



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 70

October 2005

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing at 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at
Shenton Park Community Centre, corner Onslow and Herbert Roads

Wednesday, 5 October 2005

Dawn Casey (Director, WA Museum)
'WA Museum's Kimberley collections and activities'

Wednesday, 2 November 2005

**Grant Pearson (Research Centre
Manager, CALM Science Division)**
'The importance of the Kimberley in bird migration'

Wednesday, 7 December 2005

Geoffrey Bolton (Historian, Murdoch)
'The last years of Moola Bulla, 1949–1955'

Please note that, because many of our speakers are involved in work-related travel, this program may change at short notice. Should a speaker be unavailable, we will try to replace him/her with a speaker on a similar subject. All meetings will be held at Shenton Park unless otherwise advised.

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after meetings.
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Kimberley Rock Art Seminar held at the University of Western Australia on Saturday 10 September was a great success and the 110 registrants were almost all still there at the end of the very full day. The seminar is reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter, but I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the speakers who put so much into their presentations to ensure they were not only accurate, informative, and well-illustrated, but also well timed, which enabled the program to proceed as planned, and refreshment breaks to be enjoyed to the full.

The talks were professionally recorded and the audio tapes will be transcribed and edited for publication. The amount of photographs and diagrams included in these proceedings will depend on funds left over from the seminar, as well as funds we may be able to secure from other sources. This is currently being investigated, and it is hoped that a substantial volume will result. The proceedings of the last rock art seminar organised by the Society in 1997 sold out within about a year of publication, and the publication remains a valuable record of the day, and is of lasting benefit in the study of the Kimberley's priceless rock art heritage.

The success of the seminar will encourage the Society to consider other thematic one day seminars in future. If you have any bright ideas please let us know. Perhaps a day discussing Kimberley flora would be of interest?

Mike Donaldson

KUNUNURRA – 45 YEARS ON

Long term Kimberley resident Norma Wainwright has come up with the idea of producing a book that covers the 45 years since the gazettal of Kununurra as a town on 10 February 1961. She is hoping to receive short stories, photographs, poetry, and other material from people who have been a part of the town at any time from its inception to the present. The format of the book has yet to be decided but, depending on the material received, it may be divided into sections on early settlement, agriculture, transport, tourism, education, commerce and trade, etc. Norma and the others who are working on the project expect a good response from Kununurra residents and ex-residents and so cannot guarantee publication of everything that is received. Contributions can be returned if requested, and all material that is submitted should be marked with the contributor's name. Material can be sent to Norma by e-mail (ekt@wn.com.au) or by post to PO Box 537, Kununurra, WA 6743.

KIMBERLEY WATER SOURCE PROJECT

The Expert Panel appointed to evaluate the Watering Australia proposal, the Tenix canal proposal, and other proposals to deliver Kimberley water to Perth is expected to report to government by 31 March 2006. The panel is 'to independently review the feasibility of supplying at least 50 gigalitres of Kimberley water a year to the State's Integrated Water Supply Scheme'. After receiving a total of 30 submissions, the panel focused on three concepts that involve delivering that volume of water by pipe, canal, or ocean transport. Eight proponents were interviewed, and expert technical consultants will now test the information provided by the eight. Community consultation will continue. See www.ourwaterfuture.com.au.kwsp for more.

BENDING THE RULES: FINDING, RECORDING AND SAVING THE BUILT HERITAGE OF THE KIMBERLEY

On 1 July 2005, Rosemary Rosario, an Architectural Heritage Consultant, spoke to the Kimberley Society about some of the work that she has done in her fifteen years as a consultant. Rosemary's association with Cathie Clement goes back ten years, and their work has taken them to the Kimberley to assess structures from the grand to the more modest, some of which have great heritage significance.

Rosemary's presentation was a photographic overview of some of the many Kimberley buildings she and Cathie have visited and studied over the past ten years. The focus of the evening was the varied range and style of the buildings in the region and the sometimes unexpected discoveries such as the extent to which concrete was used in Kimberley construction from quite early in the twentieth century.

The Broome Court House was built as a cable station by the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Co. Ltd, which imported it in 1889, prefabricated from England. It was a standard pattern with an iron frame, corrugated iron walls, cast iron steps and balconies, which remain from the original building. The building was erected with the help of Chinese workers from Singapore from where teak panelling was also sourced. A billiard room on one side was part of the original building. Rosemary showed a photograph of the cable station taken in 1900. It served as a cable station until 1913, and in 1921 was purchased by the state government for use as a courthouse and is now fully restored.

Also in Broome was the Coastal Wireless Station, built by the Commonwealth as part of a network of stations that communicated with ships sailing in waters off Australia. The Broome Wireless Station was used until 1967. It was vested in the Shire of Broome in 1973 and became the Bowling Club in 1980. It is a concrete building, cast in situ, and is in two parts with a breezeway between. Similar wireless stations were built at Wyndham, Roebourne and Esperance. Another concrete Commonwealth building was the Health Laboratory, built in 1937, to investigate malaria, leprosy and other tropical diseases, particularly malignant tertian malaria in the Fitzroy valley. This building is of interest because of the suspended concrete floor, poured over corrugated iron which has left its pattern on the under side. In 1955, it was transferred to the state and became nurses' quarters for the hospital. Concrete was also used in the Customs House, which is now the Broome Museum.

Double iron roofs and wind scoops are also a feature of Broome buildings. They were installed to cope with the climate before fans and air-conditioning were available.

Derby has, and had, some significant heritage buildings such as the police station, built in 1906 with a lock-up behind it in which prisoners were chained to the floor to prevent overnight escapes. The lock-up, which had no solid walls, consists of two sections of iron grill. The 1906 police station was used until a few years before its demolition in 1977; the lock-up has now been restored.

The Flying Doctor Base in Derby is identical to one in Wyndham, now used by an aboriginal corporation. More modest but still significant Derby buildings are represented by the house in Mrs Wells lived until recently. It has an iron roof and walls with push-out shutters enclosing the veranda. The Wharfinger's house, built in 1928 to house the man who was in charge of the Derby jetty, has been restored. It is now used as a museum.

The Derby woolshed, built in 1900, was damaged by a cyclone, but was reconstructed in 1957 with a gabled roof instead of the original saw-tooth form. The huge doors have been restored.

The Leprosarium was built in 1936 and closed in 1986 when the need to segregate patients was replaced by new treatment.

Further afield, near Windjana Gorge, and probably visited by many members, are the ruins of Lillimilura, built in 1887 as the station homestead for the King Sound Pastoral Company. Much of the stone walls remain either side of the wide breezeway between the two halves of the building. The pastoral activity on Lillimilura decreased in the early 1890s, leaving the homestead available for occupation by the local police constables. It was here that Jandamarra, who was known as 'Pigeon', shot Constable William Richardson in 1894. Jandamarra was shot at Tunnel Creek in 1897.

All that remains of the Old Leopold homestead are the stone walls of the former homestead, built about 1900 and occupied until the 1920s. Other station buildings that have been assessed for their heritage value are Glenroy, built in the 1950s of concrete blocks with a stone building for staff quarters. Mt Elizabeth also built in the 1950s is another stone house. The grandest of all the station homesteads is Fossil Downs, near Fitzroy Crossing, a large two-storey homestead set in a beautiful tropical garden. It was built by the MacDonald family in the 1940s, using locally made bricks, and remains in the family. The interior was decorated in Art Deco style with a grand staircase, Art Deco furniture and furnishings.

Several more recent buildings in Fitzroy Crossing are of heritage value, such as the Post Office, built in the 1950s with a timber frame and fibro walls with a gap at the top for ventilation.

Old Halls Creek Post Office is known to all members through Cathie's efforts in raising money through the Kimberley Society to assist with its conservation. It was built of mud bricks in 1889 and served until the town was relocated in the early 1950s. A photo taken in 1964 shows the roof and veranda posts intact but soon after this, the roof was removed and deterioration started. A photograph in 1975 showed the walls intact but by 1999 they were crumbling. Now a gabled roof with eaves, the same height as the original, protects them. In 'new' Halls Creek a trackers' hut, built next to the Police Station in 1959, is an example of a simple building with walls, roof and even the fireplace of galvanised iron.

Rosemary and Cathie have also assessed or examined river crossings such as the one near Fitzroy Crossing where a concrete crossing was built in 1935 and raised in 1958 by casting concrete over the original. In contrast, the Mary River crossing is quite elegantly built of stone.

Rosemary's meticulous work has found many important features of buildings overlooked by previous surveys. She took us on a fascinating journey of discovery through the Kimberley in search of heritage buildings.

Loisette Marsh

AWARDS

The book *Gogo Fish!* has won a Children's Book Council of Australia award. Written by Dr John Long and illustrated by Jill Ruse, it tells the story of WA's fossil emblem. Dr Long discovered the fossil fish near Fitzroy Crossing in 1986.

GOULDIAN FINCHES AT MORNINGTON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

In the May 2005 edition of *Wildlife Matters*, the newsletter of the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, there is an article concerning the conservation research of the Gouldian Finches at Mornington Station.

The Gouldian Finch is an endangered bird and the article describes various aspects of research and possible reasons why this bird is endangered and in decline. Because of the changes in the environment due to grazing of cattle and lack of regular burning (which would have previously been performed by the indigenous inhabitants), there is less seed for these seed-eating birds during the early wet season. Several different studies were performed. In the first study, the distance that the Gouldian finches flew was monitored by tiny radio transmitters, which weigh 0.4 grams. This showed that these small birds can fly up to 17kms a day in the wet season which would seem to be no mean feat for a bird that weighs only 13gms. However, it would appear that the finches have wingspans that are appropriate for these longer flights compared to, for example, Crimson finches, which live along creeks and rarely venture out of that habitat.

The other fascinating study was looking at blood counts of various finches and seeing how they varied during the year and what time of year they become relatively anaemic. They compared the Gouldian finch to Crimson and Long-tailed finches. Apparently, the Crimson finches show the least drop in red blood cell volume towards the end of the dry season, which is when they moult (October). However, the Gouldian finches seem to become more anaemic during February where presumably there may be less seeds for these birds. The anaemia studies were based on techniques used in physiological medicine, which are extensively used in monitoring the performance of elite sportsmen. It will be interesting to see where this research goes.

In a totally unrelated moment, I came across another reference to Goulds at Mornington Station. In Philip Bodeker's book, *The Sandgropers' Trail*, he describes Mornington Station as "the last outpost of civilization along the Central Kimberley Beef Road." He mentions the inhabitants being a John and Laurel Gould who were living there with their 8 week old son. However, the wildlife in this chapter refers to crocodiles, cherrabin, black grunTERS and rock cod with no mention of any bird life.

This book has quite an interesting section on the Kimberley and the Bodeker's fishing travels through the region and includes a chapter which is largely centred on the late Jack Wherra or "Wheera" who is well known for his carved boab nuts and his pastel paintings. This book is well worth seeking out for its description of life and fishing in the Kimberley in the late 1960s.

References: *Wildlife Matters*, May 2005; and Philip Bodeker, *The Sandgropers' Trail: An Angling Safari from Perth to the Kimberley*, A.H. & A.W. Reed Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1971.

Jack Vercoe

ART EXHIBITIONS

Mary Place Gallery at 12 Mary Place, Paddington, NSW, is currently showing recent paintings by Alma (Kalaju) Webou, from Bidyadanga, and recent ilma by Roy Wiggan from the Bardi Peninsula. While this is Alma Webou's first solo exhibition, many members will be familiar with Roy Wiggan's ilma. Those who attend the Perth meetings may recall Pat Vinnicombe speaking about and showing the dance totems.

THE SHEEP AND CATTLE STATIONS OF THE KIMBERLEY IN 1916

On 3 August 2005, Dr Cathie Clement spoke to the Kimberley Society about the sheep and cattle stations that existed in the Kimberley in 1916. This summary is drawn from the PowerPoint presentation in which Cathie, a self-employed historian, used photographs and segments of maps to take the audience on a virtual tour.

Why focus on 1916? The year is important because it yielded comprehensive information about Western Australia's pastoral industry. That information includes photographs, maps, and reports. Many of the photographs were taken between April and June of 1916 when the Honourable Rufus Underwood, the Minister for Aborigines, and A O Neville, the Chief Protector, toured the Kimberley. Some of the photographs, which are held by the J S Battye Library of West Australian History, were taken on Kimberley stations.

In 1916, the Department of Lands and Surveys published a map that showed the principal sheep and cattle stations in the Kimberley, North West, Eastern, and Central Divisions of the state. That map, based on information collected over a three-year period, was accompanied by lexicographical lists of stations and their owners' names. The lists record approximately 300 pastoral holdings, providing the names and owners for 237, and only the owners' names for the remainder.

A copy of the map and the lexicographical lists were placed on a departmental file (6180/10), which is now at the State Records Office of Western Australia. The map and the lexicographical lists contain litho numbers that identify the 300 chain to an inch plans that covered the state's pastoral regions. Those numbers, which appear in red on the map, make it possible to locate the positions of the stations mentioned in the lexicographical lists.

While the department was producing its material, the stock and station agent Elder, Shenton & Company Limited compiled a report that listed more than 270 stations. That report, which was for private use, covered stations scattered throughout an area extending slightly further south than the departmental map.

The Elders report surfaced last year when Mr Jack Maslen, who had held a copy for almost 50 years, approached Hesperian Press to see whether the press would publish it. Peter Bridge, the owner of the press, considered it well worth publishing. He invited Cathie to write an introduction, and, on looking into the report's format and coverage, she realised that the presence of the litho numbers in it indicated that the firm would have used it in conjunction with the Land Department's map.

Only two copies of the map appear to have survived and, utilising segments of the one that is now in the Battye Library, the audience "boarded" the State ship *Kwinana* to make the trip north. Broome had a few motor vehicles in 1916, mostly for use in the town. The Elders report tells of six stations and a mission in the district but the map shows only four stations and the mission. It would have been interesting to take a T-Model Ford out to Streeter and Male's Roebuck Plains Station and then swing south to Thangoo, but, with the ship due to continue on to Derby, no one could risk being stranded out of town. A reading from the Elder's report had to suffice.

Today, people can read about Thangoo Station in Richard Ferguson's *Pearls of the Past* or S M Kelly's *Proud Heritage*. A lot of information about other stations in the Broome area has disappeared. "Stations" might be too grand a word for those holdings but their owners felt that it was warranted when they submitted their entries to the 'Pastoral and Agricultural Directory' that formed part of each year's *Post Office Directory*. The Elders report mentions some of the small holdings, and the surveyors

Hope & Klem recorded some on a station map produced in 1921. Frazier Downs is on their map as is Cherry and Flack's lease, which became Nita Downs.

Back on the *Kwinana*, the audience followed the path of early travellers and, after passing Cape Leveque, sailed up King Sound to Derby. From there, the travel options were varied but basic. The Derby to Fitzroy Crossing mail coach was available but someone had to jump off and on to open and close the dozens of gates en route. The road ran along the north side of the Fitzroy River and the coach called at Yeeda, Mt Anderson, and Liveringa. Each of those stations is mentioned in Dr Battye's *History of the North West of Australia*, which was published in 1915.

The coach did not pass Robert and Ellen Bell-Blay's Ellendale Station. It was one of the stations omitted from the Lands Department's map but shown on the Hope & Klem map in 1921. The Bell-Blays, who were generally known as the Bells, were one of the first married couples to obtain work on a Kimberley station. They worked for the Duracks on Argyle in 1900, and then for other Fitzroy River station owners, before they secured the Ellendale lease in 1906. They lived very simply and frugally and, in later years, they were best known for the many tiny dogs that were their pride and joy at Ellendale.

The 1916 gossip on this part of the river was very much about the activities of the Bell's neighbour, George Layman, from Calwynyardah Station. Billy Wells, the manager of Ben Copley's Oscar Range and Brooking Stations was sure that George Layman was rustling cattle but he could not get a conviction. The floods were also topical because the 1914 flood was the highest on record. The Emanuel brothers' Noonkanbah Station, the next stop for the mail coach, lost 1500 sheep, all of its donkeys, and nearly all of its working bullocks. It is hard to comprehend that volume of water coming down the river because, by September, the bed of the Fitzroy tends to be largely sand. That meant that few motor vehicles could cross the Fitzroy unless people, donkey teams or anything else that was handy dragged them across.

It is obvious that life on the stations was no picnic. The homesteads were mostly primitive affairs, built from either the local stone or timber and galvanised corrugated iron. Each station had a large Aboriginal workforce and, regardless of whether it ran sheep or cattle, it could not have existed without the labour of those people. Their labour had always been important but, with the Great War taking experienced stockmen away in 1916, station owners and managers were more reliant than ever on their Aboriginal workers.

The virtual tour stopped at Fitzroy Crossing because, in 1916, the mail coach went no further. Unless people made their own way into the East Kimberley, their knowledge of such stations as Lamboo, Springvale, Argyle, and Hillgrove was likely to come from maps, lexicographical lists, reports, or articles.

The material mentioned above, excluding the photographs, will be published by Hesperian Press this year in a volume of source documents on Western Australia's sheep and cattle stations. Cathie Clement and Peter Bridge are editing the volume. The next issue of the *Boab Bulletin* will report on its availability.

AWARDS

As this newsletter goes to press, care and kindness shown in the Kimberley has put two police officers in the running for the 2005 Police Officer of the Year Award. Senior Constables Simone Brown (Broome) and Drew Taylor (Fitzroy Crossing) were both extremely helpful to people involved in and affected by serious accidents.

ROCK ART SEMINAR

The Kimberley Society hosted its second Rock Art Seminar at the University Club of Western Australia on September 10th. Over a hundred people enjoyed a wide-ranging day of lectures and discussions presented by experts in their fields.

Mike Donaldson opened with an overview of the different styles of Kimberley rock art, illustrated by stunning photographs from his extensive collection. Then Mark Norval, himself a well-known Kimberley artist and now coordinator of the Mowanjum Wanjina Art project, introduced Donny Woolagoodja. Donny is not only a well known artist using modern media to paint the stories and myths of his culture but also a respected elder of the Worora people who "keeps the Wanjinas fresh" by repainting sites under his guardianship in the traditional manner. A DVD of the evolution of his work was shown. There can be no doubt about the continuing importance of rock art to present Kimberley Aboriginal culture. Donny's presence both in his talk and discussions provided authority and authenticity to the entire proceedings.

Next came science. Jim Ross gave a lucid exposition for the lay audience of mitochondrial DNA research and its role in determining the successive waves of emigration by human ancestors from Africa to our region. Sue O'Connor from the ANU followed her Wednesday night talk on stone structures with an account of sites on which she has worked, especially Carpenters Gap in the Napier Range. The problems with dating of site artefacts and rock art were illuminated. Dating seems to be of prime importance in the understanding of the evolution of rock painting.

After lunch, David Welch showed the remarkable similarities between the adornments on the Gwion Gwion (Bradshaw) figures and early photographs of aboriginal ceremony and dance. This surely implies a longstanding continuity of some kind. Ian Crawford, pioneer of the Wanjina culture to the white community, was amusing and thought provoking in his reminiscences of his early days in the Kimberley. He raised several issues relating to cultural sensitivity that were subsequently debated in vigorous but friendly manner.

More science, with the chemistry of deterioration of rocks and their "desert varnish" of silica or oxalate, came from Dennis Callaghan. He spoke particularly of the rock engravings of the Burrup peninsula but such science will have wider implications in considering the preservation of sites throughout the country. The talks were rounded off by perennial favourite Phil Playford who illustrated the change in the rock art of the Napier Range from North to South and by tribal boundaries.

Finally, there was a lively discussion about many of the topics raised. "Why are you so interested?" asked Donny Woolagoodja as issues of preservation, access and recording were debated. All of us would have different responses but there is no doubt that the day inspired us with the beauty and intrigued us with the origins of the fabulous variety of Kimberley Rock Art and left us wanting to know more.

The symposium was the brainchild of Mike Donaldson who handled all the organization and arrangements (with Lynne) and he deserves our congratulations and plaudits for the outstanding success of the day.

Hamish McGlashan

Editor's note: The summary of Sue O'Connor's Wednesday night talk about stone structures in the Kimberley will be published in the December issue of the newsletter. Summaries of previous talks presented by David Welch, Phil Playford and Ian Crawford have been published in past newsletters. A recent newsletter carried Hamish McGlashan's review of Donny Woolagoodja and Valda Blundell's book, *Keeping the Wanjinas Fresh*.

CANE TOADS

The advance of cane toads towards the Kimberley is a very topical subject. People's views on what should, or should not, be done about it differ greatly. The Council of the Kimberley Society has resolved to support Kimberley residents and others who believe that community awareness and effort can limit the cane toads' impact on the biological diversity of the Kimberley. Not all members support that decision. The *Boab Bulletin*, starting with this issue, will provide room for all points of view. A view opposite to that adopted in this article is presented in the "Letters to the Editor".

On 6 August, the Community Awareness And Fundraising Day at Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, Wembley was a great success. The WA Gould League with the support of Alcoa Frogwatch, CALM, the Conservation Council of WA, the Kimberley Society, the WA Museum, the WA Naturalists' Club, and WWF Australia hosted it. The outside exhibits, especially Gayne Doyle's snakes, were as popular as the illustrated talks, and everyone left much better informed about the appearance and the impact of cane toads. The talk by Dr Paul Doughty, Senior Curator of Herpetology at the WA Museum, was particularly helpful in highlighting the physical differences between frogs and toads. In the other talks, Mike Donaldson showed the range of Kimberley habitats that are at risk from a cane toad invasion, and Gordon Wyre and Winston Kay from CALM spoke about the State Cane Toad Strategy.

With more than 100 people attending, sausages sizzling non-stop, and a coffee van nearby, the day raised more than \$1200. That money, which included a \$250 donation from the Kimberley Society, will go towards the construction of cane toad traps. The money side of things is being handled by the "Stop the Cane Toad Foundation", for which the Conservation Council of WA has advised that it will seek incorporation from the Commissioner of Fair Trading on or after 30 September 2005.



Speakers at the Cane Toad Day included (L to R) Gordon Wyre, Kevin Kenneally, Winston Kay, Mike Donaldson, and Dr Paul Doughty.

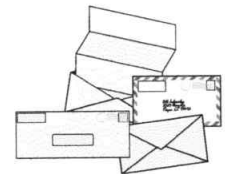
On the weekend of the 10–11 September an educational forum was held on cane toads at the Victoria River, NT. Forty volunteers from the Kimberley learnt how to catch, trap, handle and kill cane toads. This group will go on to lead other groups of volunteers trapping cane toads at water holes across the Kimberley as the toads colonize their way west. While no-one is under any doubt the cane toads are spreading west, the volunteers are going to work hard to keep the numbers down to

minimize the destructive impact they will have on wildlife. While the main purpose of the exercise was educational, forty-seven cane toads were 'dispatched', many of them egg-bearing females.

The weekend was organized by Kimberley Specialists in Research and Kimberley veterinarian Dr. Sarah Brett, with great support from the Bell Springs Community, Northern Frogwatch, CALM, Conservation WA, the National Bank and Stop the Toad Foundation as well as various Kimberley individuals and businesses. Jeff Hayley from Triple J Tours supplied the bus and fuel. The group's next training weekend at the Victoria River will be on the 1-2 October.

Concerned community members at Kununurra have established a Cane Toads Web site (<http://www.canetoads.com.au/index.htm>) to provide information about the toads and what people can do to slow their spread. The April 2005 edition of *Frog Watch (nth) News* is available on the Web site. It tells of the SuperTrap, which forms the basis of the wetland strategy in the NT, catching 543 toads in six weeks at Bonrook Station, and of 74 people collecting 1447 toads in 1.5 hours at Yamba Golf Course in NSW last February. The minutes of the meetings of the Kununurra Cane Toads Working Group are also available on the Web site. Kimberley Specialists and Jeff Hayley Triple J Tours are the joint sponsors of the Cane Toads Web site, and Kimberley Specialists are issuing a Cane Toad newsletter. The issue dated 17 September carries reports about the Toad Busting training exercise held at the Victoria River.

Cathie Clement (Perth) & Wendy Carter (Kununurra)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am constantly dismayed by the current government encouraged anti cane toad program. The talents and enthusiasm, the good intentions of so many concerned people are being put to a purpose that cannot possibly achieve the ends set for it.

The latest example, the much publicised week end at which some very concerned, dedicated people set to catch and destroy the toads at the Victoria River Roadhouse and bridge area. This activity was confined to a very small section of the river bank, and a relatively small number of toads were caught.

But how many were not caught? Along the immense stretch of this lush tropical river bank?

Come this approaching wet season and the toads will multiply unchecked along thousands of kilometres of very suitable, to toads, of fresh water river bank.

It seems to be expected that the toads will reach parts of Lakes Kununurra and Argyle in the wet. This will give them access to many more thousands of kilometres of verdant fresh water river banks.

With the best will in the World, I cannot see how a few, or perhaps hundreds of well intentioned people can possibly trap or kill enough toads to make a significant difference.

The toads are almost here, they will come do what we may, unless a biological means can be found to defeat them. The pity is that governments are content to use the financial and other resources that they have to fund the good intentioned trappers, instead of devoting the full effort to the biological method.

Consider the rabbit. It spread rapidly over most of Australia, except for the hottest parts of the Tropics.

We shot, them, we poisoned them, we dig up their burrows, we sent ferrets after them and we trapped them, to no noticeable effect until we used "mixin" and that other virus.

Even so, the rabbits, now mostly under control, are coming back, and will need a further virus to be developed.

My youngest daughter lives in Mackay, Qld., right in the heart of cane toad land. Going outside in her yard at night, the whirr of the toads can be heard. Poke around in her fish pond, toads for killing can easily be found.

Jill has cats, by the dozen, dogs, billy goats, geese, ducks, chooks and so do her neighbours. The air is full of birds. None of these wild or domestic animals seem to be inconvenienced by the ever present toads. What goes? Why are they not all being killed by toads?

Is anyone going to research this area to see why this is so?

Are the Mackay toads not killing the other creatures? have they all learnt to live side by side?

So before I go, brimming with enthusiasm, golf club and trap in hand, scrambling down our tropical river banks, the home incidentally of some of the fiercest and apparently very hungry crocodiles, I would like to be armed with a lot more logical information and facts.

It hurts me deeply to see so many well meaning, sincere people headed down the wasteful path of physical cane toad removal.

It is an illusion.

Howard Young, KUNUNURRA

DOCTORS CREEK TIDAL AREA, DERBY

On 17 August, the Australian Heritage Council invited public comment on a nomination for a national heritage listing of Doctors Creek Tidal Area, Derby (ID 105841). The Nominator's Summary Statement of Significance reads:

Doctors Creek near Derby in Western Australia is identified as a type-site of State, National and International geologic and ecologic heritage significance. Its geologic significance is as a well-documented, unique global classroom in its setting as a macrotidal tropical semi-arid mangrove coast, its erosional patterns, its tide-dominated deltaic estuarine setting, and the fractal laboratory therein. Its ecologic significance is in the role it plays in the breeding cycles of the barramundi and the critically endangered freshwater sawfish (*Pristis microdon*) populations of the Fitzroy River, and habitat for the rare and critically endangered speartooth shark (*Glyptothorax* sp. A) and the extremely rare and endangered northern river shark (*Glyptothorax* sp. C). Its geomorphology gives rise to the globally significant complex of mangrove species associations evolving therein. It is the culturally significant traditional fishing ground for indigenous people who rely on it for much of their fresh nutrition.

See <http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage> or contact the Australian Heritage Council on (02) 6274 1111 or ahc@deh.gov.au for further details.

REST IN PEACE

On 21 July 2005, Thomas Edwin Annear passed away. As one of the many highly skilled telegraphers who handled communications in the days before long distance telephones, he spent part of his career in the Kimberley. His posts included a stint as the relieving postmaster at Halls Creek from January to August in 1946. The following year, he married Thelma Joyce (Joy) Gittos, and continued to work in Bunbury until posted to places that included Perth, Narrogin, Kalgoorlie, and Esperance. An interesting obituary written by Len Findlay, and published in *The West Australian* on 5 August 2005 (page 47), notes that, in his 50-year career, Tom Annear served in every Western Australian postal district. He lived in Embleton after retiring in 1984, and he is survived by Joy, their five children, and four grandchildren.

On 4 September 2005, Maisie Wylde passed away. Maisie and her late husband Les, who died in August 2003, were well known to many Kimberley folk. Les first went to the East Kimberley as a teenager in the late 1920s, and Maisie joined him there in 1948. They lived in Wyndham initially but, with Les working in areas that included long distance haulage and the training and riding of his racehorses, they travelled widely. In retirement, they lived at Marangaroo (a Perth suburb) and then, up to the day of her death, Maisie Wylde lived at Stirling Aged Care. Her funeral service was held in the Simplicity Chapel in Osborne Park on 8 September.

Cathie Clement

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Councillors:	Adrienne Boulter, Cathie Clement, Daphne Edinger, and Maurice O'Connor
Newsletter Editor:	Cathie Clement
Web site:	http://www.users.bigpond.net.au/sellwood/kimsoc/ The Web site has not been updated for some time but the Kimberley Society has plans for an upgrade. The site carries the summaries of talks published in the <i>Boab Bulletin</i> as well as information about membership and the Society's objectives.

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