

Friends of Mandurah Community Museum Newsletter

Christmas Issue 2019

Elizabeth Thomas nee Cooper.

Joseph Cooper arrived in Fremantle aboard *The Warrior* in March 1830 with his wife Elizabeth (35 years old) and their children, Elizabeth (7 maybe 9), Rebecca (5), Joseph (3) and Mary Ann (6 months).

The young Elizabeth known as Betsy, was to marry Captain John Thomas in 1841. The couple went on to become business owners in Fremantle where they ran a general store as well as several shipping businesses. With John away so often at sea, it would appear that Elizabeth, may have taken a very active role in the land-based businesses.

They appeared to have been happily married, working closely with each other, both in the businesses in Fremantle and later at the farm. They also maintained ties with the Cooper family and Mandurah. Elizabeth gave birth to eleven children over a period of nearly 20 years, with all but three children reaching adulthood.

In 1858, while John was at sea Elizabeth purchased a farming property near Pinjarra. The farm had been put up for sale some 5 years after the previous owner, Adam Armstrong died. One of the Armstrong sons had married Maria Cooper, much younger sister of Elizabeth. Life continued to be hard for Elizabeth, as the farmhouse was badly damaged in floods in 1862.

The home was rebuilt into what is now the Ravenswood Hotel. In 1875, the couple retired to Fremantle where John was well known. They left the Pinjarra property in the hands of John Frederick, their eldest son. John Frederick continued to farm the property and was buried in Pinjarra cemetery in 1904.

John and Elizabeth Thomas's marriage lasted 47 years, only ending with Betsy's death in 1888.

Captain John Thomas died in 1907. He had married a second time to another Elizabeth (Tracey) in 1899 some eleven years after Betsy had died.

(Captain Thomas's will makes for interesting reading but is not relevant to this article.)

Jan Baker.

Editors Remarks. Not that I really need the space as my handiwork fills the newsletter. However it might be useful to look at what has 'trended' this year.

Over a full year we have featured Coastal Trading, with several significant Mandurah Pioneer families featuring extensively. We probably could go on with this series as it is clear that pioneers who came to Mandurah, also went away and opened up both land in the far north and sea lanes, shipping produce near and far, around the world and especially to Asia and other parts of Australia. But we won't!

Next year we will return to bringing you information relating to an earlier Mandurah, more benign but a harder existence. In some cases it would be closer to say our pioneers subsisted until better days came.

We have featured some amazing women of Mandurah over the years, and Nellie Lanyon, featured earlier this year deserves this label.

It was so good to finally have a mural on our side wall to attract more visitors, the mural has been an item volunteers have tried to promote for many years. The effect of this has been further enhanced by signage leading to the museum from under the bridge. We have noticed an increase in visitors due to these two items.

Finally I would like to wish you and your loved ones a Happy, Peaceful and Safe Christmas season.

Jan Baker.

Special features.

Robert Holmes: Policeman of the Peel.

Sue Doherty & Debra Armstrong.

Elizabeth Thomas. Jan Baker.

**Committee of Friends of Mandurah
Community Museum.**

Volunteer outing, Mandurah Dreaming.

Regular features.

From the MDO .
Education Matters.
Maritime Moorings
Editor

Nicholas Reynolds.
Katrina Gauci
Dave Austin
Jan Baker.

EDUCATION MATTERS!

Wow! How this year has flown by. I reached the milestone of working at the Museum ten years earlier in the year. I feel so lucky to work with you all. Thank you for your dedication to our museum. Together we have displayed 12 Curious Community Collectibles. My favourites were Honey Month, Science Week and Wacky Witches.

Do you have a collection?

The Mandurah Museum would like to display your collection.

We invite people of all ages to participate.

Your collection could be anything from tea towels, model trains and fridge magnets to teddy bears.

If you are interested please contact the museum by emailing museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au or phoning 9550 3683.

Please promote this to friends/family and organisations you are a part of.

This year the activities organised for the children to participate in were Toy Cars, Fishing Clinics, Create a Crab, ANZAC, Create a Bookmark, NAIDOC, Science Week, Save the Koala, Light Fantastic and a Christmas Treasure Hunt. The number of activities available during the year have increased to include special days that do not occur during the holidays. Over 700 children participated in activities at the Museum.

A huge thank you to Tom (Phyl Hardy's Husband) for producing 120 wooden cars for the children to assemble for the January holiday activity and 100 spinning tops as prizes for the Christmas Treasure Hunt this December.


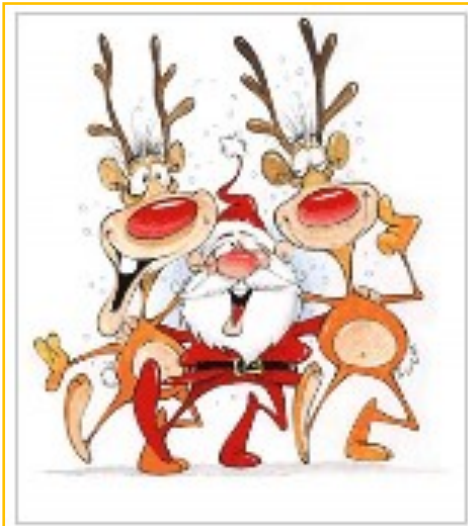
Thank you to everyone involved for your time, support and effort over the three days of the fishing clinics held in April. Especially Ceylene Copley and Michael McGhie for preparing and cooking the sausage sizzle each day.

A big thank you to the volunteers that were involved in special days such as Anzac Day, the Children's Festival and the Intergenerational Christmas Event.

Excursion numbers were good with over 1330 students visiting with their school. The number of schools that visit that are not in our local area is increasing with classes travelling as far as Rockingham.

You make working at the Museum a positive and rewarding experience and I look forward to seeing you next year. Have a Happy and Safe Christmas and New Year.

Katrina Gauci



Transformers Art & Craft


With Xanthe Turner at the
Mandurah Community Museum

Learn to draw your own Transformers, make a Transformers mask to take home and complete a Transformers quiz.

Details

Dates: 14-16 and 21-23 January
Days: Tuesday-Thursday
Time: 1.00pm-3.00pm
Cost: Free
Ages: Suitable for 6+

Adults must accompany children and bookings are essential.
To book call the Mandurah Community Museum on 9550 3683 or email museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au



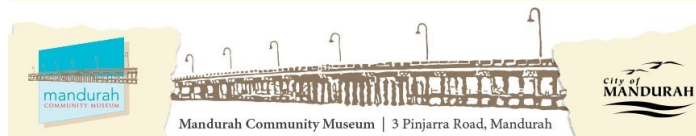
Christmas Treasure Hunt

The Mandurah Community Museum is having a free Christmas Treasure Hunt during December. Complete the hunt and receive a prize.

Details

Dates: December 1-22
Days: Tuesday-Friday 10am-4pm
Saturday-Sunday 11am-3pm
Ages: All ages are welcome to join in.
Parents must accompany children

For more information call the Mandurah Community Museum on 9550 3682 or email museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au



Robert Holmes - Policeman of the Peel District.

Robert Holmes was born 1833 in Ireland, son of John Holmes (a farmer). Robert was an agriculture labourer in Ireland when he married Maria Wilson on 30th June 1855. Maria was born 1835 in Ireland, daughter of John Wilson and Jane, nee Johnston. They had one child, Jane, born in Ireland in 1856.

Robert and Maria arrived in Western Australia per the *City of Bristol*, on 8th August 1857 with their daughter Jane. Robert was now 22 years old. The *City of Bristol* had a tonnage of 619 tonnes. The cost of the passage was £17. There were 87 males and 115 females on board. Their second child, John, is born in Perth in 1857. He only lived 3 months and died in 1858.

Robert joined the Western Australian Police in 1857 and was living in Guildford when their third child is born, Anne in 1858.

He was with the Police force in Vasse, Busselton, in 1860 when twins Robert Hardy and William Johnson were born.⁵

He must have been back in Guildford in 1862 as this is where their sixth child, John is born.⁵ Unfortunately, John lived for only one day.

It is recorded that Robert was on York Fair Duty on October 27th 1863. He next travelled from Guildford to York to pursue an escapee named Graham on March 8th 1864.

In 1863 he nominated his brothers-in-laws Thomas Henry Sunter and Thomas Wilson and their families to come to the colony.

Maria and Robert's seventh child born in Guildford 1864⁷, was Thomas Charles.

As a Constable, Robert was in Fremantle prior to being stationed in Mandurah on 22nd April 1864. The police station had been built at Mandurah in 1853 and was situated close to the old military barracks. By 1853 a new uniform was issued. It consisted of a broad skirted coat of rifle green with white metal buttons embossed with a crown, rifle green trousers, and the same helmet as previously used but with a black cloth covering.

Interesting to note from Ronald Richards' book "The Murray District of WA" how the police rarely had a dull moment. Robert would have been keeping law and order among the Aborigines and apprehending runaway convicts, not to mention the usual clerical duties. The horses also needed grooming and feeding. His uniform tended to soil readily and were not easy to clean. Boots had to be treated with dubbin (treating leather with grease and oil to protect) and revolvers and carbines oiled frequently to prevent rust.

In December 1865 Constable Robert Holmes had to report the sudden death of Thomas Peel Esquire. He needed to then notify the authorities. An inquest was held the following morning in which they arrived at the Verdict of "Died from Natural Causes".

In 1866 a baptism is recorded at Christ's Church, Mandurah on 14 October, a son, named Joseph John. It is also noted that in 1866 Robert bought 4 Town Lots in Pinjarra. The first blocks to be auctioned. Consisting of 89 town lots located on the river side of what is now called Camp Road, each averaging in size about ½ acre at £5 per town lot.

In 1869 Cecilia Hardy wandered away from her home and had become lost. She was found 5 days later by Constable Robert Holmes with two native trackers, unfortunately, she had died of thirst.

The same year another son was baptised on the 4th October from a private house. His name, was George David. Another baptism is found for Henry Septimus 26 November 1871 at Christ's Church Mandurah and yet another son baptised Henry Ernest on 5 January 1873. Their last child was Hilda Maria baptised in their own home 28th November 1874 but she only lived for one month.

On the 24 July 1878 Police Constable Robert Holmes sent a report regarding a Vessel having floundered about 7 miles off Point Robert (Halls Head) on the South end of Murray Reef. It was the '*James Service*' of Melbourne. On board were Theatrical Performers going to Melbourne from Penang. A search was conducted by Constable Holmes, Mr C Tuckey and other locals along North Beach. Found were endless tins of castor oil, large quantities of clothing, boxes, trunks and luggage. On Thursday July 25th Constable George Pridmore reported that he had met Constables Holmes and Offer on the beach between Rockingham and Mandurah. About 2pm the first body was found floating near the shore. It was identified as Mrs J Towers. A second body found on Sunday July 28th was another woman identified as Mrs Cowdery. They were both from the theatrical company. Seven other bodies, which were washed ashore from the wrecked barque, were the subject of reports by Constable Holmes.

Robert received a reward of £4 on May 18th 1881 for service. The report states "An exceptionally good character."

Robert died by his own hand, having shot himself along the side of Rockingham Road. He died 21st October 1882. The Coroner stated "*Gentlemen, you have heard the evidence, which, I think, is very clear and quite removes any suspicion of foul play having occurred which might at first have suggested itself. I think there can be no doubt the deceased shot himself, while in a state of unsound mind, caused by the effects of a sunstroke acting upon him while in a depressed state of spirits.*"

He is buried in the Christ's Church graveyard, Mandurah.

Of his children, Joseph John became a Member of Parliament after being a storeman, butcher and pastoralist, part owner with J. A. Kilfoyle of Rosewood Station (affiliated with the Durack family).

Another son, Thomas Charles, born Guildford 1864 served in the W.A. Police force for 37 years rising to the rank of Inspector. He died while serving at Geraldton on 11th November 1920 and is buried at Karrakatta.

Joseph John Holmes, son of Robert.

Joseph was a businessman, Mayor of Fremantle and member of both the Legislative Council and Assembly at different times.



Museum Development Officer.

The completion of the courtroom redevelopment project has now occurred with the final version of the interactive game being installed on the tablet located in the gallery. In creating the game from scratch a period of 'play testing' was needed to uncover any mistakes which had been made in the process of creating the storyline of the game along with any inconsistencies in game play. Typos and punctuation errors had crept in with the text provided to the game makers being retyped and often made to fit into text boxes that were too small.

Another area which needed significant work was the game play itself with all screens and activities having to 'make sense' in terms of one event leading to another on the voyage from England to the Swan River and then on to Mandurah and Pinjarra. Many times changes to one element would place others out of order, hence checking involved playing the game through over and over again in order to test that every possible outcome 'made sense'.

After all this, we are now in a position where the game offers a challenge, is interesting and at times amusing, and will give players a taste of at least some of the hardships faced by Thomas Peel and the first settlers in Mandurah and Pinjarra.

As part of the City of Mandurah's infrastructure works for the 2019/20 financial year the asbestos roof of the old police sergeant's quarters at the back of the museum will be replaced. The replacement will be made from colour-bond steel and require 75mm wide strapping to be placed down the walls of the building in order to secure the roof. This was explained by the structural engineer who is supervising the work as being necessary due to new regulations which require stronger tie downs for roofs as opposed to those originally incorporated into the building. This now needs to be added to the building's exterior whereas when new buildings are constructed the fastenings can be hidden inside walls. The lower weight of the steel roof verses asbestos sheeting makes this even more important.

An exciting project which is now well underway has been the production of a podcast series on Mandurah's history in conjunction with West Coast Radio. The podcasts will be a series of 10-20 minute interviews with Nicholas conducted by one of the radio station's hosts, with each episode focusing on one place or family which has had significant involvement in Mandurah's past. When complete the interviews will be available for download as a series for people to listen to at their leisure on their phones or computers. Ian Bassett-Scarfe was the instigator of the project and agreed that the completed interviews will be made available immediately to the museum for us to use as we see fit. The interview series is currently half way through, with interviewer Nick Morgan currently editing the first batch into their final form.

One of the focuses of the last two months has been the upgrade of the library's computer catalogue system to a new version. While this sounds simple, the change is a major update which moves services 'online'. This means that anyone who needs to can access the system from a pc with a connection to the internet rather than having to use a computer which the system is installed on. Some changes have been made to Archives, our museum cataloguing system, which has gone relatively smoothly and in fact has made the system much more visually appealing than was the case in the past.

Thanks must go to our cataloguing team for adjusting to yet another change! Nicholas has also been involved in helping improve the look and functionality of the whole system hand in hand with other senior library staff. This has proven to be both interesting and a good way to get to know members of the library team. Bruce, our library technician, has said that the system upgrade was the smoothest he had been involved with and that the end result has been a great improvement. Small changes will be ongoing as suggestions and feedback are received from staff and the public.

Nicholas has been fortunate to have been invited by Judith Tuckey to view some historic papers relating to Charles Tuckey and the Peel Inlet Preserving Works. The contact came thanks to Louise Helfgott who had been discussing the papers with Judith and mentioned the idea of the Museum as being a long term home for them. Nicholas has spent a number of Friday mornings with Judith and Louise examining the papers. Many appear to be volumes of day books dealing with the operation of the preserving works in terms of canned good going up to Fremantle and stores being bought to keep the works running. Many are also accounts and correspondence of the Mandurah Progress Association of which Charles Tuckey was secretary around the turn of the 19th century. Unfortunately many of the books are water damaged which has made the ink run and fade, making them hard to read. Judith is not yet ready to make a donation, but we are considering borrowing a volume at a time to copy. The Museum would need to purchase a photographic copy stand as the books are far too fragile to place open on a scanner.

Nicholas Reynolds



Snippet from Oral History of Violet Sutton relating to Robert Holmes, Policeman of the Peel.

Policemen

"No, no policemen, the policeman left. Ages ago, we had a police station here, I don't know whether they had one in Pinjarra at the same time, but it was mostly you see people, these convicts getting loose and they had the ferry here to get across otherwise they had nowhere else to go. Well they had a policeman here. But Holmes was one, you've heard of Holmes."

Holmes

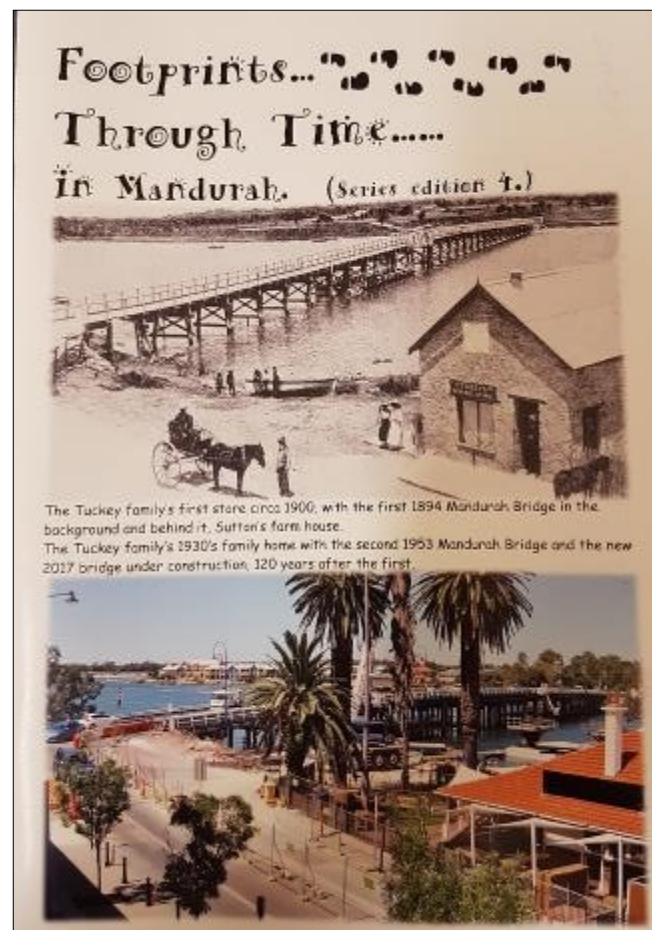
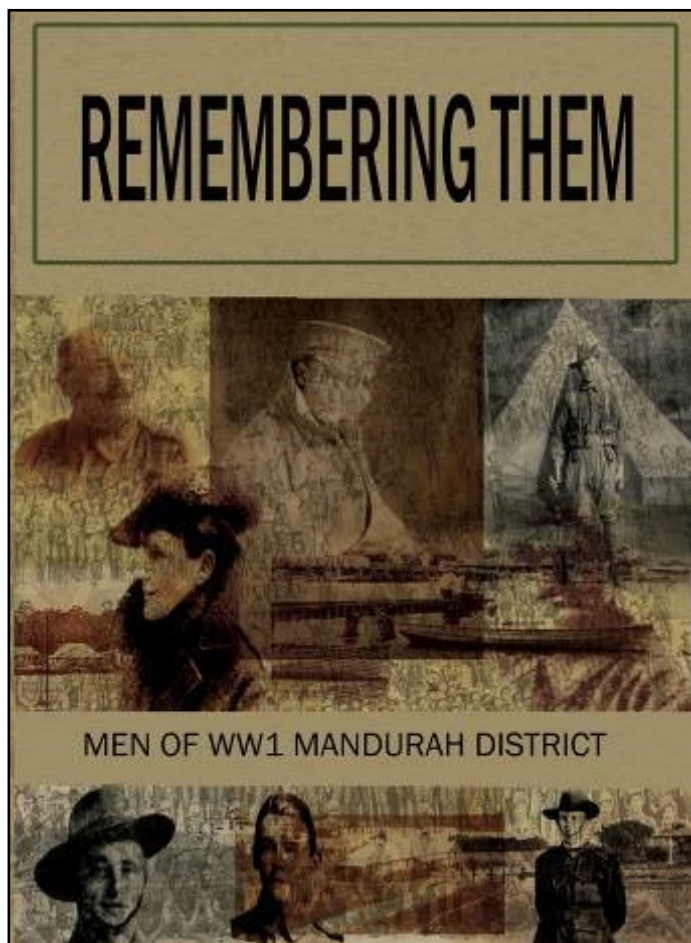
"He was the last one I remember. . . But he was the one that was here the longest. All the Holmes, old Joe Holmes he was a member of Parliament, and he went to the little school down here that was run near the church and that was run by Mr Mewburn, well I'd better not tell you his history because (sound interrupted). He was a very good writer too, every one of his pupils wrote beautiful hands, he was quite a good old chap, he used to tell us 'no good teaching them geography and that, they'd only be chasing a cows, all the time sort of thing (laughs)."

Maritime Moorings. We have finally been able to do our first informative heritage cruise. This project has been something the team has been working on for a very long time and were only able to bring it to fruition with the generosity of Mandurah Murray Mayday to whom we are extremely grateful. (I request anyone who is considering changing their wardrobe or furniture to consider donating unwanted items to Mayday).

We learnt from our first cruise that a crew of three and four volunteers is a very comfortable number to have on board. We also learned that we need to start these cruises earlier at nine thirty to enable us to retrieve the boat before the wind picks up. We found the wind makes it difficult; blowing against the three metre elevated advertising banner and blowing the boat away from the trailer.

We visited or pointed out ten places of historic interest in a trip that takes one and a half hours and is a very enjoyable way to learn more about Mandurah's history.





CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS. THE FRIENDS HAVE SUPPLIES OF THESE ITEMS FOR SALE. THESE REMAIN THE SAME PRICE BUT COULD PROVIDE EITHER A SMALL GUEST GIFT OR A LARGER PERSONAL FAMILY GIFT. FUNDS RAISED SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE 'FRIENDS'.



BOOKS.

Footprints	\$20
Remembering Them	\$55
(Men of WW1 Mandurah District).	

Mandurah Sketches	\$13
The Bibbulmun	\$13
Mandurah Murray Story	\$ 5

OTHER ITEMS.

Mugs	\$10
Mousepads	\$ 8
Stubby Holders	\$7.50

Badges, Magnets, Bookmarks
also available



October 23rd saw volunteers meeting bright and early at the museum for a short routine meeting. We numbered 20 people and were brought up to date with what is happening at the museum.

Outing. After morning tea, we all got on board the bus provided by the City of Mandurah. We were going on an indigenous tour of the Rivers, Estuary and sea with local identity, George Walley. George wears many hats in Mandurah, but today he was our guide and took museum volunteers to sites we had never been to, and also gave all of us information about those sites, and their importance to past and present indigenous residents of Mandurah.

With George's knowledge of the Noongar language, we were told about some of the names for the various areas of water. Gubi meaning water, bilya – river (think Beeliar wetlands), djilba – estuary, sea – wardan.

We were taken to the peaceful reserve of Riverside Foreshore. This is where the '**Joseph and Dulcie Trail**' commences following the Serpentine River. This was where Joseph and Dulcie Nannup often camped and sustained their family by fishing in the lakes and rivers.

Following this we moved to the Coodanup Foreshore, signposted Djilba Daabal-Gabi (estuary waters) another peaceful area with walk trails near it. George answered our myriad of questions here and took note of any early settler historical information we had to tell. Cooper's Mill could be seen in the distance.



Group Photograph of Museum Volunteers on Coodanup Foreshore. An overcast day with occasional showers meant that our tour was very pleasant.



Our final destination was by the sea where aboriginal hunters and fishers would have shelter in caves or under dense teatrees. There is still archeological evidence near this site in the cliffs which are very fragile. This area was near Seascapes.

We all enjoyed learning more about the indigenous background of areas known to us but not understood and were pleased to undertake this tour by Mandjoogordap Dreaming.

<https://mandurahdreaming.com.au/about-us>



Volunteer Awards by the City.

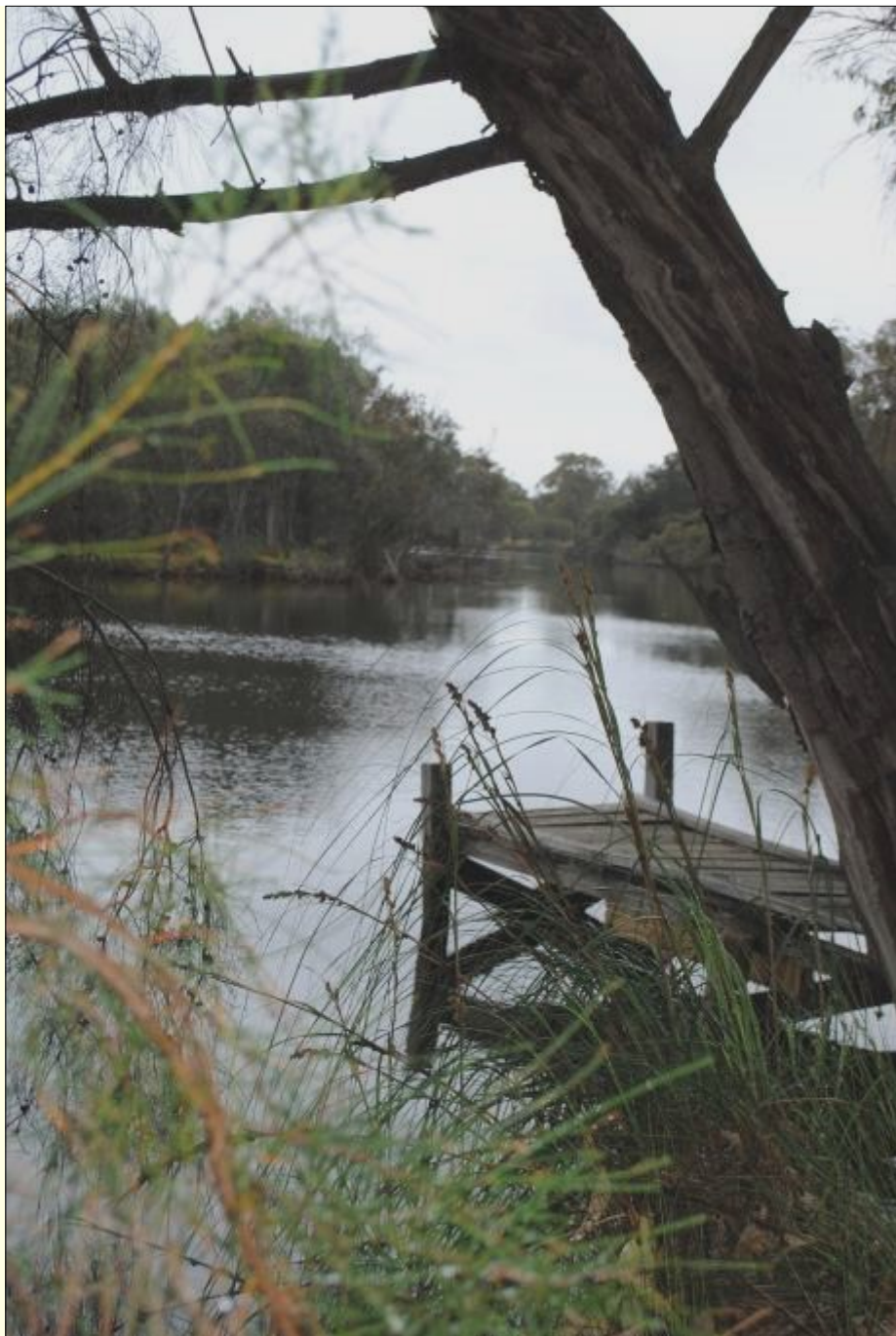
This year the museum nominated Eleanor Kay for this awards. Eleanor is a worthy recipient of our vote as she has worked tirelessly over many years in several roles at the museum.

Volunteering on a Sunday has meant Eleanor keeps up with the community with many of her long standing friends and acquaintances calling to see her. She tirelessly promotes the museum to others. One way she has been doing this is by administrating our Facebook page, *Mandurah Museum Friends*, which she set up for the museum.

As past Chairperson of the Friends she has brought a fundraising focus to the Friends by arranging printing for mugs and other items.

Lastly and possibly most importantly, Eleanor has been conducting Oral History interviews for the museum with older residents of Mandurah. These histories live in our museum and tell the stories of a Mandurah not covered by dry historical research but lived fully by local residents.

We congratulate Eleanor on her nomination.



Above Right, peaceful scene on Serpentine River.

Right. Dave and Marie Austin, Marie appears to be really enjoying her drink and lunch.

Below, platter of food which was part of the lunch served for volunteers.



Chairpersons report. Introducing your new office bearers and committee.



One of the advantages of writing a limit to terms of office in a Constitution is that you bring fresh ideas and events into the mix. You also allow for periods of rest for the office bearers, this prevents burn out and ideas becoming tired. This rest has just happened to me with a period spent assisting the committee without having the major responsibility. I am Jan Baker and one of the first members of the Friends of Mandurah Community Museum, and I am returning to the Chair after a break. Eleanor Kay has been Chairperson for nearly 3 years and has steered us so well, with fund raising being her forte, given she knows so many people in the Mandurah Community.



After 4 years of hard work as our treasurer, Julia Lindley has stepped down and Christine Steer is replacing her in that role. Christine hasn't been retired long and was looking for further challenges, we promise to challenge her. Julia will assist whenever Christine is on holidays.



Ceylene Copley came new to the role as Secretary and it has been a steep learning curve for her, she has now stepped down from that role, however, she replaces me as Vice Chair.



Di McIntosh has kindly agreed to take on the role as Secretary. She is very experienced in this, and other committee roles, and currently serving on other committees. They say 'find someone who is busy, and they will step into a role'. Thank you, Dianne.

Re-elected to the committee are Michael McGhie who represents the interests of the Maritime section of the Friends, Phyl Hardy, past secretary, Julia Lindley, and Eleanor Kay.

We are all looking forward to an exciting and productive 2020.



Lastly, who can remember what we were feeling like at this time in 1999? Where I was working we had been issued with new computers. We were worrying about planes falling from the skies and what exactly would happen to all our computer devices which we were only just coming to terms with. It is definitely a different millennium we are living in.



I would like to wish all our Friends and Volunteers a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Hope to see everyone in the New Year.

Jan Baker

**Mandurah Community Museum,
3 Pinjarra Rd,
MANDURAH WA 6210.**

Telephone: 9550 3680.

Email: museum@mandurah.wa.gov.au

**Internet: [www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/Facilities/
Museum/Friends](http://www.mandurah.wa.gov.au/Facilities/Museum/Friends)**

Opening hours.

Tuesday to Friday. 10 am to 4pm.

Saturday & Sunday. 11 am to 3pm.

Closed Mondays and Public Holidays.

**Friends of Mandurah Community Museum,
3 Pinjarra Rd, MANDURAH WA 6210.**

Meetings are 4 times per year usually with a presentation. These are notified.

The mission of the Friends is to provide assistance and support to the Museum in all its endeavours. The 'Friends' also seek to promote the heritage and history of Mandurah, and to assist other like minded bodies.

Membership of the Friends is by a yearly membership fee of \$10 due each August.