

THE TOODYAY FRIENDS OF THE RIVER



THE FIRST FOURTEEN YEARS  
(1994-2008)

# HISTORY OF THE TOODYAY FRIENDS OF THE RIVER (INC) DECEMBER 1994 – TO – SEPTEMBER 2008

From the embryonic beginnings of 'an idea' in 1994, a small band of willing volunteers, interested in the health of our Avon River, gathered together to raise awareness of the issues facing the River's health.

Following a number of years in consolidating that vision, community members gathered in February 1998 and, with great enthusiasm, supported the original concept; September 1998 saw the Toodyay Friends of the River incorporated.

These visionary people can look, with great pride, on 14 years of achievement.

Gratitude is extended to Wayne Clarke for the layout of the booklet and the Department of Water, Northam, for the printing of this history of those formative and challenging years.

*Desraé Clarke, Editor  
September 2008*

## **CONGRATULATIONS TOODYAY FRIENDS OF THE RIVER 1994 – 2008**



February 1998 working party

[The Toodyay Friends of the River will be known throughout this publication as 'the Friends'.]

Photograph of Bulldozer on Page 32 loaned by Mildred Heath. All other photographs by Wayne Clarke.

## **GAVEN'S MESSAGE**

I was born on the Avon River at Cobbler Pool in 1941. For the first sixteen years of my life I enjoyed learning about the River, its moods and the creatures it supported. The River pools were wide, deep and beautiful; with my brothers and sisters, river neighbours and friends we enjoyed swimming, tube races and picnics. My Dad always told me to 'respect the River'.

Things changed from 1958! The 'training of the River' changed a healthy waterway into a string of silt-filled pools and the gradual loss of river creatures.

With the decline of the health of the River I joined the Toodyay Friends of the River to work towards bringing it back to what it used to be.

It all began in November 1994. A small group of dedicated Toodyay people was worried at the loss of the health of the River. Recovery Plans were developed and in February 1998 the message got through to those interested in care of the River. They worked together to begin cleaning up the great assortment of rubbish along the River and the floodplain area within the town precinct. Included in the collection were large pieces of concrete, galvanized iron, household goods, bricks and galvanized piping. This vast cleanup was followed by removal of pest plants including bridal creeper, nasturtiums, tamarisk, false bamboo and others. The Friends were very grateful for the heavy work involving the removal of large plants by a Ministry of Justice team. After removing lots of heavy rubbish the Friends then revegetated the River flood plain and several small reserves in the vicinity of the Avon River.

On 3 October 1999 Mr Oriel Lloyd of 'Calbaline', Toodyay, gifted 6.8 hectares of riverside land to the Toodyay Friends of the River, land that had been in the Lloyd Family for four generations. Unfortunately, the Friends were unable to afford to pay the rates on the land so it was donated to the Water and Rivers Commission [now the Department of Water]; the management was taken over by the Friends. Exciting projects have been trialled on the Reserve including conservation education of visiting schoolchildren.

Over the past two years there has been much liaison with the Department of Water, the Avon Descent Committee and the Shire of Toodyay in restoring the car-parking bay at the West Toodyay Bridge, the banks of Weatherall Reserve and Cobbler Pool and excavating at Long Pool. This work has now progressed to the planned removal of silt from both Cobbler and Long Pools - a significant milestone in the restoration of the Shire of Toodyay section of the Avon River.

My reward from working with the Friends on care of the River has been an acknowledgement to the river neighbours who lived and worked along this beautiful waterway of my youth.

*Gaven*

Gaven Donegan  
President, 2007-2009



## PATRON'S MESSAGE

The Avon River has altered considerably since the time of European settlement. Stream flow is faster, coarse sediments are filling river pools, water quality is high in nutrients and salinity, weeds dominate understorey vegetation, rising groundwater is changing the over-storey and adjacent vegetation has been significantly fragmented by clearing for agriculture. Local communities along the Avon have witnessed this change and have responded by mobilising action to retain or restore some of the ecological and social values of the natural river system.

The community of Toodyay knows the Avon River well. Active community involvement in river management draws from the 1980's when the magnitude of change was fully recognised.

The *Toodyay Friends of the River* has formulated and evolved effective processes for community river management action. In doing so it has crafted a volunteer group-based model that is relevant to the Avon and really gets things done. Their well-known secrets to success are in being well organised, valuing contributions, and having fun!

The group adopts all the ingredients required to be effective. It raises awareness through displays, encourages participation through field activities, educates and communicates through public extension courses, develops capacity through training and provision of a tools trailer, forms partnership working arrangements especially with the Department of Water in Northam, is activist through the mass media about key management issues, and not least, celebrates success.

The *Toodyay Friends of the River* deserves robust congratulation to have achieved 10 years of effective involvement in river management. Significantly, it is continuing from strength to strength building on the foundations set in the early years. Congratulations to past and current members for ongoing honourable and enjoyable achievements. I am proud to be involved.

*Viv Read*  
Patron  
*Toodyay Friends of the River*



The Avon River was once a glorious stretch of, predominately, fresh water. It contained 26 pools, deep enough in which to swim and dive, between Northam and the Avon Valley National Park. Edible fish, such as cobbler, were plentiful and, as a result of the 1963-64 floods, hundreds upon hundreds of mullet from the estuaries were trapped in both Katrine and Glen Avon Pools. Their numbers slowly declined over the following five years to have totally disappeared by the drought of 1969.<sup>1</sup>

However, as with most early settlements, the areas close to the River were those chosen on which to farm and live. There were numerous citrus orchards with some of those very old orchards still in existence today.

As the River periodically flooded, the local governing bodies of the affected areas harassed the government to control the flooding by a 'river training scheme'. Although this plan was strongly argued against by those wise to riverine activity and habits, the 'training' proceeded.

Commencing in 1956 and continuing until the 1970's, the Avon River was bulldozed from West Toodyay upstream to Brookton (Avon River South Branch), a total of 187 kilometres; this process is now termed 'The River Training Scheme'. The meanders of the waterway were destroyed by the removal of the rocks and trees to make the river run 'straight and fast'.

The late Mr Jim Masters OAM was known affectionately as 'The Old Man of the River'. 'The Principles of River Management', written by Mr Masters and published by The Avon River Management Authority in 1996, was the outcome of many years of his meticulous river research. The research, in addition to his many years commitment to wildlife and environmental protection in general, brought him the recognition of the Order of Australia Medal. Mr Masters had few romantic notions about Mother Nature with his often-used quotation "In nature there are no rewards, only consequences".

Unfortunately, the Avon River is now predominately saline. The cobbler and mullet could not survive the increased salt content and destruction of their habitat and have disappeared. Of the original 26 pools below Northam only two remain; both are experiencing sedimentation resulting in their gradual destruction.

1994 - Viv Read, the Regional Manager of the Waterways Commission (WWC) planted the seeds of forming a 'friends' group with Wayne Clarke, then a member of the Avon River Management Authority (ARMA). The specific aim of the venture would be that of involving the community in the rehabilitation of the River and its tributaries. The process would include the removal of feral plants, the rehabilitation of the foreshores and floodplain with endemic plantings and the removal of rubbish within the riverine environment.

10th December 1994 - An inaugural meeting was held in Toodyay's Duidgee Park.

January 1997 - The Avon River Management Authority called a public meeting in Toodyay to establish a working group from the community to develop a management plan for the River. Wayne Clarke and Gaven Donegan, both current Friends members, were engaged in forming the strategy. From this management plan evolved the River Recovery Plans that have since been endorsed by the Avon River Management Authority.

August 1997 - The Friends were very pleased to have two noted speakers give a presentation on the management of the weeds present on the foreshore of the River, especially behind the town itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Pers comm. John Masters, Glen Avon 12.02.08

The guests were Penny Hussey, co-ordinator of the Land for Wildlife programme, and Joanna Seabrook, founder of the Environmental Weeds Action Network (EWAN). They were both visibly shocked at the variety of weeds present in the small section of the river they viewed - twenty-one species, in fact! They included Tamarisk, Castor Oil, Jonquils, Bamboo, Easter Lilies and Soursob, together with the most disturbing of all the weeds, extensive growth of Bridal Creeper. Suggestions were made as to how to begin the removal of the weeds.

21st February 1998 - After much advertising by Wayne Clarke, a group of thirty people, aged from seven to seventy, attacked weedy plants in the vicinity of Duidgee Park. Following two hours of steady work a halt was called to decide that the 'friends' would meet on a regular basis, the third Sunday morning of each month.

A sponsor, or benefactor, for the group was needed!!! It was hoped that the group could become incorporated, at an approximate cost of \$80, and also to take out insurance cover for the volunteers.

March 1998 - A devastating fire began in the vicinity of Dumbarton Road and burnt along the both sides of the River as far as Glen Avon in the Shire of Northam. The temperature on the day was recorded at 42°C. [At March 2008, ten years on, the vegetation of that area is still struggling to regenerate and weeds, especially Wild Oats and Soursob, have proliferated.]



17th May 1998 - It was with delight that the Toodyay company, Vernice Pty Ltd, agreed to sponsor the group to be known as the 'Toodyay Friends of the River'. Childhood memories of happy times spent along the River had prompted Jan and Vern Ferguson to present their donation through their son, Michael, to the co-ordinator, Wayne Clarke. Mrs Wendy Brennan of Mt Lawley also made a very generous donation to the Friends for which the group was extremely grateful.

June 1998 - The first steps were taken to becoming incorporated. A draft constitution was developed and was available at the Toodyay Public Library for community comment.

The Objects of the Friends are:

1. To provide an organisation in Toodyay that will work towards the conservation and rehabilitation of the Avon River and its environs.
2. To help enhance the river environment for the enjoyment of local residents and visitors to the area.
3. To work with ARMA on River Recovery Plans aimed at rehabilitation of the riverine environment
4. To work with the Shire of Toodyay in preparing landscape and amenity plans for the Avon River.
5. To encourage group participation by the community in River Recovery projects
6. To publish or assist with the publication of news articles, literature, film or electronic media presentations that will further the objects of the Friends

The annual membership structure:

Ordinary	\$5.00	Junior	\$3.00
Family	\$12.00	Associate member	\$30.00

The inaugural Annual General Meeting was to be held on 16th August 1998.

16th August 1998 – The inaugural Annual General Meeting elected the following:

President: Wayne Clarke  
Vice President: Gaven Donegan  
Secretary: Andrew Marsden  
Treasurer: John Pyle  
Committee: Bob Frayne, Belle Rowe, John Pyle, Walter Kolb  
Publicity Officer: Wayne Clarke  
Patron: Spec Sinclair

18th September 1998 – Incorporation of the Toodyay Friends of the River. Gratitude was extended to Vernice Pty Ltd and Mrs Wendy Brennan for their generous financial donations enabling this important step to be taken in the consolidation of the group of volunteers.

18th October 1998 – Weed eradication had previously been concentrated within the townsite. A working-bee was organised to remove Bridal Creeper infestation from the fringing vegetation of the River in the vicinity of the West Toodyay Bridge. Gaven Donegan entertained the group with stories about the heritage crossing, the old West Toodyay Bridges and some of the characters that used them. It was interesting to see the outline of the old Barrack Pool; the Pool is currently filled with sand as a result of the River Training Scheme.

15th November 1998 – An exciting year had closed! Applications have been made to the Shire of Toodyay for assistance with the supply of trees in 1999 from the 'Local Native Tree and Understorey Scheme', the Minister for the Environment for a Community Conservation Grant to procure a chipper/mulcher and to the Water and Rivers Commission for assistance in procuring a computer. The Friend's next meeting was to be 21st February 1999.

21st February 1999 – The Water and Rivers Commission launched the River Recovery Plan for section 3. The River Recovery Plan was developed by members of the Toodyay community and covered many achievable aspects of river restoration. With facilitation by Mike Kerr (consultant) and Chris Ryan (Water and Rivers Commission) the recovery team had met on numerous occasions throughout 1997 and 1998 and proposed a plan with five key issues: River Discovery and Appreciation, River Repair, Natural Events, River Pollution and Strategic Planning. Strategic actions were then set for each key issue, with

priorities and timing set for each action. The resultant plan was endorsed by the Avon River Management Authority (ARMA) and covered such topics as re-creation of river pools, walk trails, weeds, access, recreation, sediment management, fire management, pollution and land use planning.



During the launch (by Doug Morgan, above left) the Water and Rivers Commission made a presentation of a superseded computer. It would be used to keep up-to-date records of weed control activities, tree plantings (and species) and would be for use, jointly, with the Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee (LCDC) and the Toodyay Naturalists' Club. The first copy of the Toodyay Friends of the River newsletter, 'Biddup', edited by Wayne Clarke, was distributed to all those present (above right).



Agreement was made by the members for a submission to be made to the Natural Heritage Trust for part funding for a Ribbons of Blue Co-ordinator for the area, to be submitted in conjunction with the Water and Rivers Commission. This major project was of great importance to the Friends, as it ensured the continuance of the 'Ribbons of Blue' project so important to the development of sensitivities for our school children towards water quality.

21st March 1999 – The Friends sought to procure the latest aerial photographs from the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) to assist with weed mapping, and the implementation of some of the recommendations from the River Recovery Plans plus location of property boundaries for fire breaks.

18th April 1999 – Cutting back of 'sapwood' of the Tamarisk and the trees painted with Biactive Roundup.



16th May 1999 – Vegetation plots set up behind the townsite to monitor both weeds and natural vegetation. Advice would be sought on the preferable method of eradication of each weed species. Specimens of each plant within the plots were collected, photographed and pressed. Weeds accounted for 80% of plants collected.

A record of terrestrial birds of the River and its environs was commenced.



June 1999 – Second newsletter 'Biddup', edited by Wayne Clarke, available for distribution.

July 1999 – The Shire of Toodyay, in association with the Friends, nominated to host a Ministry of Justice Prisoner Work Camp, a project established in 1998.

17/18th July 1999 – Weeding and tree planting on the western aspect of Duidgee Park. Birds observed included: Great Egret, Fantail Cuckoo, Red Wattlebird, Magpie, Brown Honeyeater, Wood duck.

24th July 1999 – 300 *Eucalyptus rudis* (Flooded Gums) and *Melaleuca raphiophylla* (Swamp Paperbarks) were planted in the vicinity of Duidgee Park. 290 trees were planted, assisted by staff from Kings Park, on the north bank of the River in an area burnt in the 1996 fires. The following day, National Tree Day, saw a further 250 trees planted in Duidgee Park.

August 1999 – It was extremely disappointing to find some of the seedlings had been pulled out of the ground. They were replanted, if still nearby, or replaced as necessary.

15 August 1999 - Annual General Meeting

President:	Wayne Clarke
Vice President:	Gaven Donegan
Secretary:	Andrew Marsden
Treasurer:	John Pyle
Committee:	Walter Kolb, Bob Frayne, Miska Madacsi, Russell Lane
Publicity Officer:	Wayne Clarke
Project Co-ordinator:	Miska Madacsi
Patron:	Spec Sinclair

19th September 1999 – Under supervision of, and with assistance from, Martin Revell, District Manager of the Water and Rivers Commission, the Friends used a chipper/mulcher on a number of Tamarisk plants; the chips were used to spread over other weeds such as Soursop. Weed removal continued as did tree planting.

The Friends registered an interest with CSIRO in receiving the leafhopper, *Zygina* sp., to aid in the destruction of Bridal Creeper. The leafhopper sucks the green material from the leaves reducing flowering, fruiting and tuber formation. This bio control is much safer and less expensive than the use of herbicides.

26th September 1999 – The Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP, Member for O'Connor, announced from Canberra that a number of Western Australian Waterwatch Programmes had funding approved through the Natural Heritage Trust. A grant of \$25,000 was awarded to the Friends to part fund a Ribbons of Blue Co-ordinator in the Avon Catchment. Toodyay District High School children had been involved in the Ribbons of Blue programme for a number of years.

17th October 1999 – The final day of 'Weed Buster Week' saw the Friends busy with removal of Paterson's Curse, Tamarisk, Giant Reed (bamboo) and Castor Oil behind Toodyay townsite. Birds observed included: Splendid Fairy Wren, Brown-headed Honeyeater.



A donation of \$201.75 from the Toodyay Agricultural Society 'end of Show auction' was most gratefully received.

November 1999 – News received of the success of the Shire's submission to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) for a Prisoner Work Camp. Following the public meeting November 10th 1999, the Ministry was asked to consider our project as being of high conservation value and of benefit to both the local and wider community. Acknowledgement was made of the importance of our River Recovery projects.

15/21st November 1999 – Working with Wayne Clarke a front-end loader and a backhoe, equipment belonging to Project Co-ordinator, Miska Madacsi, was used for the removal of False Bamboo. Birds observed included: Western Thornbill, Red Wattlebird, Sacred Kingfisher, Western Gerygone, Horsefield's Bronzecuckoo, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike Thrush, Grey Fantail, Corella, Willie Wagtail.



19/21st December 1999 – Weed and tree removal behind the Anglican Church, Toodyay Traders and Stirling House.

Volunteer hours for 1999, excluding office hours, 160½.

January 2000 – A number of young people from Green Skills spent two days, over their Christmas/New Year break, helping a group of Friends continue to clean up weed infestation behind the Toodyay townsite.

G and B Drainage had been working on the infill sewage project behind the township; once the work had been completed in the area the Friends would continue with their planting programme.

February 2000 – The Avon River is *flowing* – **what a wonderful sight!** However, the weeds are growing – they just love the warm, damp conditions.

The Friends have been planting Bridal Creeper – **WHAT!!!!!!** There is a simple explanation for the plantings of this environmental weed that had been declared '**a weed of national significance**'. The leafhopper, *Zygina* sp., had arrived in Toodyay to attack the Bridal Creeper. A number of the tiny creatures had been brought to Toodyay and over that short trip they had sucked all the green material from the leaves of the transport plants. The leafhoppers would be transferred directly on to the new plants to begin their vital work on the Toodyay Bridal Creeper.



Third edition of newsletter 'Biddup', edited by Wayne Clarke, published.

February 2000 – Notification by the Ministry of Justice that the Shire's nomination to host a Prisoner Work Camp had been successful.

4th February 2000 – A draft programme, to take the management of the Avon River into the next century, was launched by Max Trenorden MLA. The programme, prepared by the Avon River Management Authority (ARMA) and the Water and Rivers Commission, stated the actions needed in the coming years to improve the Avon River. Management issues for the Avon include maintaining the ecological, social, economic and historical values of the river as well as managing the downstream impacts of Avon River management on the Swan River.

20th February 2000 – Continued with weedy tree removal.

19th March 2000 – The Friends began working with the Prisoner Work Camp Team with removal of Tamarisk stumps and preparing the piles to be burned. The MOJ Team made a tremendous difference to the area behind the Anglican Church leaving it park-like! Requests in person, and advertising, had been made to river neighbours to ask that they refrain from dumping rubbish, of any type (including lawn cuttings!), over the banks and on the riverine surrounds. Birds observed included: Splendid Fairy Wren, Black Duck, Mountain Duck, Grey Fantail.

The release area of the leafhopper, *Zygina* sp., had been extended to part of West Toodyay. The original releases had suffered stress from warm weather but were reported to be still surviving.

April 2000 – The MOJ Team continued to clear rubbish and large environmental weeds such as Tamarisk, Castor Oil, Bamboo and Bridal Creeper, from behind the townsite on the River foreshore and environs.

16th April 2000 – Weeds and weedy trees continued to be cleared away in preparation for burning.

21st April 2000 – Burning of rubbish piles and cleanup with the backhoe. Birds observed included: Little Grebe, Black Duck, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Mountain Duck, Black-fronted Dotterel.

17th May 2000 – Avon River Management Authority (ARMA) awards presentation to the Shire of Toodyay and the MOJ team. The Shire was recognised for its contribution and dedication to the protection and enhancement of the riverine environment. It had been the Shire, in association with the Toodyay Lions Club, which had instigated the Avon River Systems Committee, the forerunner of ARMA. The Toodyay Shire was presented with a Gold Rivercare Award.

The MOJ team, from the Prisoner Work Camp Scheme, was presented with a Blue Good River Manager Award for its contribution to the protection of riparian vegetation. Members of the team were also presented with Certificates of Appreciation from the Friends in recognition of their valuable contribution to the Avon River and the Toodyay community.

The Friends dedicated their May busy-bee to the '*Tidy WA in May project*' by burning the piles of rubbish collected by the Prisoner Work Camp Team; Peter Dawson, a member of the Toodyay Central Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, ably assisted this.

June 2000 – The Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Cheryl Edwardes MLA, announced that the Friends were successful in their application to the 1999/2000 Community Conservation Grants. The Friends submission for the '*Survey and Development of a Management Plan for Riverine Weeds*' attracted funding of \$4,800.

The project will employ a consultant ecologist to map the major weeds adjacent to the Avon River, and to prepare a plan for the management of these weeds into the future.

18th June 2000 – 300 trees were planted in Duidgee Park and also behind Stirling House and the Victoria Hotel.

The Victoria Sports and Community Association, from the Toodyay Victoria Hotel, donated \$250 to the Friends towards the restoration of the Avon River.

An Avon Rivercare Project community works trailer was made available to assist with work in the Avon River catchment. The trailer was a joint initiative between the Northam office of the Water and Rivers Commission, the Avon River Management Authority (ARMA), the Natural Heritage Trust and the community. Three local companies assisted with sponsorship to meet some of the cost of equipment.

16th July 2000 – A further 200 trees were planted in Duidgee Park totalling 500 trees planted since June.

The Friends had developed a Project Description for the development of a '*Weed Survey and Management Plan for 3kms of the Avon River adjacent to the Toodyay townsite*'. Consultant ecologists had been invited to tender for the project. It was envisaged the project would provide a blueprint for other riverine surveys and management plans in the region.



20th August 2000 – The Annual General Meeting.

President: Wayne Clarke  
Vice President: Walter Kolb  
Secretary: Andrew Marsden  
Treasurer: John Pyle  
Committee: Gaven Donegan, Bob Frayne, Desraé Clarke, Val Tanner, Miska Madacsi  
Publicity Officer: Wayne Clarke  
Project Officer: Miska Madacsi  
Patron: Spec Sinclair

9th September 2000 – The Water and Rivers Commission presented a Rivercare Workshop in conjunction with Ribbons of Blue, ARMA, Shire of Toodyay and the Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee (LCDC) at a site along Toodyay Brook. The workshop covered such topics as Foreshore and Channel Assessment, Water Quality Monitoring, Riparian Revegetation, River Restoration Techniques and Integrated Catchment Management.



17th September 2000 – Members of the Friends inspected Lloyd Park.

15/17th October 2000 – A continued onslaught made on the Bridal Creeper at the rear of the Victoria Hotel. The plants had finished flowering with the fruits now available for distribution by birds.

19th November 2000 – Assessment of Duidgee Park.

26th November 2000 – Assessments of both Duidgee and Lloyd Parks.

29th November 2000 – Project Co-ordinator, Miska Madacsi, continued to work with his backhoe.

NB – Volunteer hours, excluding office hours, 198½.

February 2001 – The Green Corps team had completed fencing in Lloyd Park. A number of native grasses had been identified in the Park.



18th February 2001 – A meeting held to discuss Duidgee Park and River foreshore development.

March 2001 – A Management Plan of Lloyd Park between the Friends and the Water and Rivers Commission to be developed.

18th March 2001 – Removal of debris from the firebreak along the River behind Stirling House.



April 2001 – The drought over the previous months had seen the demise of many seedlings. It was also noted the number of Tamarisk seedlings found in the hard riverbed, a second '*Weed of National Significance*' prevalent in the Shire of Toodyay!

20th May 2001 – Eradication of large numbers of Castor Oil plants from behind the Anglican Church/Toodyay Traders/ Stirling House by removal of the seed heads and storing them in black plastic bags; this allows the seeds to rot rather than transferring them to another site.

17th June 2001 – Planting of melaleucas and sedges and cleaning up the entrance to Lloyd Park; the erection of a gate at the entrance to the Park.

15th July 2001 – Planting of sedges and trees in the vicinity of the Bolgart [Newcastle] Bridge. Worries held for their survival, as the rains have still not arrived! Began erection of a second gate at the east end of Lloyd Park.

19th August 2001 – Success with the leafhopper, *Zigina* sp., has not been noted. CRC Weed Management Systems/CSIRO has released a second biological control in the form of rust fungus, *Puccinia myrsiphylli*.

Weeding continued behind the townsite and completion of erection of second gate in Lloyd Park.

September 2001 – Cessation of the Prisoner Work Camp Scheme.

2nd September 2001 - The Annual General Meeting

President: Andrew Marsden

Vice President: Walter Kolb

Secretary: Wayne Clarke

Treasurer: John Pyle

Committee: Bob Frayne, Val Tanner, Desraé Clarke, Miska Madacsi

Publicity Officer: Wayne Clarke

Project Officers: Miska Madacsi

16th September 2001 – Weeding, tidying and burning at Lloyd Park.

18th November 2001 - Removal of Castor Oil and Bridal Creeper from behind the townsite.

December 2001 – At the end of the month the Avon River Management Authority (ARMA) to be replaced with a community based waterways advisory committee, Avon Waterways Committee (AWC), in line with all other Authorities in the State. Membership would be drawn from the wider Avon community, taking in the whole of the Avon River Basin.

NB – Volunteer hours, excluding office hours, 178¼.

17 February 2002 – Planning meeting for the year's activities. Removal of Castor Oil plants, Tamarisk, Deadly Nightshade, Lilac Tree from behind the Anglican Church and downstream of the town. A Mistletoe Bird was observed.

14th March 2002 – Assistance given to Val and Neville Tanner by the Friends to apply for a grant from the Avon Catchment Council Community Grant Scheme, supported by the Natural Heritage Trust. The grant application of \$1,500 was successful. At the confluence of the Toodyay Brook and the Avon River on Val and Neville's property, the banks were severely eroded. The grant was to be used to stabilise and revegetate the area to provide habitat for turtles and bird life.

17th March 2002 – Removal of outer growth of Tamarisk then spraying of the main trunk with a woody-weed herbicide, Tordon.



21st April 2002 – Surveying and weeding in Duidgee Park and behind the business centre of town. With the 50mm of rain received over the previous week the newly planted trees appear most satisfactory. Unfortunately the Tamarisk has begun to re-shoot. Erosion continues around the stormwater outlet behind the Anglican Church.

June 2002 – Viv Reid, a consultant of river management, was fulfilling the important role of preparing, with public consultation, a Recovery Plan for other sections of the Avon River. 'The Vision' would be a public statement of aims and objectives over the forthcoming 10 to 20 years.

The Avon had been divided into 18 separate management areas (sections) spanning approximately 191kms. Towns along the River's route include Brookton, Beverly, York, Northam and Toodyay. Sections 1 to 4, pertaining to Toodyay, extend from the upper edge of the Avon Valley National Park to Glen Avon Weir, just inside the Shire of Northam.

July 2002 – Publication of the fourth edition of the newsletter, 'Biddup', edited by Wayne Clarke.

21 July 2002 – Removal of Bridal Creeper from behind the Victoria Hotel.

9th August 2002 – Members of the Toodyay Seed Orchard had gathered, under licence, native seed from designated areas of the Shire of Toodyay. These seeds were then sent to the children of the Doubleview Primary School to grow and nurture the plants until they were mature enough to plant out. The programme was a Rotary International sponsored project. This particular project planting was to take place along the Avon River with the assistance of the Landcare Co-ordinator, Bethan Lloyd, and volunteers from the Friends group.

15th August 2002 – Friends joined schoolchildren at Duidgee Park with tree planting.

17th August 2002 – Members from the Friends attended the launch of the Beverly River Recovery Plans of sections 13 to 16 by the Minister of the Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards. Dr Edwards gave an enthusiastic speech as she had grown up in the Beverly district. She stated, "As a girl, I swam in farm dams and enjoyed picnics at the pool near Johnson's Crossing. I remember the Avon River as a place of great beauty".

18th August 2002 – Annual General Meeting:

President: Andrew Marsden

Vice-president: Walter Kolb

Secretary: Wayne Clarke

Treasurer: John Pyle

Committee: Miska Madacsi, Richard Taylor, Robyn Taylor, Neville Tanner

Publicity Officer: Desraé Clarke

Project Officers: Gaven Donegan, Miska Madacsi

Patron: Viv Reid

The fourth newsletter, 'Biddup', edited by Wayne Clarke, available for distribution. Birds observed included: Grey Teal, White-faced Heron, Welcome Swallow, Ringneck, Red Wattlebird, Weebill, Western Gerygone, Rufous Whistler, Silvereye.

22nd August 2002 – The Avon Waterways Committee (AWC) held its first Annual General Meeting. The major role of the AWC, from community input, was to ensure sustainable waterways management within a framework of Natural Resource Management (NRM).

15th September 2002 – Planting of rushes along River foreshore. Erection of three 'NO ENTRY – CONSERVATION AREA' signs at Lloyd Park.

16/17th September 2002 – The Friends greatly appreciated the assistance from the work team from the Wooroloo Prison with the removal of an old fence from the reserve of land donated by the Lloyd Family. Two members of the Friends group supervised the work.

13th October 2002 – The Lavender Farm hosted the River Recovery Plan workshop for Sections 4 and 5, upstream from Goomalling (now Connor) Bridge towards Northam. The workshop was well attended with the facilitator, Viv Reid, gathering sufficient data from the community members of the area, to develop a draft plan.

The draft for the River Recovery Plan, from the Avon Valley National Park upstream to Deepdale Road, had been completed and awaited comment and endorsement by the Minister of Environment and Heritage, the Hon. Dr Judy Edwards.

20th October 2002 – Collection was made of old fencing materials from Lloyd Park consisting of wire, fence posts and wire netting; the wire was rolled up and left, with the posts, on the road verge to be removed.

17th November 2002 – Removal of weeds surrounding plantings. Birds observed included: Plover sp., Rufous Whistler, Little Black Cormorant, White-faced Heron, White-tailed Black Cockatoo, Sacred Kingfisher, Ringneck, Red Wattlebird, Striated Pardalote, Corella. A pair of mating dragonflies was also observed.

5th December 2002 – Five members of the Friends attended the 'end of year' celebration of the Avon Waterways Committee at Gwambygine.



15th December 2002 – Three large trailer loads of malodorous rubbish were collected and removed by the Friends from the Avon Descent campsite at Cobbler Pool.



Visit to Cobbler Pool, Duck's Pool, Coombawongi Crossing and Rocky Basin Pool. Gaven Donegan told of the lives of the families living in the area along the River. Birds observed included: Splendid Wren, Coot, Willie Wagtail, Little Black Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Grebe and the exciting sighting of 3 Rufous Night Herons!

The Toodyay Seed Orchard members were successful recipients of a grant from the Commonwealth Envirofund for work at Lloyd Park.

Volunteer hours, excluding office hours, 431¼.

February 2003 – The Avon River is flowing beneath the Newcastle [formerly Bolgart] Bridge - a wonderful sight!!! For many, many months the riverbed has been dry except for several small, muddy pools in which the tiny waterbirds, such as the dotterel and the stilt, forage.

Recent heavy, widespread rains had set many waterways running. Calingiri and Bolgart districts received up to 100mls that resulted in filling the Toodyay Brook. Heavy falls in the Shire of Wongan Hills drained into the Mortlock North Branch to flow into the Avon below the weir in Northam. Quairading received good falls and Kellerberrin received 150mls. With all these heavy rains in the Avon Catchment water drained ultimately into the Avon River and finally through the Avon Valley National Park to the Swan and Perth waters.

16th February 2003 – A new fence had been erected around Lloyd Park. While some members removed the old fencing, pickets, netting and wire from the area, others were removing prickly lettuce heads from behind the Anglican Church and putting them in black plastic bags to rot.

Following an informal meeting on the day, it was announced that the well-known ecologist and supporter of the Friends, Viv Reid, had accepted the position as Patron of the Toodyay Friends of the River!

16th March 2003 – 'Wire weed' and 'stink weed' were removed from the Duidgee Park foreshore and newly planted rushes watered. Birds observed included: Pied Cormorant, Red-capped Robins (male and female).

A sub-committee was formed to assist in the preparation of a grand landcare display envisaged for the 150th Toodyay Agricultural Show in October 2003. The display would be in conjunction with all landcare groups within the Shire.

13th April 2003 – Ten members, three visitors and river neighbours collected many bags of rubbish, visible on the River floodplain, following a recent fire in the area. Dumped rubbish included building materials, fencing wire, bottles, broken glass, bike frames and tyres. Using his own vehicle, Gaven Donegan removed it all to the Toodyay Transfer Station. An identification sign was erected at Lloyd Park.

The Friends had been successful in obtaining a Lotterywest grant for equipment for weed control, a CD on Australian grasses, a Global Positioning System (GPS) and signage for Lloyd Park. The GPS is to be used for mapping weed locations, pools and crossings on the Avon River and land features such as creek and brook confluence with the River. Birds observed included: Mudlark, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Silvereye, Weebill, Willie Wagtail.

26th April 2003 – Friends worked with the Deepdale Catchment Group at Weatherall Reserve.

25/27/28th May 2003 – The road reserve in the vicinity of Lloyd Park and the area of placement of a marquee were cleared for the visit of the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards, on May 31st to officially accept the area of Lloyd Park from the Lloyd Family.

31st May 2003 – Dr Judy Edwards, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, officially accepted, on behalf of the people of Western Australia, a donation of land from the Lloyd Family of Toodyay; the land is to be known as Lloyd's Reserve.



The Minister also launched the River Recovery Plans of the Avon River for Sections 1 and 2 (Avon Valley National Park to Deepdale Road), Sections 4 and 5 (Goomalling Road to Northam Town Weir), and Sections 7 and 8 (Spencer's Brook to Burgess Siding).

The Plan for Section 4 and 5 was dedicated to the late Mr Jim Masters OAM *'in appreciation of his devotion to the Avon River'*.

Dr Edwards was guest at the ceremony held in Lloyd's Reserve together with Mr Max Trenorden MLA, Cr Alan Henshaw, (Shire President of Toodyay), Cr Ray Head, (Mayor of Northam), Mr Alan Cole, (Avon Waterways Chair), Mr Wayne Clarke, (Avon Catchment Council Deputy Chair), Mr Oriel Lloyd and members of the Lloyd Family, Shire Councillors from Toodyay, Northam and York, members of the Toodyay Friends of the River, members of the Toodyay Naturalists' Club and the interim Recovery Teams. Mr Martin Revell and staff, from the Department of the Environment, facilitated the day. The Minister joined the guests to enjoy a delicious morning tea catered by the Toodyay CWA.

June 2003 – A 'weed control' trial at the southern end of Lloyd's Reserve was commenced following the ripping of the area by Patrick Ferguson and the location of cables in the vicinity by Garry Nelmes. Gratitude was extended for the time, effort and use of machinery for the preparation for the trial. A different technique was to be used for each of the three plots.

15th June 2003 – Weeding of Castor Oil, Dock, Wild Radish/Turnip, Blackberry Nightshade, Nasturtiums, Paterson Curse around planted shrubs on the River foreshore behind Toodyay town site.



25th June 2003 – Members of the Seed Orchard Group were assisted with the planting of endemic species of shrubs and sedges at Lloyd Reserve for an Envirofund Project. Pieces of carpet were laid out to stifle weeds.

20th July 2003 – Planting of sedges and rushes to stabilise the banks of the Avon north of the township in the vicinity of the miniature railway. Birds observed included: White-faced Heron, Magpie, Western Wattlebird, Great Egret, Yellow Spoonbill, Mountain Duck, Scarlet Robin.

9th August 2003 – Jimperding and Weatherall Reserves were cleaned together with members of the Deepdale Catchment Group. Fallen branches were cleared away, logs were chain-sawed and grass was whipper-snipped. Plantings were made at Weatherall.



The Friends enjoyed a social evening by the holding of a 'Progressive Dinner'.

10th August 2003 – A guided walk was taken through Lloyd's Reserve by Bethan Lloyd, Toodyay Landcare Support Officer and member of the Seed Orchard Group, to appreciate the rich diversity of flora especially the native grasses.

13th August 2003 – Planting of endemic trees and shrubs by the children from the Doubleview Primary School.

14th August 2003 – Annual General Meeting

President: Andrew Marsden  
Vice-president: Walter Kolb  
Secretary: Wayne Clarke  
Treasurer: John Pyle  
Committee: Desraé Clarke, Rae Kolb, Richard Taylor, Robyn Taylor  
Publicity Officer: Desraé Clarke  
Project Officers: Gaven Donegan, Bethan Lloyd  
Patron: Viv Reid

21st September 2003 – A planning meeting was held to formulate projects for 2003/2004.

25th September 2003 – The Avon Waterways Committee, a community-based group charged with keeping a watchful eye on the Avon River, spent a full day visiting stretches of the River between Toodyay and the Avon Valley National Park. The group, led by Gaven Donegan and including many Friends, took a close look at sections of the river of particular interest or concern. Pools, filling with sediment, and bank erosion were major threats to river health. Specific areas used during the Avon Descent were inspected for the need to look after fragile banks and the riparian vegetation.

11th October 2003 – 150th Toodyay Agricultural Show. The Landcare Tent involved conservation groups throughout the Shire. Among the special features was a macro-invertebrate display provided by the Water and Rivers Commission. The fifth edition of the Toodyay Friends of the River newsletter, 'Biddup', edited by Wayne Clarke, was available for distribution at the Show.

12th October 2003 – Thirteen members cleaned up the Agricultural Showgrounds, following the show, as a fundraiser. It was an arduous task especially in the centre of the grounds that held the remains of the fireworks – a greasy, tarry mess!

19th October 2003 – The Friends enjoyed an excursion to the main eastern natural drainage of the Avon River Basin at Yenyenning Lakes and Qualandary Crossing, east of Beverly, to return via Gwambagyne, Spencer's Brook and so to Toodyay - an excellent day of education. Birds observed included: Silver Gull, Grebe, Mountain Duck, Stilt.



16th November 2003 – Weeding occurred around newly planted trees, shrubs and sedges on the floodplain and river edges. Tordon, supplied by the Water and Rivers Commission, was injected into a number of Tamarisks and 'tagged' for identification.



Noted botanist, Penny Hussey, had contacted the Friends stating she had observed bright orange pustules on the back of leaves of the Castor Oil plant in the Perth area. The rust disease, known as 'Melampsora ricini', is peculiar to this plant and with this type of natural infestation it may be useful as a bio-control. The Castor Oil plant is a major weed on the River foreshore around the Toodyay townsite.

11th December 2003 – Members of the Friends participated in the Annual Street Christmas Party with Community Promotion.

21st December 2003 – A fauna survey was undertaken followed by a Christmas get-together enjoyed in the shade of the she-oaks on the banks of the River in Lloyd's Reserve. Birds observed included: Striated Pardalote, Gerygone, Grey Fantail, Brown Honeyeater.

Volunteer hours, excluding office hours, 403.

January 2004 – Extreme carelessness resulted in a devastating fire in the River threatening lives, stock and property. Large, old river trees had been lost forever and the understorey of Paper-barks and She-oaks would take many years to regenerate; the Wild Oat weed problem would increase fire risk in the area a thousand-fold.



15th February 2004 – Topic of concern, discussed at the first Friends meeting for the year, was the need for further firebreaks along the River foreshore. Plants were watered as required. It was noted that many branches of the Tamarisk had died following injection of Tordon. Unfortunately, the Castor Oil plants were proliferating out of control.

Observers had noted thousands of tiny creatures visible in the River. These included native shrimp and at least three species of native fish. Photographs were taken plus samples were sent to the Department of Environment for identification.

March 2004 – A funding grant from Lotterywest had been received by the Friends to purchase equipment to undertake weed control in the Avon River environs; included would be brush cutters, protective clothing and hand tools.

From the Australian Wetlands Database of Inland Waters and the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, the Avon River Valley has a level of importance as a 'Wetland of National Significance'. [The following is the web site for this database: <http://www.deh.gov.au/egi-bin/wetlands/report.pl>]

21st March 2004 – Reading of the 'Strategic Plan 2003 - and into the future' was followed by a discussion and planned actions. Birds observed included: Grey Fantail, Grey-shrike Thrush, Striated Pardalote, Weebill, Great White Egret, White-faced Heron, Magpie, Red Wattlebird, Yellow Spoonbill, Ringneck, Western Gerygone.

28th March 2004 – Avon Valley Landcare and Conservation Achievement Awards were presented at the inaugural Avon Valley Landcare Celebration breakfast held in York. Max Trenorden, MLA for Avon, presented awards to Wayne Clarke, Gaven Donegan and Mrs Rae Kolb. Rae, and Husband, Walter, are also driving forces behind the Phillips Brook Catchment Group.

18th April 2004 – Extensive weed removal and preparation for the expected plantings of trees and shrubs by students from metropolitan primary schools.

May 2004 – Children from the Doubleview Primary School involved in 'The Million Trees' programme were, once again, guests of Toodyay. The children had propagated the plants from native seed members of the Toodyay Seed Orchard

had gathered, under licence, from designated areas of the Shire of Toodyay. These seeds were then sent to the children of the Doubleview Primary School to nurture the plants until they were mature enough to plant.

Work commenced on the removal of sediment from Long Pool but came to an abrupt halt when the Jimperding Brook began to flow. Work would resume when the weather cleared.



20th June 2004 – Continued weeding around existing new plantings and areas for school children from the Nedlands Primary School to assist in the tree planting programmes.

18th July 2004 – ‘Rust affected’ Bridal Creeper was moved into unaffected areas behind Stirling House with weed spraying continued especially of Nasturtiums. Sedges, Melaleucas, Black Wattles, Frankenias were planted. Birds observed included: Pied Cormorant, Pied Butcherbird, Welcome Swallow, Black Duck, Weebill, Western Gerygone, Grey Fantail, Magpie, Striated Pardalote, Silvereeye.

15th August 2004 – Annual General Meeting

President: Richard Taylor  
Vice-president: Andrew Marsden  
Secretary: Wayne Clarke  
Treasurer: John Pyle  
Committee: Walter Kolb, Robyn Taylor, Theone Pyle, Val Tanner  
Publicity Officer: Desraé Clarke  
Project Officers: Gaven Donegan, Bethan Lloyd  
Patron: Viv Reid

The Northam Avon Descent Association (NADA) recognises the importance of pre and post ‘river reviews’ extending from above the Northam Township and downstream from Toodyay to Cobbler’s Pool. Jim Smith (Race Director) conducted the reviews with the following in attendance: Brenden Oversby, (Department of Environment, formerly Water and Rivers Commission) Wayne Clarke (Toodyay Friends of the River) and Alan Cole (Avon Waterways Committee). Reviews have proven to be a valuable tool to maintain the conservation concept.

Protective ground coverage, in the form of special matting, was laid in a number of areas to protect the River banks where craft were taken into the water and also pulled out of the water and up the banks. The protection was especially valuable in the Cobbler Pool area at the overnight campsite.

19th September 2004 – Viv Reid, Patron of the Friends group, gave an update of the River Recovery Plan that pertains to Section 4, allied to Lloyd’s Reserve. Toodyay Landcare Support Officer, Bethan Lloyd, led a tour of Lloyd’s Reserve explaining the work of the Toodyay Seed Orchard Group and the enormous

number of voluntary hours given to experiments in weed control. Project Officer, Gaven Donegan, spoke of organising maintenance of the Reserve's firebreaks.

Gaven Donegan and Richard Taylor had recent discussions with the Hon. Mrs Judy Moylan, MHR, on problems that have developed in the River with the shifting of silt along its length. The gradual filling of a large, natural pool, Long Pool, is evidence of the catastrophe as this glorious sheet of water, a haven for birds and wildlife, lessens in size. It was further explained that with the demise of this pool the silt will continue to progress to the Avon River Gorge.

9th October 2004 – Joint participation between various conservation groups of the Shire produced an excellent display at the 151st Toodyay Agricultural Show. The Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee (LCDC) provided the large marquee for the Landcare display.

A life cycle display of the cane toad was kindly loaned by the Agricultural Department. Toodyay Landcare Support Officer, Bethan Lloyd, had weed specimens on display and much printed data on identification. The Toodyay Seed Orchard Group members were on hand to give help and advice on native plant queries. The Toodyay Naturalists' Club presented a photographic display of wildflowers and club outings. Brendan Oversby, from the Department of Environment, lent photographs of the revegetation of the River foreshore that was work of the Friends. Liz Appelt of the Kanyana Wildlife Sanctuary, together with her volunteers, brought a quokka, euro, echidna, grey kangaroo and a possum to the display,

17th October 2004 – The Friends participated in weeding and whipper snipping around plants on the foreshore of Duidgee Park. 'Rust affected' Bridal Creeper was taken from the town side of the Newcastle (formerly Bolgart) Bridge to the walkway near the caravan park.

18th November 2004 – Gaven Donegan and Richard Taylor met with the new Toodyay Shire Chief Executive Officer, Graham Merrick. River issues were reviewed especially the building up of sand and silt in the pools.

21st November 2004 – Weeding attended at the west end of Duidgee Park. This area is a popular walkway and the newly planted trees and shrubs need to be visible for those using the walkway, the River and its environs.

3rd December 2004 – Richard Taylor, Gaven Donegan and Wayne Clarke participated in a meeting at Long Pool, and other locations, with the Avon Nature Conservation Advisory Committee.

19th December 2004 - Assistance was given for plants used in the experimental weed control plots at Lloyd's Reserve. Surrounds were removed from the plants and black plastic sheeting stored for future use; extensive weeding of the large area attended.

Volunteer hours, excluding office hours, 237½.

20th February 2005 – With a 7am start began an exploratory survey and measurement of three River pools in the Toodyay Gorge those being Long Pool, Duck Pool and Cobbler's Pool. The glorious pools of yesteryear are rapidly filling with silt. Special guest, Sandra Shharma (nee Sinclair and daughter of Spec), from Vancouver, Canada, and Gaven Donegan told of their fun times as youngsters, swimming, diving and fishing in the beautiful pools. Of course, there were also the family picnics on the Riverbanks.



Birds observed included: Mountain Duck, Striated Pardalote, Black-fronted Dotterel, Kookaburra, Magpie, Tree Martin, Raven, Ringneck, Willie Wagtail, Brown Honeyeater, Little Black Cormorant, Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Mistletoe Bird, Rufous Whistler, Black Duck, Coot, Wood Duck, Splendid Fairy Wren, Sacred Ibis, Pied Butcherbird, Australasian Grebe, Common Bronzewing, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Grey Shrike Thrush, Grey Fantail, Galah, a tiny unidentified brown bird at the water's edge. The most exciting sighting of all was that of FIVE Rufous Night Herons sitting in a large dead tree – they were clearly visible!! Also observed were a Fox, Euro, Golden Orb Spider and the carapace of a Long-necked Turtle.



20th March 2005 – Measuring of the sand slugs and the waters of Long Pool, Duck Pool and Cobbler's Pool continued plus extensive photography of the areas from specific markers for future reference.

April 2005 – An environmental graduating student, Kim Nawell, had been working with the Friends with monitoring of sand deposits in the pools between Toodyay and the commencement of the Avon Valley National Park.

Nedlands Primary School students assisted with plantings at Lloyd Reserve.

15th May 2005 – A review of trees, shrubs and understorey, planted each autumn, along the River and its environs was completed; it was pleasing to note the healthy growth of these plantings. The surrounds of the plants are maintained as weed-free as possible and during the months of extreme heat the plants are periodically watered. There has been considerable natural regeneration of Eucalyptus rudis (River Gum) and recent rains have resulted in a very beautiful waterway.

Project Officer, Gaven Donegan, has checked the River firebreaks.

19th June 2005 – Gaven Donegan reported the checking of water levels and growth of planted trees and shrubs at Weatherall Reserve, West Toodyay; he had been watering the plants during the hot weather. He was horrified to find the remains of a dead sheep in an Esky left at the attractive little picnic spot!

The Friends and the Deepdale Catchment Group have rejuvenated the reserve by the removal of rubbish and further plantings of trees and shrubs.

30th June 2005 – Wayne and Desraé Clarke were invited guests to the National launch by the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, of the Australian Government's \$2 billion Water Fund. The Community Water Grants would assist local community organisations to save, re-use or improve the health of their local water resources. Where was the launching held? – at the Woodvale Primary School!!!! The children of the school were wonderful hosts and hostesses on their Special Day.

23rd July 2005 – The University of Western Australia Winter Extension Course, in conjunction with the Friends, arranged a day of education of the Avon River, its beginnings, past problems, current problems and the future vision.



The morning began with an introduction by Patron of the Friends group, Viv Reid; he gave an overview of the whole Avon River Catchment from its beginnings 50 million years ago, to the current highly disturbed river system.

The second speaker, Avon Catchment Council Chair (ACC), Wayne Clarke, spoke of the origin of the ACC in 1994 as the Avon Working Group. The Avon River Catchment covers 12 million hectares with a sparse population of 46,000 people. The Council comprises 9 community members, 2 local government representatives, 2 aboriginal members and 6 agency persons.



The second part of the day was a bus trip down the Avon from Toodyay to the western end of the Avon Valley National Park. Speakers included Viv Reid (the Friends' Patron), Bernie Kelly (Department of Environment), Bethan Lloyd (Community Landcare Support Officer), Desraé and Wayne Clarke (Friends of the River), Phil Kuhne (Fire Management Officer of the Shire of Toodyay), Jim Maher (Avon Valley National Park Ranger) and Gaven Donegan (Vice-president and Project Officer of the Friends of the River). Guests included members of the Friends, staff of the Toodyay Visitors Centre and Charles Wroth (Toodyay Shire President). The day was voted as being highly successful and enjoyed by all participants including those who had travelled from the city for the Course.

#### 28th August 2005 – Annual General Meeting:

President: Richard Taylor  
Vice-president: Gaven Donegan  
Secretary: Greg Warburton  
Treasurer: Wayne Clarke  
Committee: Desraé Clarke, Val Tanner, Theone Pyle, John Pyle  
Publicity Officer: Desraé Clarke  
Project Officers: Gaven Donegan, Bethan Lloyd  
Patron: Viv Reid

September 2005 – Kim Nawell, a student of Environmental Science, has completed a comprehensive survey of several sections of the Avon River. Findings included data on two former very large pools, Barrack and Long Pools.

Historical information of Barrack Pool was that it had derived its name from the position of the Toodyay Police Barracks that were occupied from the 1830's to the 1860's. The original pool was approximately half a kilometre in length and sixty metres in width!!!

8th October 2005 – The Landcare Tent at the Toodyay Agricultural Show was, once again, an outstanding success. Gratitude was extended to the Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee (LCDC) for sponsoring the large marquee to house the conservation groups of the Friends, Toodyay Naturalists' Club, the Toodyay Seed Orchard Group, Toodyay Landcare Support Officer and the Chidlow Marsupial Hospital Volunteers.

17th October 2005 – Garry Snook MLA, Member for Moore, Opposition Spokesperson for the Environment, met with Wayne Clarke and discussed issues

of River management. They travelled downstream to view a number of pools and sensitive sites of the riverine environment.

December 2005 – Volunteer hours, excluding office hours, 531.

January 2006 – The large farm gate at the entrance to Lloyd's Reserve had been stolen. The gate had been purchased with funds raised by the Friends.

19th January 2006 – Gaven Donegan and Richard Taylor met with the CEO of the Toodyay Shire, Graham Merrick, and Shire staff to discuss future planning of the riverine environment.

19th February 2006 – A two-hour General Meeting of Friends was held followed by an hour and a quarter major weeding effort in Lloyd's Reserve. Birds observed included: Brown Honeyeater, Sacred Kingfisher, Mistletoe Bird, Weebill.

20th February 2006 – Gaven Donegan, Project Officer, organised and led a trip along the Avon River from Toodyay through to the Great Northern Highway. Four Senior Shire staff and two Councillors attended the excursion.

Gaven explained the history of the River, as he had known it all his life. Damage, as a result of the 1950's River Training Scheme, was seen at first hand. The Council pledged to give what support was needed to rectify the problem.

March 2006 – Success was enjoyed from the application to the Australian Government Community Water Grants Scheme in obtaining \$7,000. The funding would be used for the restoration of the foreshore of the Avon River involving the regeneration of three hectares of riparian vegetation in the vicinity of the Toodyay townsite. Further works included grading to assist in the control of erosion, weed removal and construction of an artificial wetland to intercept stormwater. A congratulatory letter was received from the Hon. Mrs Judi Moylan MLA, Member for Pearce.

19th March 2006 – A two-hour Planning Meeting had the following outcomes: Working Bee at Weatherall Reserve commencing 8am and a bus trip 'down river' 6th May. Birds observed included: Port Lincoln Parrot, Magpie, Mistletoe Bird, Great Egret, Grey Shrike Thrush, Red Wattle Bird, Silvereye, Brown Honeyeater, Welcome Swallow, Magpie Lark.

23rd April 2006 – Friends worked at Weatherall Reserve whipper snipping, removal of dead branches, weeding around planted shrubs and the area was generally cleaned. This was followed with further tidying, on the day, at the roadside reserve parking area beside the bridge at Jimperding Brook.

Liaison with the Shire continued to sensitively upgrade the parking facilities at Weatherall Reserve, as it is destined to be teams' changeover at the time of the Avon Descent.

2nd May 2006 - Gaven Donegan hosted an ABC television team, from the Stateline programme, reporting on River issues; this was put to air on 5th May 2006. An article followed in the West Australian newspaper with Gaven pictured in one of the silt filled pools of Toodyay's section of the Avon River.

6th May 2006 – The Friends hosted an educational trip, of sixty-six kilometres, down the Avon River from the Toodyay townsite to culminate in the Walyunga National Park at the Brigadoon entrance. There were approximately fifty participants, from both the country and city areas, including conservationists, a politician, government environmental representatives, community members, academics and a Toodyay Shire councillor with Garry Snook MLA as one of the party. Garry has shown great interest in the plight of the River and for him to see the massive problems first-hand was extremely important.



Gaven Donegan gave interesting historical and geographical history throughout the excursion and also introduced various speakers. A riverside family, of over twenty-five years, stated the vast changes that she and her husband had observed over that period with the incredible movement of silt to fill a very large stretch of pool water into several small billabongs.

A staff member of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy spoke of the important outcome of the purchase of land, known as Peruna, between the Avon Valley National Park and the Walyunga National Park. The valuable purchase allowed a continuous wildlife corridor for animals to gain greater area to establish and remain protected. She also spoke of the liaison with the Department of Conservation and Environment with the release of threatened animal species in the Avon Valley National Park.

May 2006 – Wanton destruction, by both two and four wheel motorbikes, was found in the Weatherall Reserve.

The Friends were successful applicants for a Water Monitoring Kit from a partnership of Dilmah Tea and Landcare Australia.

21st May 2008 – Weeding of the riverbank behind the township continued.

18th June 2006 – The Shire of Toodyay provided the use of a backhoe and driver to remove invasive weeds, such as Cape Lilac, Pepper Trees and Tamarisk behind the township. The Friends assisted with the removal and cleanup of these plants following the Shire work.

14/23rd June 2006 – Gaven spent 53.5 hours with a shire employee using a backhoe to remove Tamarisk, Caper Lilac and Pepper Trees along the Avon River behind the townsite from the Connor (formerly Goomalling) Bridge to the School Bridge.

July 2006 – The Friends were successful in the receipt of a Lotterywest financial grant to purchase a custom-made trailer. It will house and transport apparatus to continue with the eradication of weeds, mowing, spraying and other activities along the River environs.



6th July 2006 – Clearing of weeds.

3/10th Gaven continued working with the Shire employee and backhoe for a further 9 hours removing rubbish, Tamarisk and filling in holes at the Weatherall and West Toodyay Bridge car parks.

16th July 2006 – Surveys were made in an area of River bank and surrounds opposite Lloyd's Reserve, 1.1 kilometres upstream from Connor (formerly Goomalling) Bridge. Each 100-metre section was measured and photographed.

John Masters and Jennifer Donegan completed a bird survey of the area and identified 48 species.

20th August 2006 – Survey in the area of Connor (formerly Goomalling) Bridge.

27th August 2006 – Annual General Meeting.

President: Richard Taylor  
Vice-president: Gaven Donegan  
Secretary: Greg Warburton  
Treasurer: Wayne Clarke  
Committee: Brian Shepherd, John Pyle, Robyn Taylor, Val Tanner  
Publicity Officer: Desraé Clarke  
Project Officers: Gaven Donegan, Bethan Lloyd  
Patron: Viv Reid



September 2006 – Spraying attended by the Shire on three small reserves that the Friends work on regularly those being West Toodyay Bridge, Weatherall and Jimperding.

Friends contracted the spraying of firebreaks on Lloyd's Reserve following earthworks donated by Vernice Pty Ltd.

Ray White Avon Valley donated a \$500 Sponsorship cheque with the Friends being the first recipients of this scheme. The money was used to purchase tools and apply signage on the newly acquired work trailer.

17th September 2006 – Weeding and spraying of weeds in vicinity of Duidgee Park followed a General Meeting.

15th October 2006 – The Friends participated in the Landcare tent at the Toodyay Agricultural Show together with other Toodyay conservation groups.

November 2006 – The sixth newsletter of 'Biddup' published and edited by Desraé Clarke. The Friends were extremely grateful to the Department of Water with its assistance in the printing of the newsletter.

Fire emergency tracks were installed adjacent to the River for the purpose of fire management. The Friends have worked with the Shire in the development of these accesses into environmentally sensitive areas.

19th November 2006 – Survey work continued from Connor (formerly Goomalling) Bridge as far as Extracts Weir. Spraying took place on the new shoots of the feral plant, Tamarisk.

Volunteer hours till 31st September 293.5. No record of the hours from this date until the end of 2006.

18th February 2007 – A well-attended General Meeting to fully assess the forthcoming year's projects was held. Birds observed included: Mudlark, Mistletoe Bird, Scarlet Robin, White-faced Heron, Silvereye, Weebill, Coot, Stilt, Kookaburra, Grey Fantail, Magpie, Mountain Duck, Red-capped Parrot, Galah, Willie Wagtail.

18th March 2007 – The 'fauna friendly' woody herbicide, Tordon, was used on the feral plant, Tamarisk, from the school bridge to Newcastle (formerly Bolgart) Bridge. The plants were cut back and the bases painted with the mixture.

April 2007 – Restoration was completed of the River crossings, Strahan's and Munnapin, with approximately fifty ton of rock used to repair the main streams in each crossing for the safe use of emergency units in the event of fire.

Funding had been received from Avon Descent Multiplex to complete the work of stabilising the banks of Cobbler's Pool. Members of the Friends were invited to receive the cheque. Protective rockwork was laid at both the upper and down-river ends of Cobbler's Pool to assist in protection of the banks of the Pool especially at the time of the Avon Descent in August each year.

22nd April 2007 – Continued with the removal of Tamarisk.

May 2007 – The Friends received a visit from Sandy Leighton, National Athel Pine (Tamarisk) and Mimosa Co-ordinator – Weeds of National Significance Programme, based in Alice Springs. Sandy visited the area to inspect the infestation along the Avon River; she commended the Friends on the amount of work in Tamarisk control that has been achieved by volunteers.



The Fink River in the Northern Territory has been devastated by the invasion of the Tamarisk by blocking waterways resulting in severe flooding. Extensive research had been done on the invasion of the weed on the Gascoyne River, in and around Carnarvon. It is vital that this noxious weed is controlled on the Avon to prevent similar occurrences.

20th May 2007 – A General Meeting was held, as the weather was misty with some rain. Spraying of weeds will be attempted on the 21st May if the weather permits.

31st May 2007 – A riffle assessment was completed on Boyagerring Brook.

June 2007 – Gratitude was extended to Vernice Pty Ltd for the assistance given in the construction of a riffle across Boyagerring Brook near the Toodyay District High School. The riffle is intended to reduce erosion and sedimentation by slowing the water flow and allowing the sediments to drop out behind the riffle to prevent them from entering the Avon River. Nearly ninety tons of rock and blue metal was utilised in the construction. The Australian Government's Community Water Grants Scheme provided funds for the project. The riffle is available for use by emergency vehicles in the event of a fire.

The Friends were grateful for the works undertaken by the Shire employees, Jo and his team, over a three-week period. Tamarisks were removed along the River in the vicinity of the town and environmental work was undertaken.

17th June 2006 – Surveying the Riverbanks between Connor (formerly Goomalling) Bridge and Newcastle (formerly Bolgart) Bridge. Birds observed included: Australian Magpie, Port Lincoln Parrot, Little Black Cormorant, Brown Honeyeater, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Red Wattlebird, Black Duck, Corella.

26 July 2007 – Students from the Governor Stirling High School joined the Friends on 'Planting Day' with plantings along the River foreshore. The project is made possible by the Million Trees Project in liaison with Men of the Trees and Rotary. The Toodyay Bendigo Bank, a sponsor of the Friends group, supplied a BBQ following the planting.

18 August 2007 – Working-bee of rubbish collection and weeding attended. Inspection was made of the Tamarisk regrowth and stormwater drain erosion behind the Anglican Church.

23rd September 2007 – Annual General Meeting

President: Gaven Donegan  
Vice-president: Richard Taylor  
Secretary: Robyn Taylor  
Treasurer: Wayne Clarke  
Committee: Desraé Clarke, Bethan, John Pyle, Theone Pyle, Val Tanner, Greg Warburton  
Publicity Officer: Richard Taylor till March 2008; Desraé Clarke from March 2008  
Project Officers: Gaven Donegan, Bethan Lloyd  
Patron: Viv Reid

13th October 2007 – The Friends participated, with other conservation groups of Toodyay, in the Landcare Tent at the Toodyay Agricultural Show. They were delighted to be included in the winning of the 'Best Exhibit' award.

27-28 October 2007 – The Friends hosted nine student volunteers from the Curtin University for the John Curtin weekend. The John Curtin Weekend began in 1999 when students and staff began modelling John Curtin's values of 'Vision, Leadership and Community Service' by committing themselves to community volunteer service.

On the first afternoon of the weekend they were taken downstream, to view the Avon River in the Avon Valley National Park with opportunities for learning of environmental issues and photography. On the Sunday morning the students were involved with the survey work with the Friends on the foreshore of the River in the vicinity of the townsite.

Sponsorship for the weekend was from the Department of Water and the Toodyay Bendigo Bank for which the Friends were very grateful.

18th November 2006 – General Meeting. Birds observed included: Carnaby's Cockatoo, Striated Pardalote.

24th November 2007 – A Toodyay Brook Rivercare Workshop was held on the property of Val and Neville Tanner. The workshop was sponsored by the Avon Catchment Council and managed by the Department of Water, Northam, in partnership with the Friends and the Toodyay Land Conservation District Committee. Much work was achieved on the rebuilding of a riffle in the Toodyay Brook; it had been washed away during a major rain event from Cyclone Clare, January 2006.



Volunteer hours, excluding office hours, 231.5.

30 January 2008 – A white stain was noted in the water below Connor Bridge and downstream from the Bridge; Brian Chambers, a Toodyay resident, photographed it. The stain was reported to Wayne Clarke, Treasurer of the Toodyay Friends of the River, and the Phytoplankton Ecology Unit (PEU) received six scum grab samples. The Cyanobacterium Oscillatoria was dominant in all six samples. The department states that it was not advisable for either people or animals to wade or swim in the River water as the bacteria could cause skin irritation.



17 February 2008 – A group of thirty-five persons gathered at a member's home to attend a Planning Meeting. Those present were members, river neighbours, a Toodyay Shire Councillor and interested Shire residents. The planning was extremely positive with those present taking on the bi-annual monitoring of sections of the River over February/March and August/September; the reports would be then transferred onto a data base to take action should the need arise.

20 March 2008 – Printing and compilation by the Department of Water of Volume 3, Issue 2 of the 'Biddip' edited by Desraé Clarke.

Right: First of each of the volumes of the Friends' newsletter, Biddip. The name, 'Biddip' is from the call of the frog.



The first working get-together for 2008 was in two groups. The first group, calling themselves the Avon Gorge Group, worked on repairs to Strahan's Crossing following delivery of thirty ton of stone. The Crossing required maintenance from general 'wear and tear' of past winter flows and weathering.

The second group was busy on the River foreshore upriver from Duidgee Park and in the vicinity of the townsite. The members collected rubbish and continued with the eradication of Castor Oil and Tamarisk, with treatment of regrowth of the latter plants. Bird observed included: Grey Shrike Thrush, White-faced Heron, Pied Butcher Bird, Red Wattlebird.

20 April 2008 – The Toodyay Friends of the River were delighted to gain National Recognition at the Invasive Species Forum held April 15th 2008. The Friends' work on the continued eradication of the feral plant, Tamarisk, has been well documented and is to be included in a 'Best Practice Manual' currently in production.

The Friends have recently taken over the sales of the publication of 'Riparian Plants of the Avon Catchment – a field guide'. The Natural Heritage Trust, Avon Catchment Council and the Toodyay Friends of the River funded this excellent publication authored by Brendan Oversby; it was published by the former Department of Environment (now Department of Water).



The working-bee saw members continue to work on the eradication of Tamarisk with both poisoning of the plants and removal of regrowth.

23 May 2008 – A 'special meeting and casserole tea' was held with attendance of thirty three people including Bernie Kelly (Program Manager, Waterway Assessment and Restoration Department - Acting Manager Avon Region), Michael Allen (Department of Water), Jim Smith (Avon Descent Race Director) and Mrs Smith, Cr Charles Wroth (President Shire of Toodyay), Cr Sally Craddock and Cr Bethan Lloyd, members of the Friends of the River and Avon River Neighbours.

Members presented their 'Sectional Reports' of the Avon River followed by Michael's presentation of survey reports prepared by JDA Consulting on the condition of the River and sediment loading; Bernie spoke on current and future projects involving the Friends.

15 June 2008 – A comprehensive meeting was held in Duidgee Park in extremely cold, wet and windy weather. Because of the dreadful weather the planned work for the day was cancelled. Birds observed included: Yellow Spoonbill, Maned Ducks (in trees), Pied Cormorant, Black Duck, and Red Wattlebird.

20 July 2008 – Following an hour and a quarter meeting in Duidgee Park, once again in extremely cold, but fine, weather, members proceeded to Weatherall Reserve to attend to whipper-snipping of grass along the road into the Reserve. Large rocks were used to mark small trees and collection of rubbish around the Reserve was attended.

Further to the work done at Weatherall Reserve three members proceeded to the car park at the West Toodyay Bridge to tidy up spilt rubbish then on to Dumbarton Bridge car park. The rubbish in that area was quite significant – it included the carcass of a dog in a bag, dumped garden refuse and twenty-five vehicle tyres!

23 July 2008 – A meeting was held on site at both Long and Cobbler Pools, between Bernie Kelly and Michael Allen (Department of Water), representatives from Toodyay Friends of the River, River neighbours, the contractor (for the removal of sediment from the Pools) and Boral, to discuss the strategy to be used to clean the Pools of the sediment. It was resolved to place a dredge on Long Pool following the Avon Descent and a long-reach excavator to be used in Cobbler Pool later in the year, possibly December, when water levels have dropped.

6 August 2008 – An excursion was taken from Northam to Brookton of Friends, River Neighbours, and members of Rivercare Groups along the Avon; they joined members of the Avon Waterways Committee. The trip took in the following sites: York's Avon Park with viewing of the new Flood Signage, Brookton's upgraded Waste Water Treatment Plant, Boyagarra Pool, Qualandary Crossing, Kokeby Pool and Beverly Pool.



17 August 2008 – Annual General Meeting

President: Gaven Donegan  
Vice-President: Desraé Clarke  
Secretary: Robyn Taylor  
Treasurer: Wayne Clarke  
Committee: John Pyle, Brian Shepherd, Val Tanner, Greg Warburton  
Publicity Officer: Desraé Clarke  
Project Officer: Bethan Lloyd  
Patron: Viv Read

Prior to the Annual General Meeting members collected litter along the road verges of Toodyay Road from the Information Bay towards the township. A great variety of rubbish was collected proceeding as far as the parking bay to then return, on the opposite side of the main road, to the Information Bay. The final count of the orange litterbags was fifty – a great effort!

Following the AGM the Friends enjoyed a barbeque lunch in the vicinity of the River to enjoy both the delicious food and a wonderful spectacle of water-bird activity. Fauna sightings of a juvenile gwardar or dugite and a Ctenotus fallons.



Above: River Training Scheme accident.



**SUMMARY**

The data given from the very beginnings of the Toodyay Friends of the River in 1994, Incorporation in August 1998 and to the present day has demonstrated the dedication of community members to care of the Avon River as it winds itself, not only through the shire of Toodyay, but also into the heart of the community.

The 'physical hours' that have been documented on an annual basis, are an extremely small portion of the actual time volunteers have spent in their quest for Rivercare. Many, many hours have been spent completing submissions for funding, public relation exercises, weed trials, publicity and the momentous secretarial and treasurer commitments.

The Group has been extremely fortunate to have the constant 'listening ear' and assistance of the staff at the Northam office of the Department of Water, especially Bernie Kelly and Terry Brooks. Successful funding has been gratefully received through the expertise of Regional Manager, Martin Revell. Gratitude is also extended to the Friend's Patron, Viv Read, who has been a wonderful supporter and mentor especially at the time of the first sewing of seeds of an idea. Finally, if it had not been for Wayne Clarke's vision in 1994, his persistence to promote his vision, and as first Chairperson of the Group in 1998, there may not have been a 'Friends of the Avon River' in Toodyay.



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