

Friends of Mandurah Community Museum Newsletter

October

2020

Son Toy Ballroom (Dance Hall) Mandurah Terrace.

The decade was the 1950s and Australia was coming out of the Second World War which followed the economic Depression of the 30s. Holiday makers were flocking to Mandurah to spend time by the sea and the estuary. Open air pictures at night were packed and Roy Tuckey was set to commence a new enterprise – building a dance hall.

On Mandurah Terrace right opposite the estuary, a general store owned by J Dowling, was sold to Roy and permission was given in 1955 to commence building. This building was designed and built by Roy Tuckey. In 1955 there was still occasional flooding across the road, so like many other shops in the area, there were masonry steps to access the upper part of the entry. Jarrah floorboards were especially sprung to provide a really good dancing surface; these still remain underneath the current flooring. At the time it was believed to be the biggest dance hall outside of Perth, possibly the biggest in Western Australia.

Roy Tuckey was to name this hall, Son Toy after a boat owned by his father who had used it along the coast of Western Australia. This is one boat the museum has failed to identify in other records.

Like other dance halls of that period, the Son Toy was extremely popular with young people who arranged to meet at the dance. At one time in the height of summer there were midnight dances commencing at 12am on a Sunday to allow the experience, without causing controversy with religious groups. Many local and Perth bands and groups came to entertain them.

Below. Photo taken soon after the conversion to shopping area. *(cont. over page.)*



From the Editor. We feature this month the Son Toy Ballroom. This amazing space was a legend with holiday makers and local residents alike. This article will provide yet another of the Fact Sheets which the Museum produces. Do you have a local question you've always wanted answered? Please contact the museum and we will try to answer it for you, or research our various areas to try to find the answer. On the flip side of that, is there a local home, institution, event or such like which you would like to research or add to our knowledge of, we welcome all help.

As every one is aware we are also very keen to add to our photographic collection as unfortunately we can't always find the photographs we want. I was especially sad not to be able to include a photograph of the front of the Son Toy in its heyday, to show to you in the article. At the moment we don't have a photo of this part of Mandurah Terrace at that time.

The Friends A.G.M. is coming up and information relating to that event as well as the Chairperson's Annual Report are to be found on the back page.

Lastly with Christmas coming up, don't forget our souvenir collection for sale, especially the return of our yearly calendar, this year put together by Julia Lindley while under Covid19 lockdown, hence the limited photos. We welcome more photos of this era from you, our Friends.

The calendar is on sale now at the museum for \$5.

Jan Baker.

Special features

What's in a name - Son Toy Ballroom.

Jan Baker.

In your own Backyard. Jan Baker.

Regular features.

From the MDO .	Nicholas Reynolds.
Education Matters.	Katrina Gauci
Maritime Moorings	David Austin.
Spotlight on Volunteers.	Jan Baker
Chairpersons report.	
For AGM.	Jan Baker.

Editor

Jan Baker.

Son Toy Ballroom - Mandurah Terrace. (cont.)

Refreshments and supper were provided from the tea-room in the hall and also were available from Warne's deli just close to the Son Toy. As time moved on, the land next door to the hall was leased and the Lanyons ran a hamburger stall there for several years. This was to become a highlight of the dances with one of the doors opening directly out to it. Consequently, there was the pleasure of fresh sea air just outside the front doors of the hall. The front door was the only way to leave the dances to go outside, and Nesta Tuckey manned this for both entry payment and with Pass Out tickets.

The Son Toy quickly became the place to hold important personal events, wedding receptions, cabarets, balls and on one memorable occasion a Debutante's Ball organized by the Mandurah Police and Citizen's Group. In January 1957 soon after this ball commenced the call went out for assistance in rescuing a small boy from down a borehole. Much of the food which was prepared for the workers at the site was prepared in the Son Toy's tearoom by local ladies volunteering their services and bringing food.

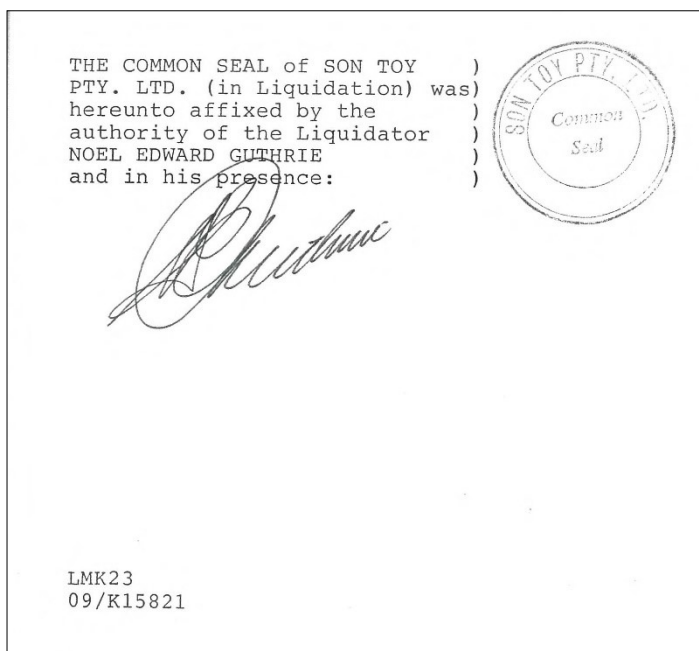
The boy, Graham Davies was to become headline news

throughout the country and indeed the world, with his rescue the next day after huge community effort, both local and statewide.

The Son Toy became an exhibition space for other events; from 1960 the Mandurah Parents and Citizens ran their annual spring show in the hall.



While many Mandurah residents believe the name of the Son Toy to be San Toy, from its first registration until now the ballroom and later shopping arcade is actually named **Son Toy**, the common seal for this is shown below.



Vox Adeon Howards had come to the corner of Smart Street and with television commencing in Perth in late 1959, by the '60's there was often a crowd around watching this new entertainment through the shop's windows.

Eventually, when the Lanyons left, Kevin Green moved from Pinjarra Road where parking has become a problem, onto the same site the business occupies today.

By 1968 the popularity of dances was waning and managing that business as well as the shop and farm was becoming more difficult for Dudley and Nesta Tuckey. Roy Tuckey applied to the Minister for Planning for permission to convert the building into a shopping arcade. He placed the management of this enterprise in the hands of his son Brynne.

The building remains to this day (2020) and has been used by numerous different businesses. For many years the front shop was Shack's Men's Clothing store. Parts of the building have also been used for dance lessons.

Jan Baker.



Les Price – Sax, John Price – Drums, Alan Norris – Piano, playing at Son Toy, c 1960.

Alan remembers coming to Mandurah from his home in Perth to play for the dances. He says that they were great fun and attended by many people, some coming from Perth to enjoy the playing.

I believe Alan slept in his car overnight after these dances.

MDO Report.

During October and November, I have been delivering a series of lectures relating to Peel region history to the Mandurah branch of the Mature Adults Learning Association. The lecture series is a journey through Mandurah's history from the ancient geologic past through to the present day and beyond. Beginning with the formation of the rivers and estuary that attracted Mandurah's first settlers over 40,000 years ago. We will move on to the conditions in Europe that lead to the British settling WA in 1829. From there we will look at the progress and setbacks faced by those settlers as they went on to develop the Peel region that we know today. Topics to be covered include Geology and Hydrology of the Peel, The Bindjareb people of the Noongar Nation, Peel's settlement scheme, The Pinjarra Massacre, The Hall and Sutton families, The Tuckey family, fishing and Mandurah's maritime heritage. To finish up the series we'll look at farming in the Peel, Captain Fawcett, the volunteer defence force and the shift to tourism. As a final session, we'll get out and actually see some of this history with a Mandurah heritage walk and museum tour.

Something which has been great to see over the last couple of months has been some great feedback from the public about the Museum.

After Minister David Templeman attended our Are you Okay Day he sent us a wonderful card and photo, which I'll share below:-

Nick Reynolds.



To all of our magnificent Mandurah Museum Volunteers. Thank you for what you all do to ensure our local and Western Australian stories are told to our children, locals and visitors to our Museum.

Sincere thanks
David Templeman
Minister for Mandurah. Minister for Heritage, Culture and the Arts

Education Matters. National Threatened Species Day

To recognise this day, I arranged with the WA Museum and Birdlife Australia to borrow a variety of taxidermy specimens to display.

Before the Curator of Mammalogy would approve the loan, I had to send photos of the display cabinets they would be displayed in. Old taxidermy specimens contain arsenic and so they are a risk to people. They need to be kept in locked cabinets so people can't touch them. I also had to fill in a form provided by the Manager of materials conservation to confirm our museum could ensure that the strict environmental parameters could be met. Fur is classed as a very sensitive material type. These parameters included temperature, relative humidity, lux levels and UV levels.

I reassured the curator and manager that our museum would look after these very sensitive specimens and return them safely.

I was very excited when the loan was approved.

I arranged for zoologist Sarah Way to speak at the Museum Facebook live event. She highlighted the threatened species we have in the Peel Region and how we can protect these animals into the future.

Children had the opportunity to complete a bookmark with a threatened species face or a black cockatoo bird that flapped its wings, when they visited. Our museum had 110 children visit during the time this exhibition was on.

October is National Stamp Collecting Month.

We have a collection of covers on display, owned by Keith Michaelson. There will be a stamp activity available to children to do while visiting.

This display is on till **Friday 6 November.**

Keith will be speaking at the Museum live Facebook event on Friday 16 October.

Retro Video Games Display

The Mandurah Museum will have a small collection of video game consoles on display. These are going to be borrowed from The Nostalgia Box- Australia's one and only video game console museum. Come in and share your childhood memories with others.

CITY OF MANDURAH
MUSEUM



On display
from the
7-29 November.

Play Retro Video Games

Play some retro video games in this one day only event.

You have the opportunity to play one of your favourite childhood games. The Nostalgia Box Museum will set up some consoles for the day at the Mandurah Museum.

Come in to relive your old memories and create new ones with your friends and family.

When: Saturday, 7 November
Opening Hours: 11am-3pm
Cost: Free

Where:
Mandurah
Community Museum

Cost:
Donations welcome

mandurah.wa.gov.au

In our own Backyard. State Library of Western Australia – Alexander Library.

Over the last few years, as part of my interests in the museum I have visited this library and the State Records Office next to it, frequently. The Battye Library contained within this area, holds records, books, microfiche etc. relating to this state. Alexander Library has within the building several areas of interest, while the State Records Office holds most of the records which have amassed over the years.

While this is an area where I have found much of interest to spend a few hours, I try not to miss a visit to whatever exhibition is being put on in the space within the building.

Two of these exhibitions have related to how children's authors produce their books, especially those who do their own illustrations. One such exhibition was part of the Awesome Festival on the first week over the past school holidays. It featured the original illustrations by May Gibbs of the Gumnut Babies. The exhibition was to also showcase W.A. Ballet Company's children's production of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, a free ballet that was part of Awesome.

Other exhibitions have related to Indigenous programs, and one to the photography of northern W.A.

Recently there was an exhibition relating to John Forrest's expedition to and around the north in 1874, when he travelled as far east as South Australia. Approaching this expedition from a different perspective, the exhibition tells the story of two indigenous Australians who assisted in the explorations throughout this region. Those guides were Tommy Pierre and Tommy Windich.

The new **W.A. Museum**, co-named **Boola Bardip** ('many stories' in local Nyoongar Language.), will draw many people to attend there, but don't ignore the smaller exhibitions which run right throughout the year at the State Library (Alexander Library).

Both of these are so easy to get to due to their immediate proximity to Perth Station and the Underground.



The display also features some modern explorers who took part in a re-enactment of the expedition



The exhibition space at Alexander Library.

Maritime Moorings. Due to the cold weather not much has happened since my last report. The main activity at the Boat shed at the moment is activity by the contractors that are working on the Foreshore redevelopment, they are using the slipway and the jetty to enable them to transport materials to the works site. It is good to see this infrastructure being used.

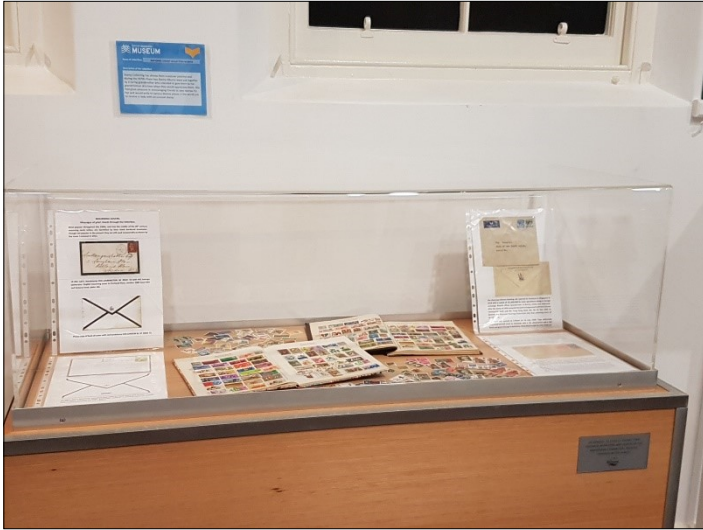
The Saturday volunteer team have been carrying out intensive research on the history of the slipway, jetty and boat shed. So far they have been able to trace it back 110 years using data from the State Records Office.

It is hoped that with the warmer weather approaching we will soon be able to resume the educational cruises using the Museum's boat.

We might also proceed with the search for the site of the Barragup Mungah, this project was postponed because of Covid19. The fishing display set up in the museum has generated considerable interest and the maritime team are already working on another project to display old fishing related objects.

David Austin





Above. Also featured in the stamp collection are stamps that our volunteer Julia inherited of the collection her mother had saved for her grandchildren. This collection commenced in 1965, and is visible in the schoolroom.

The display case which holds this part of the collections was kindly donated by the Tuckey family as a memorial to Dudley Tuckey. Dudley was a former Freeman of the City of Mandurah and a recipient of the Order of Australia.

Our special feature this month is the Son Toy Ballroom which was owned by Dudley's father Roy Tuckey and managed by Dudley and his wife Nesta. Information relating to the ballroom and also a copy of the common seal for the Son Toy was donated to the museum by Sandra Tuckey, daughter of Dudley.



Spotlight on Volunteers. Congratulations go to Brian and Kay Toussaint, volunteers of the museum and other organisations. Kay and Brian have been awarded medals for their 35 years of service to the Mandurah Southern Districts Bush Fire Brigade. Brian spent 13 years as the Captain also. Brian and Kay have been contributing to the museum for several years now with their maritime experiences helping restore the Canopus.



Photo taken from City of Mandurah Facebook pages.

Coffee and a Catchup.

Volunteers joined together to celebrate re - opening the museum and making their way back to the place which provides them with friendship, company and worthwhile activities.

On the 15th of September, we all came together (in a Covid19 safe way of course), to meet up with old and new friends. This wasn't to be a meeting, and Kat had devised a fun way to celebrate.

We all submitted baby or toddler photographs of ourselves and then took part in trying to name 'who was who'. We weren't very good at it!

Joining in the fun was David Templeman (left) who gave us a short talk on the new West Australian Museum – Boola Bardip, which is due to open in November and should become a major showpiece for W.A.

Volunteers had all contributed to the morning tea and the table was groaning with (once again Covid19) safe food.

Chairperson's report for A.G.M. I suppose all you could say about this past year is – What a Year! We started this year for the Friends with several new faces in the administration role. While we were largely closed at the museum for several months, your committee continued to quietly work in the background.

In January we commenced our second major raffle with plans of raising sufficient funds to provide a new display case to replace a heavy glass case which no longer was suitable for museum use. Mr Roy Bolton of Bolton Photography once again donated the print which was raffled. Unfortunately the response to this raffle wasn't as positive as the last one. The lockdown due to Covid19 interrupted sales; however we did raise sufficient money to be able to purchase the item depending on the specific design. At this time we haven't gone ahead as we wait the decision on what format the new case should take.

With the help of Mr Ian Bassett-Scarfe we managed to draw this raffle in compliance to legislative requirements staying Covid safe but in the outside at a park at Seascapes. The raffle winner was Dave Serukai.

Of course during the lock down we had to cancel a meeting planned to coincide with the draw, however our newsletter has continued to be produced albeit with slightly different timings.

Since the return to museum volunteering, your committee has met to discuss a variety of fund raising and souvenir producing activities and more information will be available shortly on these items. Can I remind you that we continue to sell the two books produced either by us or on our behalf plus several other items?

We have once again produced a calendar for the year of 2021 returning to a successful endeavour which we maintained over many years and only omitted due to time requirements with other items being launched. This is now available to purchase as the cost of \$5 and features the two decades between 1990 and 2010.

I write this in preparation for our A.G.M. which is to be held on Thursday 12th of November at 10 am, commencing with Morning Tea, to be followed by a short talk from the Museum Development Officer – Nicholas Reynolds. At 11am we will commence our A.G.M. with the election of Chairperson, Secretary and committee members. Both the Vice Chairperson and the Treasurer have another year of their term to serve. Nomination forms for vacant positions are available in this newsletter. Following the A.G.M. we will again run a General Meeting as we have in the past.

Recently the City of Mandurah made the decision to rename the museum to Mandurah Museum; because of this the Friends of Mandurah Community Museum will need to also change the name of our organisation and this will be discussed at the A.G.M. There is very little change; we will just need to drop the word 'Community'.

I would like to thank all our committee members and especially our Secretary Di McIntosh and Treasurer Christine Steer for their hard work this year. I also would like thank all our Friends for their speedy renewal of membership fees; in itself this is a very positive feedback for the work the Friends do.

Also I personally and on behalf of the Friends, would like to thank both Nicholas and Katrina from the museum for their unfailing help and support for this organisation. This has been a very difficult year for them as well but they have done it with unfailing good humour.

I hope to see you all at the A.G.M.

Best wishes. Jan Baker.

Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Mandurah Community Museum

Thursday 12th November.	Commencing	10 am with Morning Tea.
	Short Talk	10.30 am. Given by Nicholas Reynolds.
	A.G.M.	11 am
	General Meeting	11.30 am (to follow A.G.M.)

To be held at Mandurah Museum.

Please notify of attendance.

**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 4 times per year as 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.