

August 2011



# ***Biddip***

Newsletter of the Toodyay Friends of the River

Volume 5, Issue 2



## **AGM at Millards Pool**

The 2011 Annual General Meeting was held at the new Millards Pool shelter, part of the development planned by the Toodyay Friends of the River. The newly-erected shelter provided an ideal site for a meeting, on a glorious day, with the river flowing strong in the background.

Present was our Patron, Viv Read and his Partner Linda, a new member together with our pool custodians Wayne 'Fletch' Fletcher, daughter Catherine, and Henry (the dog).

The Friends are grateful for the funding from Wheatbelt NRM to undertake this project that will benefit the whole community. It will be a great vantage point for the Avon Descent in future years.

## **Life Membership Awards**



Left: Two new Honorary Life Members, Desrae Clarke and Bob Frayne, with President Greg Warburton at Millards Pool

Below: Some of the participants in the 2011 Annual General Meeting

The Friends of the River wish to acknowledge the Department of Water for on-going support in printing our newsletter

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# The Presidents Report 2010-2011

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend last year's AGM and was voted in as President *in absentia* so it took a little time for it to sink in that I was indeed at the helm of TFOR. Taking the bull by the horns and with the support of the committee we concentrated on addressing some priority issues. Looking back over the past 12 months it is satisfying to see a number of key achievements.

It was a big relief to get the *Tamarix* wood piles finally burnt and thank you to Gaven for organizing that in my absence.

I was fortunate enough to represent TFOR at the International River Symposium in October, it was inspirational and informative.

At our end of year event at Bob and Beth's place I was able to present some ideas to members about the future for TFOR. Dubbed "TFORWARD" the presentation was well received by members.

It has been gratifying to have had successes with our funding applications from Wheatbelt NRM which has allowed some project work to proceed. The Harper Brook Revegetation and fencing project is one example. This culminated at a successful planting day and community event in June. A recent inspection of the seedlings showed that all are doing well. Better rainfall this winter has been truly welcome, especially by the trees. Signage at the site has been ordered and will soon be installed.

TFOR coordinated and was well represented in March's Cleanup Australia Day which was supported by our Shire for the first time.

A controlled burn at Lloyd Reserve occurred in May and achieved the desired result. This combined with other management work such as fire break grading, fence repair, track maintenance, dead timber gathering and weed spraying will make this Reserve less hazardous and more easily managed in the future. The two chainsaws donated from Vernice Pty Ltd have been put to good use during the Lloyd Reserve campaign. A pedestrian gateway and sign has been installed to encourage visitors by providing improved access. The Lloyd Reserve Strategy draft document has been produced as a result of several Thursday night meetings at "Cascades" attended by committee members and chaired by Brian Shepherd. This will be an essential tool for future funding applications, management and development work.

A protracted project to redesign and produce TFOR promotional signage finally came to fruition in July with the delivery of three signs and the replacement of the faded, out of date one in Duidgee Park. Funding from the Shire for the 175<sup>th</sup> celebrations has been a welcome boost to our signage budget.

A recent meeting with Shire staff has given us reason to be assured of the Shire's support for TFOR projects especially the Heritage and Interpretive Walk Track Project. As President I pledge to nurture our positive relationship with the Shire.

Our important River section surveys continue with many members submitting reports and Sarah offering to collate the results.

The removal of plastic tree guards at Boyagerring is on-going and will be until this hazard is removed from the landscape.

In May there we hosted a visit to Toodyay from the National Athel Pine Co-coordinator, Kay Bailey and her Bridal Creeper counterpart, Shauner Potter. This was followed by a Weeds of National Significance (W.O.N.S.) workshop at Gingin attended by Desrae and myself. Currently, a major proposal to control *Tamarix* in the Avon River is being drafted by Wheatbelt NRM.

It has been a joy to see some overdue recognition of certain individual's contribution to TFOR over the years in the form of two nominations this year for Honorary Life Memberships and a newly created "Honorary Advisor" position.

TFOR was once again represented in the competitor's field of the Avon Descent with our logo proudly displayed on a kayak. Who will forget our member Rebecca Lowe playing Cello on the river bank as paddlers made their way downstream?

After a drawn out process of WBNRM funding applications, Department of Water and Shire submissions and approvals, construction and installation the picnic shelter at Millard's Pool in place. This is a significant step forward for the heritage walk track project and a possible future link with Northam's River walk tracks. A great vote of thanks is extended to Peter Weatherly of Avon Valley Environment Society for transporting the structure from Northam and its precarious unloading on site. Thank you also to Greencorp for their assistance with its erection. The seating and signage is scheduled for installation before the end of the acquittal date on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September. Thank you to all those that contributed to the lay out and wording of the interpretive panel especially to Robyn for sitting all afternoon with the sign maker to ensure it was perfectly correct.

Our newsletter, "Biddip" continues to be produced regularly and to a high standard. Thanks must go to Des, Wayne and contributors to this important publication. The monthly column in the Herald provides current news on TFOR activities and we will have a promotional display at Toodyay Show in October.

We give our best wishes to our all important Treasurer, Wayne for a speedy return to strength after a few months of health issues.

Finally, thank you to all members and the committee for supporting TFOR and its work. I'm confident the next year will be another positive one for TFOR.

*Greg Warburton (President), August 2011*

# AVON RIVER POOLS and CROSSINGS

by Gaven Donegan

From where the Shire of Toodyay east boundary meets the Northam Shire boundary, 10km from the town of Toodyay, the Avon River winds its way westward for 40km where it hits the Shire's western boundary at the eastern boundary of the Swan Shire. The Avon River continues west for a further 16km to where it changes its name to the Swan River where the Wooroloo Brook hits the River.

Before white settlement, the Aboriginal Noongar people lived along the River. The water was fresh and there was plenty of wild-life for food; it was their livelihood. In 1836 a white settlement was set up on the north west side of the River on low, flat ground. A large river pool was in front of the town site and a wide rock bar in front of the pool which made a good crossing. The rock bar was wide and went from bank to bank. This was the settlement's first river crossing.

As the settlement at Toodyay became more populated and land for farming began to move up and down the Avon River, river pools and crossings became an important part of daily life. All river pools and crossings were named by Noongar Aboriginals and the settlers.

## Pool names from east to west.

**Millard:** The longest pool on the river, being 2.2km in length that had the Toodyay Swimming Club. It is now three quarters full of sediment.

**Lloyd:** This was the old name but it is now called Redbank.

**Little Kirk:** Lost through the River Training Scheme

**Big Kirk:** This pool has shallow water but has had a drowning.

**School:** This pool was alongside the old Newcastle Bridge (where the stumps of the old bridge can still be seen; lost to the River Training Scheme

**Salt:** Lost to Training of the River.

**Wash:** Before 'blade shearing' Clarkson (the owner of 'The Range' farm and much surrounding land) washed his sheep there. This pool is still in existence today and is found between the concrete railway bridge (crossing the Avon) and Slaughterhouse river crossing on the way to Miling.

**Bull:** Dries up in summer as a result of the River Training Scheme.

**Steven:** This pool also dries up as the Bull Pool.

**Barracks:** Joined the Toodyay 1836 townsite and named after the soldiers' barracks; now filled in with old tree logs and sediment.

**Weatherall:** The River Training Scheme stopped here. It is filled in with sediment.

**Worth:** Filled in with sediment because of the River Training Scheme.

**Deepdale:** This is the deepest pool on the river being 6m deep and 900m long. There has been one drowning here; it is now filled with sediment.

**Rocky:** Filled in with sediment

**Crooked:** Filled in with sediment.

**Jimperding:** It is now filled with sediment. There is a lot of history around this pool. Water was taken from this for the gold battery in the years of 1933 to 1941. This was also next to the site of the Jimperding School and the Army used the river hills as a training ground.

**Markey's:** Filled with sediment.

**Long:** This 1.2km long pool is half filled with sediment. In 2008 6,000 tons of sand was removed from the pool.

**Duck:** This small pool is in good condition and is still used by the water birds for nesting.

**Cobbler:** This pool, on a large sheep farm, is in good condition. In 2006 Cobbler Pool developed a large sand bar. Following a summer rain event, at the head of Jimperding Brook, the pool was scoured of the sediment which was moved further downstream. It is used as the overnight camp site for the Avon Descent, as the 4 day camp site for the five-year Ferguson Reunion and is also used by Toodyay Scouts.

**Grandfather:** Old Alexander Ferguson, owner of the 'Julimar Farm' would travel across country in his horse and cart, and fish in this pool. This pool is still in good condition with the sediment moving in and out.

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# AVON RIVER POOLS and CROSSINGS

by Gaven Donegan

**Rocky Basin:** In good condition with the sediment moving in and out.

**Cut Throat:** In good condition with the sediment moving in and out. The Avon Descent participants call this area 'The Super Short' because of the narrow outlet at the end of the pool where the River drops away suddenly.

**Trap:** This pool is in the Avon Valley National Park and has sediment moving through. Named because of the 'horse trap yard' trapping wild horses.

**Delaney Mare:** A rider, Delaney, camped alongside the pool, hobbled his horse which stumbled and fell into the pool and drowned.

**Middle Station:** This pool was a resting place for drovers and their stock on their way to the coast.

**Emu Spring:** Emus commonly found in this area because of the spring water on the side of the hill and still has a good pool.

**Bald Hill:** This hill received its name as it is a hill of pure rock with nothing growing on it; it has a good of water there.

**Moondyne:** A beautiful pool located in the Shire of Swan. Moondyne Joe used this area as one of his 'hide-outs'. This was also the area of the old homestead, 'Moondyne'.

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Above: Sinclair's Crossing, downstream from Dumbarton Bridge

## ***Millards Pool (part 2)***

***“the largest on the Avon and the finest in the State”***

***by Robyn Taylor based on research by Beth Frayne***

In the last issue of *Biddip* some of the history of Millard's Pool as a popular swimming and picnic spot was covered. The following covers other aspects of the pool's fascinating story.

Millard's Pool (the area and pool was also known as Nardie) covers a long section of the Avon River upstream of the Toodyay townsite. Between Millard's Pool and the town are Extracts Weir, Redbank Pool, and Lloyd's Reserve before we get to the more 'industrial' end of the townsite. These places are mentioned by way of establishing something of their relationship to Millard's Pool.

The land along the Millard Pool area is highly fertile and excellent for crops and pasturing. The well known market gardener and orchardist Charles Soong Yock Lunn had leased a plot at Nardie before buying 80 acres of the Coondle Estate in c.1913 where he 'intended planting an orchard and orangery'.<sup>1</sup> Today there are a few remnant citrus trees along Millard's Pool, which could either have been part of an orchard established by Yock Lunn, or maybe J. M. Lloyd who owned the land. Further research is needed to establish the exact boundaries of Lloyd's property, but it evidently extended along a good stretch of Millard's Pool. In 1921 when Lloyd decided to sell his property (portion of Location V) it was described as 'containing nearly 150 acres, situated at Lloyd's Crossing on the Clackline Toodyay Railway, and about one mile from the Toodyay Railway Station with good and easy roads, viz, from Northam to Toodyay, through the property, and bounded on the west side by the Guildford-Toodyay road.'<sup>2</sup> It was claimed to be 'the richest land in the Avon Valley and adaptable for intense culture'.<sup>3</sup> It was also well watered.

At the eastern boundary it takes the end of Nardie Pool, the largest on the Avon, a mile and a half long. Also at the north-west boundary the everlasting Redbank Pool, also an excavation known as the Barley Field Tank, supplied from a spring at the bottom, and in addition, a spring running and supplying a small swamp at the north-west end of the property<sup>4</sup>.

Apart from agriculture, Millard's Pool also featured in attempts to introduce various species of fish into the Avon. In 1897 eels had been released into the 'Nargie (sic) and Viveash Pools by the Government's Acclimatisation Committee.<sup>5</sup> In 1908 there were further studies into the 'acclimatisation of fish' and experimenting with restocking WA's rivers. Mr Myer, then the Mayor of Newcastle, invited Mr Le Souef the Director of the Perth Zoo who had connections with the 'Acclimatisation Society', to come to Newcastle 'for the purpose of trying the rivers for perch, trout, and cod fish. We accordingly set a net, and to our astonishment instead of catching trout we made an excellent catch of fine mullet.'<sup>6</sup> When Nardie Pool [Millard's Pool] was dragged for fish, around 250 small mullet were found. Evidently the fish were breeding there. This caused considerable excitement and Le Souef promised further help 'to supply a number of spawning English perch for our rivers'. However the success of this venture depended on the protection of the fish from what was referred to as the 'two great evils' - the shags and the turtles. No doubt the shags and turtles in Millard's Pool could look forward to some easy meals courtesy of the Acclimatisation Society despite the proposed presence of 'honorary fish inspectors'!

Stocking the pools occurred again in 1946 when 2,000 trout fry were released in Lloyd's Pool 'with a view to testing the suitability of the deep pools in the Avon River for brown trout', then a further 5,000 were released, '1,000 in James's Lagoon and the balance in Lloyd's pool.'<sup>7</sup> I wonder if James Lagoon was the small swamp at the north-west end of Lloyd's property, and the low-lying often swampy area not far from James's Cottage?

Regular flooding had long been part of the Avon's history and Millard's Pool was often mentioned in reports about Toodyay in the *West Australian* newspaper. The reason for this was the proximity of a section of the Northam-Toodyay road to Millard's Pool where the river valley narrowed. When the river flooded the road went under water effectively cutting off traffic along this major link between the towns. There was a spate of reports of flooding of this section during the early 1930s.<sup>8</sup>

These regular floods caused major problems upstream especially when floodwaters entered the towns flooding ground floor shops and houses. In 1955 floodwaters flowed over the Newcastle Bridge in Toodyay and reached into Stirling Terrace.<sup>9</sup> Another major flood occurred in 1958. By then the towns had had enough and the River Training Scheme was introduced as a solution.

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# Weeds Workshop Involving Bridal Creeper and Tamarisk

Gingin May 5th 2011

by Desraé Clarke

A Weeds of National Significance (WONS) workshop was held in Gingin with support from the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council (NACC) concentrating on *Asparagus* species (including *asparagoides*, *declinatus*, *scandens*, *aethiopicus* and a plant known as Western Cape form of Bridal Creeper) and *Tamarix* (including *aphylla*, *ramosissima* and *parviflora*).

In the 1980's it was recognised that there was a need to develop a protocol for the recognition and control of invasive plants throughout Australia. Australian states and territories were asked to list their worst weeds resulting in over 70 plants nominated. From the listing 20 plants were nominated as Weeds of National Significance resulting in the development of a National Strategy. At this point in time the National Strategy is being reviewed resulting in the appointment of a National Co-ordinator, increase in funding leading to an increase in research of biological control, herbicides and the viability of aerial spraying.

## Asparagus Species

Shauna Potter, based in Adelaide with the Department of Primary Industries, was the first speaker. Her presentation on the *Asparagus* species, of which there are approximately 80 with 8 found in Australia, began with the plant *Asparagus asparagoides* (Bridal Creeper), one to be the most prevalent of the species found in Western Australia; however, other species have acclimatised or have the ability to propagate within our State.

Bridal Creeper, from South Africa, was introduced in the 1870's and used, as its name suggests, in bridal bouquets; it is a Weed of National Significance.

The plant is a very competitive climber that reduces diversity and abundance of native plant species. It does not require disturbance and smothers intact native vegetation, stifling plants and starving them of nutrition. It increases nutrients in the soil by shedding its leaves over the summer months and aids in the growth and spread of other weed species. It is very much a southern Australian weed growing from Shark Bay to Esperance, southern South Australia, Victoria, lower New South Wales and a small amount in Tasmania.

Reproduction may be vegetatively (the rhizomes reproduce) or by seed dispersal usually by birds. Depending on seasonal moisture the tendrils begin to emerge in April/May with the flowering in winter followed by green fruits in the late winter to progress to bright, red berries each containing up to three seeds. The plants do not flower or fruit till two to three years of age and, it is only the older seeds that reproduce dispersing up to 1,000 seeds per square metre!

If growing in the shade the shiny leaves are a dark green but are lighter in colour if grown in sunlight. In irrigated areas Bridal Creeper will grow throughout the year and is well-sustained in areas of 350-400 mms of annual rainfall.

## **Control Options**

Currently there are no legal management requirements for Bridal Creeper.

*Herbicides* - Metsulfuron Methyl – brush off                      Glyphosate – plus a penetrant

*Mechanical* - Solarise in black plastic bags                      *Grazing* – By sheep and cattle

*Biological control* – control with Rust, Leaf hopper and leaf Beetle

Rust appears mid-winter as brown-orange colouring beneath the leaf to progress to the top of the leaf. Leaf Hoppers do not like the hot summer of Toodyay and the Leaf Beetle has disappeared!

*Sporewater* – used in knapsacks, vehicle-mounted tanks and aerial spraying

Further plants of the *Asparagus* genus found in Australia are *A. declinatus*, an escapee from Western Australian gardens, *A. scandens*, which could propagate in our State but has not been recorded at this point in time, *A. aethiopicus* (Basket fern) often found around old homesteads, prefers shade and is reported in several southern areas of our state. Unfortunately, this latter plant is available at nurseries.

Western Cape form of Bridal Creeper, *A. asparagoides*, is similar to the first Bridal Creeper described but leathery, waxy with much coarser and larger leaves, globular-shaped red berries, each containing a black seed, and rhizomes parallel with the soil surface with 4cm long tubers; it is not impacted by biocontrol.

Local action from the community begins with reporting infestations of weeds. Contact the Toodyay Friends of the River group, Toodyay Naturalists' Club members, Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee Secretary or <http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/>

Staff at the WoNS will place reports on an Australian-wide map.

## Future directions:

Prevent spread of outlying areas.

Nomination of other *Asparagus* species as Weeds of National Significance-WoNS. New WoNS to be announced soon such as ?cactus and ? box thorn.

Continue school programmes of 'Weed Warriors' – however, no current funding .

New biological control research of weeds by DAFWA.

## Weeds Workshop ...cont

### Tamarix Species

Kaye Bailey, National Athel Pine Coordinator and based in Alice Springs, was also at the workshop speaking on the Tamarix species. The three species of Tamarisk in Australia – Athel Pine (*Tamarix aphylla*), Tamarisk (*T ramosissima*) and Smallflower tamarisk (*T parviflora*) have been used in WA as a 'wind break' and 'shade tree' since the 1930's following their introduction via California. Athel Pine and Tamarisk originate in arid and semi-arid northern Africa and western/southern Asia. Smallflower tamarisk originates from southern Europe and northern Africa.

**NB** – *Tamarix aphylla* is known as Athel Pine - but it is a flowering plant, NOT a pine.

The three species have the potential to infest inland drainage systems across all mainland states with the Athel Pine nominated as a 'WEED OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE'. Tamarix species have extensive, deep woody root systems capable of penetrating up to 50 metres underground in search of water.

The species became a nuisance plant in Australia in the 1980's. A strategy for its eradication was developed in 2001 with a National Management plan in 2005; a National Coordination strategy in 2006 which is now under a five-year review.

**Athel Pine (*Tamarix aphylla*)**, an evergreen tree up to 15 metres high is often not recognised as a weed. The foliage is dull green with grey/brown granulated bark, small, pink/white, five-petalled flowers (spring/autumn), hanging in 3 to 5cm long clusters at the end of last year's branches.

*Athel Pine is declared across all states of Australia.*

**Tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*)** is a semi-deciduous, bushy shrub up to 6 metres in height; it yellows in autumn and winter. Old stems are grey-brown with reddish-brown bark on new stems. The pink flowers have five petals.

**Smallflower Tamarisk (*Tamarix parviflora*)** is a semi-deciduous shrub, or tree, up to 6 metres in height with multiple stems. The small pinkish/white flowers have 4 petals. Small leaves are evident and new bark is brown to deep purple. It is found in York, Northam and the Toodyay Avon River.

### Impacts of Tamarix infestation

- stores salt, taken from the soil, in its leaves, which, when dropped reduces water quality and reduces natural vegetation in its vicinity
- utilises up to six times as much water as the Eucalypt!
- reduces abundance and diversity of reptiles, birds and invertebrates
- salt content causes rusting of fencing, roofs of buildings, water pipes and vehicles
- cattle in station country hide in stands of Tamarix cause mustering problems
- reduced accessibility of water for stock and sediment held in water courses
- reduced productivity through lost pasture and top feed
- plants flourished in Carnarvon area following recent flooding as trees provide upwards of 500,000 seeds each, and
- increased fire frequency beneath tamarisk.

### Growth of Plants

Grows near water and is able to propagate vegetatively. They are prolific seeders but the seed is short-lived requiring wet conditions over a short period for proliferation. Water course and river areas require control of up to 100 metre distance as plants proliferate following flooding.

### Control Options

*Mechanical control* with the removal of crown and tap root to at least one metre in depth; follow-up regrowth with herbicides. It is important to clean machinery and to remove debris from the flood plain.

*Herbicides* may be used on an 'erosion prone' area; foliage spray is not effective. BPM manual contains lists of permitted herbicides, eg Tordon and Garlon.

Good water is required, and ensure good coverage of a 'wetter'. Minimum of one metre regrowth from roots and leave sprayed plant for 12 months.

*Cut Stump* is by cutting low and level across the base of the tree with stump treatment within 30 seconds for maximum uptake with a two-person team.

*Pulling small, young plants* as the taproot will be twice as long as the top.

*Biocontrol* - Leaf Beetle use on *Tamarix ramosissima*.

*Natural control* - Athel Pine die-back is found in the Fink River area and research is currently being carried out on the 'die-back' fungus.

# LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

## BOB FRAYNE

There are always members of voluntary organisations that are quiet, behind the scene, contributors who are often missed of appreciation for their contribution.

In 1987 Bob Frayne bought a small, rundown little house in Drummond Street, Toodyay, which backed on to the Avon River. Although he still lived in Perth he visualised potential in revitalising the building and beautifying the banks of the river at the bottom of a future garden of native plants.

In a conversation with Wayne Clarke about the Avon River, Wayne (a member of the Avon River Management Authority) stated that there was encouragement by the Regional Manager, Viv Read, to hold a community meeting to encourage the community to be more aware of the river and its environs. Bob agreed and the first meeting of the future 'Toodyay Friends of the River' was held in 1994 in Duidgee Park but, despite intensive advertising and a lack of response, those present retired to Bob's home for tea and coffee. Not to be discouraged the small group continued to develop a management plan into which evolved the River Recovery Plans.

In February 1998 the first 'working bee' of a group of thirty people attacked the woody weeds in the vicinity of Duidgee Park. The Inaugural Annual General Meeting was held August 16th 1998 with Bob elected a Committee Member and remaining till 2002.

Since purchasing his property Bob has cleared untold rubbish, not only on the flood plain at the bottom of his property, but also on the neighbouring properties either side. It must be mentioned here that this land does not *belong* to him but, to the community beneath the umbrella of the Department of Water. He has revegetated the area with endemic plants, over many years, and it is an excellent example of what can be done to beautify the banks of our river; this area is now fondly known as 'Frayne Park' and stimulated his contribution to the Friends' newsletter, 'Biddip'. It is also an ideal site from which to view the Avon Descent participants!

Bob has always been a staunch worker in the numerous cleanups that involved removal of incredible large, heavy stuff right along the river from the Transfer Station, behind homes that face Toodyay West Road and behind the Anglican Church and nearby businesses. Since the inception of the observation by members of 'their' sections of the River, Bob has reported on the north side of the Avon from the Connor to Newcastle Bridges.

The Toodyay Seed Orchard Group, which sits beneath the umbrella of the Toodyay Friends of the River, has had Bob a keen supporter and a willing worker over a very long period. His beautiful native plant garden demonstrates his keenness in this area. The Frayne home has been used, on **innumerable** occasions, for social get-togethers, committee and general meetings, Christmas parties, and is always an open home if an outside meeting is struck by inclement weather. Together with his wife, Beth, the home has always been an 'open home' and the Toodyay Friends have been most grateful for their generous hospitality.

*Compiled by Desraé Clarke*



Above: Bob receives his Certificate from President Greg Warburton



Above: Bob is congratulated by President Greg



## **Millards Pool (part 2)**

**by Robyn Taylor based on research by Beth Frayne**

**(continued from Page 5)**

In the late 1950s and continuing into the early 1960s a deep channel was bulldozed along the length of the river between Toodyay and Beverley. The purpose was to prevent what was a braided river system from spreading across the floodplain into the towns and riverside properties. The scheme achieved its aim, but a consequence was the movement of large quantities of silt that began to fill the deep permanent pools. People who had lived all their lives along the river lamented that some pools that used to be between 18 to 30 feet deep were now only about 6 inches deep.<sup>10</sup> Millard's Pool would have been similarly affected but the construction of Extracts Weir to service the new Industrial Extracts Ltd's Tannin Extract factory (commenced operating in 1952), meant there was a backup of water along Millard's Pool ensuring a constant body of water.

The idea for a weir to create a larger body of water along this section of the river wasn't new. A weir had been proposed in 1907 and supported by well-known local identity Mr Bull. 'The fall in the river was very slight and the weir only a few feet high would throw the water back to Nardie Pool, making a sheet of water about five miles in extent, without overflowing.'<sup>11</sup> However an ongoing issue about anything to do with the river was the matter of private ownership of the riverbed. 'This had been a very sore question, as long as he [Mr Bull] remembered... He believed that Newcastle was the only town in the State where the people had not free access to the river banks.'<sup>12</sup> Whether the idea of this particular weir ever became a reality, is a topic for further research.

However, one thing is certain, today we do have free access to the river. At the Friends 2011 AGM we all enjoyed a breakfast bbq set up under our new picnic shelter beside Millard's Pool, enjoyed the views of the water, the wonderful bird life - but no-one thought to bring a fishing line!

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1 West Australian, 28 June 1913, p.3.

2 West Australian, 8 March 1918, p.5.

3 *ibid.*

4 *ibid.*

5 West Australian, 23 April 1897, p.5.

6 West Australian, 19 September 1908, p.2.

7 West Australian, 1 November 1947, p.12.

8 West Australian, 21 August 1931, p.22; 11 September 1931, p.20; 19 July 1932, p.10; 5 August 1932, p.18.; 31 August 1932, p.3.

9 Photograph in the Batty collection. However the 1958 date given in this photo for this flood is probably wrong. According to Department of Water in Northam, major floods have occurred in 1910, 1917, 1926, 1930, 1945, 1946, 1955, 1958, 1963, 1964, 1983 and 2000.

10 *Reflections on the Avon*, Environmental Science Report Series No. 00-3, 2000, pp. 11-12

11 West Australian, 15 April 1907, p.5.

12 *ibid.* Even up to the 21st century, the boundaries of some riverside properties in Toodyay still extend to the mid point of the river.

Right: Newly installed picnic shelter, Millards Pool. This was a project of the Friends of the River (funded by the Wheatbelt NRM)



# AVON RIVER POOLS and CROSSINGS

by Gaven Donegan  
(from Page 5)

## River Crossings from east to west

**Tinks:** The family, Tinks, used this as a farm crossing. As camels were not allowed in the Toodyay/Newcastle town site, they used this crossing on their way to the goldfields. It was destroyed during the River Training Scheme.

**Drumree:** A farm crossing that was destroyed during the Training Scheme and is not in use.

**Sinclair:** This is a farm crossing that is still in use alongside the Dumbarton Bridge for the crossing of the river of farm machinery as the bridge is too narrow.

**Depot:** This public crossing, from Old Toodyay to Newcastle, runs alongside the Newcastle Bridge with the old bridge stumps showing where the crossing was.

**Slaughterhouse:** This rock bar public crossing is not used today as it is not warranted.

**Bull:** A farm crossing that was destroyed by the Training and is not used today.

**Barracks:** This was the settlement's first river crossing. It is a rock bar public crossing that is not used today except if needed by emergency vehicles.

**Weatherall:** A public crossing, now closed, that was destroyed by the Training.

**Deepdale:** This farm crossing is still used today. In times gone by it was changed to Poles Crossing but has since returned to be named Deepdale.

**One Tree:** A farm crossing that is still used.

**Horns:** A farm crossing that is still in use.

**Strahan:** This crossing, in good condition with TFOR providing funding for maintenance; it was used in early settlement for sheep farming and now for fire protection of the Avon River.

**Long Pool:** A private farm crossing that is still in use.

**Billy Hill:** Because this crossing is overgrown it is not used.

**Cobbler Pool:** This crossing was the longest river crossing in the Toodyay Shire. Farmers and drovers used it to join the stock route. The crossing of the North Channel washed deeper resulting in steep banks and is not used today. During the WW2 Lt. Laurie Donegan used this crossing for training army motor bike riders.

**Munipin:** The Munipin crossing is kept in good condition for fire protection, with funding from the TFOR, and used by farmers.

**Coomarwongi (Goomarwongi):** Aboriginal name for 'possum talk'. This crossing has been used for stock crossing to the stock route and to farms. It may be registered as a 'public' crossing.

**Concertina:** This 'hard to get to' and now, unused, crossing was the only registered crossing used to get to farming land and to the stock route. It is hard to get up the bank on the north side of the river. As far as I know this crossing was closed and registration was moved to Coomarwongi

**Donegan:** The last crossing in farming land before going into the Avon Valley National Park; this crossing is in good condition and in use for farming and fire protection.

**Avon:** The east boundary fire break's name in the Avon Valley National Park. The name comes from *Avon Valley*, *Avon River* and *Avon Donegan, the machine operator*. Gaven Donegan arranged for the crossing to be built and put in the firebreaks to join each side of the river for fire protection to farming land and the river. He named it *Avon Crossing* in 1984.???

**Middle Station (Old name) Sappers (New name):** This river crossing was once a stock and drovers crossing. When the army took it over it was the Avon Valley Army Training area. Army sappers made a road from Plunket Road down to the Avon River and upgraded the crossing with a concrete causeway. Today it is a *high priority* river crossing in the Avon Valley National Park.

**Fred Chitty:** Fred Chitty was the last person to lease and run stock in the Avon Valley; the land was owned by the Midland Rail Company. The rock bottom crossing is used now and again for joining firebreaks.

## Swan Shire

**Moondyne:** This old settled place was Moondyne Joe's stamping ground. It is where the Red Swamp Brook joins the Avon River. The crossing, which is still in use, has been used for drovers, stock and farm crossing and fire protection.

**Dempster:** I'm not sure whether this crossing is still used but it is still there and in good shape. Drovers and stock crossed from the south bank to the north bank on their way to the coast. Donald Clarkson, owner of 'The Range' farm, east of Toodyay, moved his stock to and from Toodyay as feed became short on his farm. There is a lot of history and stories of the Clarkson stock drives along the stock route, the Avon River and to Burns Beach.

## 175 YEARS OF WHITE SETTLEMENT 1836-2011

It is interesting to note that many of the crossings of the Avon River are still in use 175 years after settlement.

# HARPER BROOK FENCING and REVEGETATION

by Greg Warburton

The core business of a Land care group in my view has to be re-vegetation. Especially when it comes to waterway protection and restoration. For some time I had been looking for a suitable TFOR project site for fencing and tree planting. Every time I drove past Harper Brook I could see from the road that the banks were eroded with no sign of understory vegetation and little or no protection from livestock. A 500 metre section of Harper Brook ran through Ted Godwin's property on the Toodyay-Northam Road. A fine grove of magnificent Flooded Gums grew along the creek but a long history of grazing had removed all other vegetation, prevented recruitment of the Gums and caused considerable bank erosion. There was also an infestation of weeds.

In October of 2010 I approached Ted Godwin with the idea of doing some "Rivercare" work and he was enthusiastic. Ted said he had always wanted to do something about protecting the creek and immediately agreed. I ordered 2,300 appropriate species seedlings from Rob and Beth Boase's Arinya Tree Farm. In February Vernice Pty Ltd deep ripped the site in preparation for tree planting. A D7 Bulldozer was used and there was NO charge!! By early 2011 with the help of the Department of Water nearly a kilometre of cattle proof fencing had been erected along both sides of the Brook. A "flood fence" was installed at the upstream end and two farm gates down stream to allow for access and property maintenance.

The committee agreed on a planting day in late June and the date was programmed in. All we needed now was rain. It certainly did come in the form of a flash flood in March with the water backing up at the traffic bridge and flooding much of the paddock causing minor damage to the fence. Then the weeds came up. Herbicide spraying was completed in May.

The call was sent out to the community that volunteer tree planters were need and we had a wonderful response with over 50 people turning up on the day. Representatives from the Scouts, the Toodyay Naturalists' Club, Coondle Fire Brigade, Greening Australia, Talbot Land Management Association and the School were there. With the TFOR members attending to their allocated tasks such as seedling transportation and distribution, traffic control and the all important catering the operation went like clockwork. The planting was completed by lunch time and no-one went away hungry.

A recent inspection has shown that the seedlings are doing well. A sign will soon be erected to highlight the project and its sponsors. Monitoring will be ongoing and we can look forward to the ecological restoration of this section of our important Harper Brook.



Above: Ripping prior to planting.

Below: Debris collected in the fence following a storm



Above: A tree planting crew.

Below: Seedlings being sorted prior to planting



**Newsletter of the  
Toodyay Friends of the River**

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*"Make Friends with our  
Avon River"*



**Toodyay Friends of the River**

The objects of the *Toodyay Friends of the River* are to *work towards the conservation and rehabilitation of the Avon River and its environs. In the bigger picture of natural resource management, we are committed to implementing the Avon River Management Program and its associated River Recovery Plans for each of the four sections of river that pass through Toodyay.*

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Shire of Toodyay 175th Anniversary Committee has generously supported the Friends in this 175th Year of settlement