the December newsletter edition.

Desraé Clarke

Eremophila Sunday by *Jacquie Lucas*

On a damp winter morning which fined up into a glorious day, members of the Toodyay Naturalists' Club met at the Toodyay Visitors centre and headed off to the Dadd's property south of Goomalling, to see their wonderful collection of eremophilas.

On arrival, at first glance the property looked like a typical wheatbelt farm. However, on reaching the Dadd's farmhouse, it was surrounded by beds of beautiful eremophilas, many were in flower. Also present was Noel from "The Green Emu" an eremophila garden centre based in Goomalling. Much uhmhing and ahhing was made over his table of plants for sale, and bargains were snapped up. Both Bethan and Sarah had a wonderful time shopping for new plants.

There were so many plants I just don't know where to begin. Eremophilas are commonly known as poverty bushes, or emu bushes. They are quite hardy and drought tolerant. They are endemic to Australia, with a large portion of the species coming from Western Australia. Florabase contains 384 listings under eremophila.

The Dadd's garden contained pure species and hybrids. There was a wide range of colours, and one of my favourites was a bush with both pink and orange flowers. After looking at all the flowers, we had lunch and a meeting. On return to Toodyay a few of us adjourned to Pelham Reserve for afternoon tea. Thank you very much to the Dadd's for their hospitality



Opening of the JOHN MASTERS BIRD HIDE

by Desraé Clarke

The Avon River, although not always full of water, attracts an incredible number of both water and land birds to small pools, muddy areas and flood plain. Dense stands of Melaleuca (paperbark), Casuarina, old eucalypts and long grasses on the riverine plateaus provide the needs of both species. Bird hides are found throughout the world in wetlands, by rivers, near the sea, in grasslands, forest, around lakes, or resting areas for migratory birds, allowing observation without interference to them.

It has been the dream of many to have a bird hide built within the Shire of Toodyay. The Toodyay Naturalists' Club members are extremely grateful to the Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management (NRM) which provided funding for a plan and to build the hide which was with Shire support; local craftsman, Michael Shepherd, was the builder.

The John Masters Bird Hide has been named to recognise the incredible contribution John has made to ornithology in both the Avon Valley and beyond. He is the Regional Coordinator for Birdlife Australia recording numbers, species and migratory bird activity. This information is extremely valuable as it is recorded over long periods for exacting data.

The opening of the John Masters Bird Hide was held on Saturday 10 August 2013 together with the launch of the Bilya Walk Track, a Toodyay Friends of the River initiative. The walk track passes by the bird hide which allows walkers to also enjoy a scenic view of bird life. (see photo front page)

Dreams do come true!



Above: The crowd of over 40 people gather at the new John Masters Bird Hide for its official opening, together with the Bilya Track, a project of the Friends of the River (TFOR).

At right the President of the TFOR, Greg Warburton, President of the Toodyay Naturalists' Club, Desraé Clarke, listening to Shire of Toodyay President, Cr. Kevin Hugg as he officially opens both the Bird Hide and Walk Track. Cr. Hogg presented an excellent background on both the organisations involved.

He also praised the funders of the hide, Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management, for their foresight in funding the hide.

Photos by Rebecca Megan-Jones



It is quite evident when summer weather has arrived!

With it comes the sun, the heat and the activities of many cold-blooded reptiles (snakes, goannas, lizards, geckos, etc), all very keen to hunt for a feed, hungry to catch up on lost feeding time from the colder months and fatten up.

No doubt we have all seen evidence on our roads of our little cold blooded friends becoming more active. The lengths they go to apparently to forage or chase their prey seem to have no boundaries as I found out late last October.

I live about 10km from Toodyay, off Julimar Road. Last year, on one of our first warm days, at about 1pm, I was heading into town, driving down my drive and my freshly graded fire break when I discovered an odd sight. Someone had discarded a soft drink can and it had ended up in the waterway and on its way to my dam, now dry. It seemed to have a life of its own even though there was no wind or water to move it around in the chaotic manner in which it was behaving!

On closer inspection, the rope like structure protruding from the opening of the can proved to be dark, leathery skinned, sharp clawed and four legged. It was a RACEHORSE GOANNA with its head stuck in the opening! The dust trails told the story of a long struggle of the unlucky predator; many twists, rolls, foot prints and tail swishes were evident of its distress.

Now, if you happen to come across an animal stuck in a similar manner, THINK TWICE before you rush in (as I did!). Sharp claws scratch deep, snakes are venomous and just about everything can bite! My first attempt at rescue was fought off and it was quite funny to see a can run off as if it was naturally a head. Second attempt with rag to protect both victim and rescuer meant I was able to immobilise this little cracker of a lizard, still full of robust energy. Firmly but gently he was carried back to the house to work out how to free his head from the can opening.

Scissors, knife and tin snips should do the trick, I thought and away I went like a surgeon, opening the side of the can gently and cutting a fair size hole.

This is when the reason the lizard's predicament became obvious! Out, at full speed, came a huge bloody huntsman spider!

After a bit of a jump, a chase and a flick, I got back to cutting and snipping away and, eventually freedom for my lucky victim.

The lizard had a quick drink from the dog bowl and was off at full tilt for the scrub, on the hunt again no doubt. I reckon he was pretty happy to be free!

So please be mindful of where you discard your rubbish. It's not only an eyesore but also a hazard to bush creatures. Keep your eyes open and look after our native wildlife.

DID YOU KNOW... ?



Malleefowl can take over 9 months of each year to build and maintain their huge home. The mound can reach a diameter of over 20 metres, and up to a metre in height.

Compare the mound at left with the size of Greg and Vicki Warburton's vehicle.

This photograph was taken by Vicki in the Great Western Woodlands, a 16 million hectare area of Western Australia that connects the south west of the state with our arid areas. There are over 160 species of eucalypts and 20% of the known plant species in Australia found within the woodlands.

Boletus Fungi



Above left and right: Photos by Charm Venn of possibly members of the Boletus Family of the larger fungi.

Below: A 20 cent piece sits atop this fungi at the Clarke's.

Below: These Boletus have been eaten by woylies Photos by Desraé



There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before.

Robert Lyn

PHOTOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS



Above: Chudditch trapped during the Julimar Fauna Survey. Photo by Kate Burton



Above: Everlastings in Reserve 19904. Photo by Bethan Lloyd

‘Field Guide to the Larger Fungi of the Darling Scarp and South West of Western Australia’. Kevn Griffith, author of the 1985 edition of ‘A Field Guide to the Larger Fungi of the Darling Scarp and South West of Western Australia’, has had an update sheet added to his publication in the soft and hard covers. As he has said, ” with increased study of mycology names can be changed”. And no doubt there will be more to come.

Kevn’s beautiful field guide, of his own watercolour paintings, has a wealth of both general information, for the casual observer, and specific information for those who want to know more. A comprehensive glossary, found on page 74, is an excellent start to the language required to identify the great variety of fungi found in the south west with page 68 holding a locality map.

Once a fungus is located it is vital to know how to collect the specimen and to preserve it without destroying essential information; suggestions are found on page 64. A permit to collect in the field is needed nowadays.

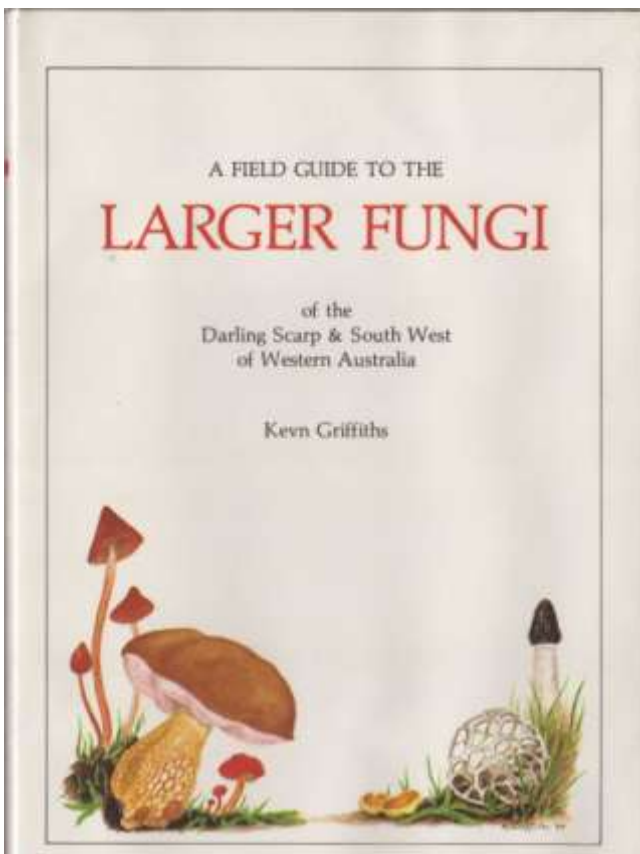
Page 72, entitled a ‘Prominent Features’ guide, commences with ‘This guide is not intended to be exact in its diagnosis of Western Australian fungi, rather it is an alternate approach to their identification where a fungus may have a particular outstanding feature, or features, eg, the scaliness of the cap, its brilliance of colour or its unusual shape.’ This interesting and clever guide is well worth a careful study.

Because of the variety of fungi found of late, resulting in Kevn’s much-needed help in identification, he has made the following comments. “Fungi seem to be funny things, weatherwise, where some species will be prolific one year, as has happened this year with Scaly Caps, *Amanita chlorophyllum*, and then they would vanish for a couple of years. A certain weather pattern apparently does the job.”

A further comment was made of tall fungi found at the gate of Vicki and Greg Warburton’s property identified as *Batterrea stevenii*. “The caps of this fungus begin as a disc laden with spores and a whitish covering cap which drops off with maturity. I hadn’t seen specimens as mature and woody as these with the caps still in place.”

This extremely interesting publication has added features in nutritional value and cooking suggestions of edible fungi and the use of fungi as a fabric dye. Although entitled a ‘field guide’ it also makes interesting bed time reading – enjoy!

Desraé Clarke.



This wonderfully illustrated Field Guide (at left) is available from the Author, Kevn Griffiths. The Club also has a number of copies available for sale to members. Members need to contact the Treasurer if they wish to purchase one through the Club.

The fungi at right was found near Greg and Vicki Warburton’s gate. They have woody stalks, and are **thought to be *Batterrea stevenii***. Kevn advised “I think of them as stalked puffballs although the caps start off as a disc laden with spores and a whitish cap to cover, this dropping off with maturity. I’ve never seen these with the caps still on”.



ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

Since I last wrote about the TTT campaign, things have reached a peak (ie Judgement Morning, 23 July) and now we are moving quietly towards the Regional Awards Event in York on 20 September. Back in April, we had 30 Signed-Up Supporters. By the time we submitted our Submission, at the end of May, we had increased that number to the Tremendous Thirty-Seven.

TNC's Project Officer Greg (and TTT Chair) created an amazing and powerful PowerPoint presentation that impressed the Tidy Towns Judges, Peter and Rhonda Ashton. Peter is one of 'Tidy Towns – Sustainable Communities' (TTSC) most experienced judges. He is an exploration and mining geologist with a background in environmental management. Rhonda is a volunteer in a community native plant nursery with particular expertise in propagating local provenance species. They have both travelled all over the State in the past years and Peter (who lives in Dalyellup) won one of DEC's Volunteer of the Year awards last year, for his enthusiastic volunteer work for the TTSC program. They were a very appreciative audience when we showed them the sights of Toodyay, which included a visit to the Pelham Reserve lookout and the Drummond Memorial Garden.

The TTT Supporters helped put up the display materials in the CWA Hall, which supported Greg's presentation. The attendees (25 of them) were so impressed they want us to do another 'Show' for the Toodyay community. This will happen after the 20 September Awards event, when TTT can have a party and celebrate all that Toodyay has achieved, TTT-wise, TNC's John Masters Bird Hide being one of them. The Clarkes, Warburtons, and Fraynes will be representing TNC at the York event.

Right: Stocklands giving Pelham Reserve a 'Make-over', The town can be seen in the background.



Left: Toodyay Tidy Towns Judgement Day! Part of the display for the Judges in the CWA Hall on the day the Town was judged for the Tidy Towns Awards. The displays were broken up into the various categories of the Awards that Toodyay had entered.

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