



## WA Heritage Trails Network

The Dundas Coach Road Heritage Trail is a recent addition to the Heritage Trails Network, a project for community participation devised by the Western Australian Heritage Committee. To commemorate the 1988 Bicentenary, the project established a statewide network of 'Heritage Trails'—routes designed to enhance awareness and enjoyment of Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

The W.A. Heritage Committee congratulates the Dundas Coach Road Heritage Trail Committee, on devising and implementing a trail that adds considerably to the network.

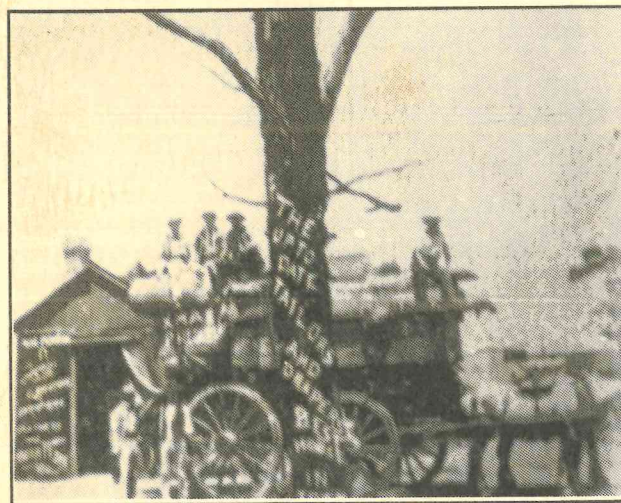
The Eastern Goldfields Heritage Trail encompasses Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Booklets on this heritage trail are available from several outlets including the Kambalda Tourist Bureau.

For further information:  
WA Heritage Committee (09) 322 4375



## Dundas Coach Road Heritage Trail

Original Cobb & Co  
Coach Road



# How To Get There

Norseman is situated 190kms south of Kalgoorlie and 200kms north of Esperance on the junction of the Eyre and Coolgardie/Esperance Highways.

The Dundas Coach Road Heritage Trail retraces the early Cobb & Co Coach road from the Lady Mary Mine through to the original Dundas townsite.

## Please Note:

- The trail is on gravel roads and care should be taken.
- A half hour Flora walk is available at the Brockway Timber Reserve.
- Persons using this trail do so at their own risk.

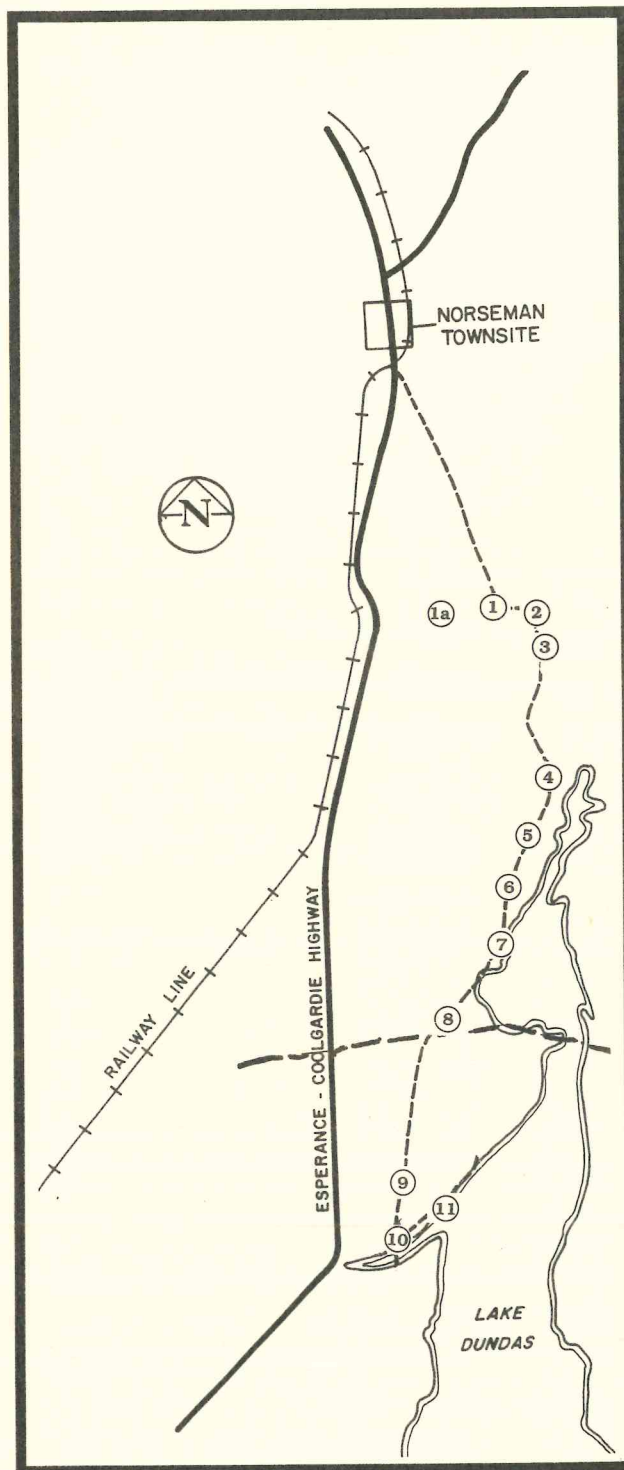
## Front Cover:

One of the first coaches to arrive in Norseman.

### Key

1. The Lady Mary Mine
- 1a. Lady Mary Well
2. Grave at the Lady Mary
3. Iron Duke Decline
4. Panning
5. Break O'Day Cricket Pitch
6. Break O'Day
7. Brockway Reserve
8. Telegraph Line
9. Dundas Water Catchment, Soak and Picnic Area
10. Dundas Townsite
11. The Lone Grave

*Photos provided courtesy of  
Thelma May and Ron & Thelma Gibbons*





# Introduction

When the railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie was completed in 1896, Cobb & Co Coaches and J Scholeys vans ran between Norseman and Coolgardie until the railway was extended to Norseman in 1909. "Carriage conveyance" to Esperance continued for many years until the railway line between the two towns was completed in 1927.

Perhaps one of the most spectacular sights of these early days, the Cobb & Co coaches and teams were attractive and unforgettable. Highly polished vehicles of the most ornate timber and metal work of the highest workmanship, tastefully and colourfully painted, drawn by a team of four, five or six well matched horses. These teams which were sought after unceasingly by the drivers, were matched as to size and colour, and were "heavy bodied, light legged, proud of carriage" and the darlings of the drivers hearts.

Although known as Cobb & Co, the owners were not the original firm, but had purchased the equipment and brought it "out west" when the old firm ceased to exist in the East. The coaches and teams were shipped over and many of the drivers, rather than be separated from their teams, or not caring for other jobs, came over too. The most notable of these were Cabbage Tree Ned Divine, Jack Catterini, Don McLennan, Billy Wary and Andy Blake.

The Norseman Pioneer reported the arrival of the first Mail Coach from Esperance on May 23 1896, as follows... "Making full allowance for fresh horses and the many delays inseparable from the first trip, Messrs. Cohn, Kidman, and Nicholsons Royal Mail Coach, one of the real old sort, with leather springs, and plenty of facilities for conveying mails arrived in fair time. It was expected by noon on Sunday but did not turn up until Monday. There were nearly twelve bags of mail weighing one and a half tons and the postmaster had a busy time before commencing to deliver the letters. The mail being so weighty necessitated a portion being left at Dundas". . .

## Cobb & Co

LINE OF  
ROYAL MAIL COACHES

Leave Norseman Wednesday and Saturday  
Arrive Coolgardie Thursday and Sunday  
Leave Coolgardie Tuesday and Saturday  
Arrive Norseman Wednesday and Sunday  
Leave Norseman Monday  
Arrive Esperance Tuesday  
Leave Esperance Thursday  
Arrive Norseman Friday  
Leave Norseman Monday and Thursday  
Arrive Peninsula Monday and Thursday  
Leave Peninsula Tuesday and Friday  
Arrive Norseman Tuesday and Friday

BOOKING OFFICE **BARNES HOTEL NORSEMAN**  
Cobb & Co, Limited, Proprietors

# 1. The Lady Mary Mine

The Lady Mary mine forms the centre of a separate group about five miles south of Norseman. It was discovered by SW Pearce on the 29th November 1894. Under the original management seven shafts were sunk 100 feet on the underlie. A vertical main shaft was also sunk and equipped with a winding plant. No provision was made however for reaching the 100 feet drive from it.

Captain Hosking was then placed in charge and in a short space of time it was made a workable mine.

The Lady Mary property as floated consisted of one lease of 18 acres until Lady Mary North was acquired and two block claims to the east, making a total of 54 acres.



*Lady Mary Gold Mine, Norseman. W.A. 1896*



*Captain Hosking*



The capital of the Company was 30,000 Pounds in 60,000 shares of 10s each.

Crushing was commenced in April 1898 with a 10 head of stamps from the foundry of Bowes, Scott & Co of London and the additional 10 head made by Fulton & Co of Adelaide.

From April 1898 to March 1904, 19244.5 tons were crushed to yield a total of 21916.5 ozs of gold, averaging 1.138 ozs per ton.

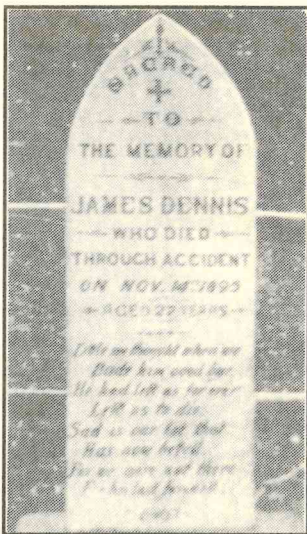
## 1a Lady Mary Well

The well was put down for the Lady Mary town's water supply in 1895. The water was 'good' and although it had a small percentage of magnesium, according to the 'experts' was suitable for human consumption. The well had an overhead tank with a windmill built by 'Monitor'.

The mill was sold to Cooke Bros at Noondoonia Station in 1916. It was erected on their dam, the dam being called the Monitor. The mill is still working today.

## 2. Grave At The Lady Mary

James Dennis, who had been known to have dizzy turns, fell down the Lady Mary South vertical shaft. He was buried at the site with this epitaph on his headstone. . .



SACRED TO THE  
MEMORY OF JAMES  
DENNIS  
WHO DIED THROUGH  
ACCIDENT ON NOV  
14TH 1895 AGED 27  
YEARS

*Little we thought when we  
Bade him goodbye  
He had left us for ever  
Left us to die*

*Sad is our lot  
That has now befell  
For we were not there  
For his last farewell.*

The original headstone was thought to have deteriorated and a new one erected in later years.

## 3. Iron Duke Decline

The Decline was developed in May 1987 specifically to intercept the bottom of the Myrtle Shaft (put down in the early 1890's) which was part of The Lady Mary Group.

The Decline was developed by local prospectors for approx 120m using a LM100 Airtrack and an Eimco 912 Bogger.

The venture was not fruitful as only a low grade deposit was discovered. Approximately only 100 tonnes of low grade ore was mined.



*Iron Duke Decline*

## 4. Panning

This was a method of looking for alluvial gold by using two panning dishes. One pan was left on the ground and the other, full of creek sand and gravel was held elevated and tilted to allow the sand to be blown away with the wind and the gravel to fall in the dish below. This was repeated until all the sand was blown away and the remaining gravel could be sorted for gold.



This method can be used at the panning off area, or try your luck with the conventional "wet panning" method. You will require your own pans and a supply of water.

*Dry Panning*



## 5. Break O'Day Cricket Pitch

The cricket pitch was laid in 1895 by the mine workers. The crew from the Break O'Day and the crews from the Lady Mary, Lady Miller used to play one another on alternate weekends. There was a pitch at Lady Mary flat but little evidence of it remains.

## 6. Break O'Day

The Break O'Day was located three miles south of the Lady Mary and consisted of one lease of 24 acres. Originally three vertical shafts were sunk in a row and each cut the reef at a depth of about fifty feet.

The property was held by Messrs Matthiessen (two), Ryan, Bradley and Rose operated the mine from September 1898 to March 1899.

The main shaft was equipped with a winding engine by Martin & Son with the ore hauled and crushed at the battery situated on the edge of Lake Dundas. The battery consisted of 5 head of stamps from the foundry of Thompson & Co of Castlemaine (Vic).

The total output of the mine was 1728 tons of ore for 4035oz 17dwt of gold—an average of 2oz 6dwt 17gr per ton.



*Prospectors of Break O'Day*

## 7. Brockway Timber Reserve And Flora Walk

The reserve is located some 12km south of Norseman and is east of the Norseman/Esperance road with an area of approximately 3770 hectares. Topography is hilly to undulating with the vegetation being primarily open woodland with some very fine stands of virgin E. brockwayi in places.

There are also excellent examples of regeneration of E. salubris, (sandalwood), E. flocktoniae (merrit) and E. dundasii (dundas blackbutt). Other species include E. torquata (coral gum), E. dumosa (white mallee) and E. lesouefii (goldfields blackbutt).

## 8. Telegraph Line

The original telegraph line followed the coast line. Installation of a second line was completed in May 1896 which went from Coolgardie to 4 miles south of Norseman where one branched off to Eucla and the other into the town of Norseman. The first post and telegraph master (Mr RW Lloyd) took charge on the 31st May 1896. The first messages transmitted from Norseman were sent by Mr SJ Giles, field operator who established himself at the end of Prinsep Street, with a beer case for a desk, and by this crude method nearly three thousand telegrams were transmitted and received.

The line was maintained by the Government of the day until 1937 when it became a party line for the outlying properties up until the microwave link was installed in 1968.

The Government built a shelter with a rain water tank every 30 miles along the line for the maintenance crew and supplied a square iron tank which had been fitted into the roof with rations of tea, flour, sugar and tinned meat. The posts were originally made of iron and were fitted into a cast iron base that had been dug into the ground. These bases were a good reserve source of water which had been collected by condensation. Bushmen drilled a hole into the side of the base and inserted a wooden plug for easy access to the stored water.

A story of the telegraph line said to be true is known to those who remember the days. . . as the bloke said when the telegraph line was being put up— "Look at those stupid fellows putting up that fence that won't keep the kangaroos out, the wires are too high."



## 9. Dundas Water Catchment, Soak And Picnic Area

The Dundas water storage dam was built in approximately early 1893. The catchment area contains stone walls to direct the water off the Dundas rocks into the dam. Following that, a rock catchment was built to catch the overflow.

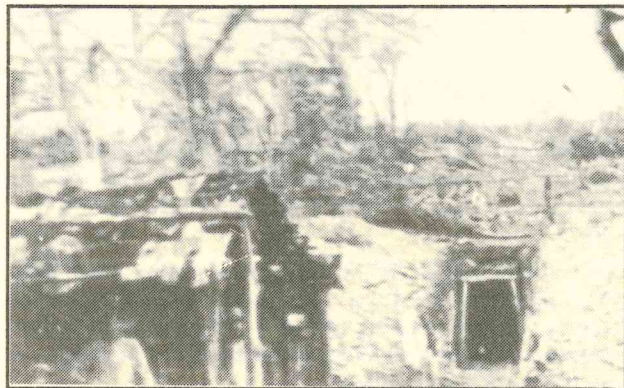
The area has now become a favourite picnic area for locals and visitors.

In 1892 Noganyer Soak was sunk by the early pioneers and was located approximately 250 yards south of the water catchment dam. This was the first water supply for the town of Dundas.

## 10. Dundas Townsite

Dundas, situated on the edge of Lake Dundas, 14 miles south of Norseman, is a picturesque area set amid huge rocks and boulders. The area is beautiful in spring, when blanketed with wild flowers, always a gentle reminder of the past, for it was here that the history of the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia began.

In 1848 Government surveyor John Roe on yet another of his many expeditions saw the surrounding hills and named them the Dundas Hills after the then secretary for Colonies in Britain. It became not the pastoral area he was seeking, but the Dundas Goldfield and then the Dundas Shire.



*Original May Bell Adit (Mawson's Reward)*

Pastoralists continued the exploration of the area until in 1890 a William Moir of Fanny's Cove, working out with stock from Esperance found a few colours of alluvial gold in the hills, and in 1892 he organised a prospecting party but failed to find any further gold. However, others remained to carry on prospecting until in the same year, 1892, Mawson and



*Warden Hicks*

Kirkpatrick discovered an auriferous reef on the west side of Lake Dundas and called it the May Bell. (Mawson's reward).

At the time the nearest Warden or Registrar was stationed at Southern Cross which meant that the two prospectors had to travel through 200 miles of virgin bush to register their claim. Almost immediately the Great Dundas and Scotia mines

were announced, and on the 31st of August 1893 the Dundas Goldfields were proclaimed and the townsite of Dundas was laid out near Noganyer Soak.

Warden Hicks was appointed and stationed initially at Esperance but later transferred to Dundas.

Dundas was mostly a tent and humpy mining town with the few houses built of bush timber and whitewashed, hessian bag walls and beaten earth floors although

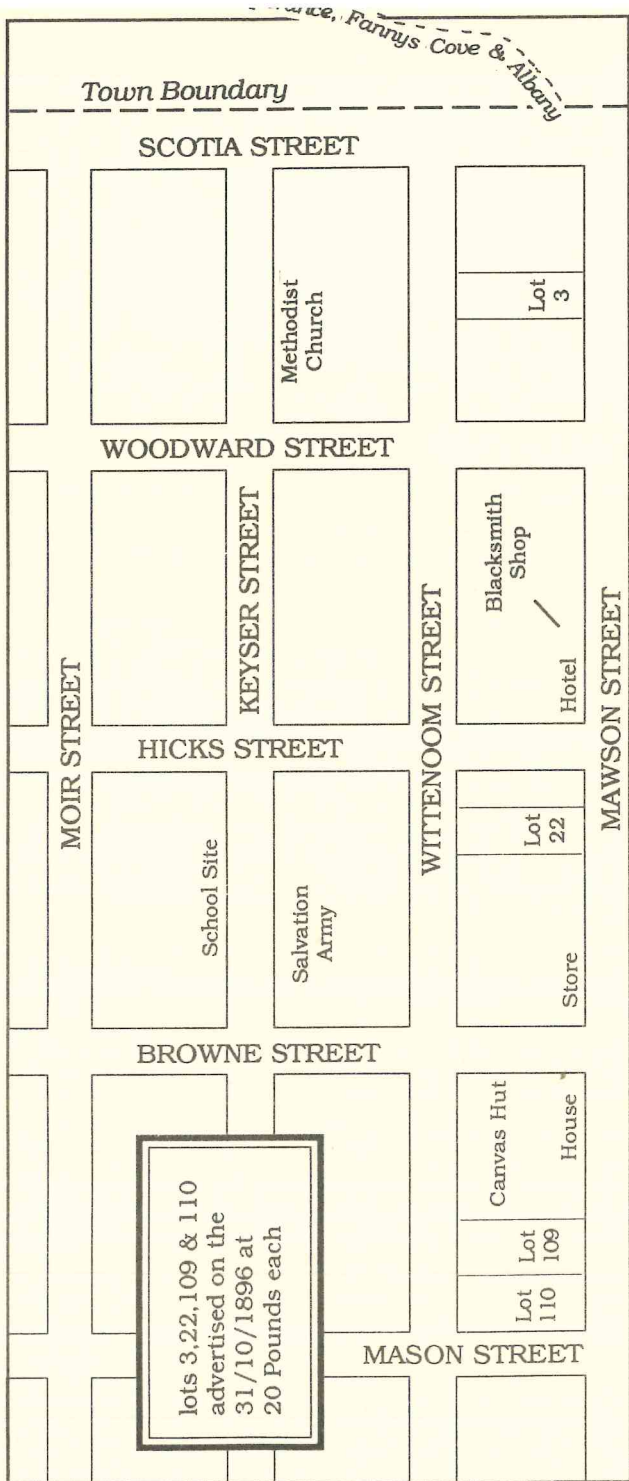


*Dundas Hotel c 1896*

buildings like the Warden's Court and Dundas hotel were the exception.

The pioneers of Dundas were magnificent people who carved out a life in raw virgin bush. Women and children walked beside drays and wagons from Albany, Esperance,





*Original Warden's Court—Dundas*

Perth and Israelite Bay because all supplies had to be brought into the area. Even that most basic necessity—water, had to be carted for miles. In spite of all the hardships there sprung into being a wonderful fellowship in its truest meaning that became the tradition of all mining towns.

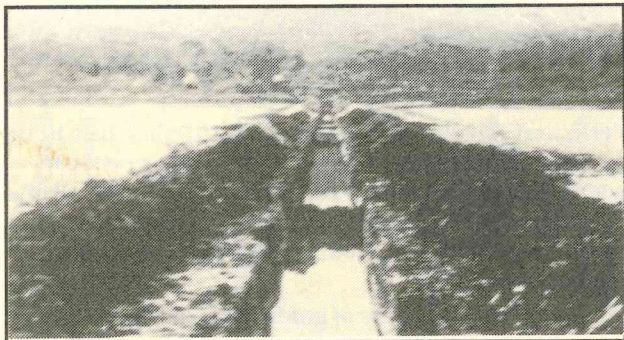
Following the discovery of gold at Coolgardie by Bayley and Ford, which incidentally occurred just AFTER the Dundas strike, many left to try their luck on the new field. Generally, those working their finds remained in the area until almost exactly one year after the proclamation of the Dundas field.

Two applications for reward claims were made on the 13th of August 1894, one by Messrs Sinclair and Allsop for their find known as the Norseman, 14 miles north of Dundas, and the other by Messrs Talbot, Ramsay & Goodliffe for their find, the Mount Barker, 3 miles east. This started a new rush and the population and businesses gravitated from Dundas to Norseman until the former was abandoned. The Hotel at Dundas remained, catering for coaches and travellers, until the coming of the railway between Norseman and Esperance many years later.

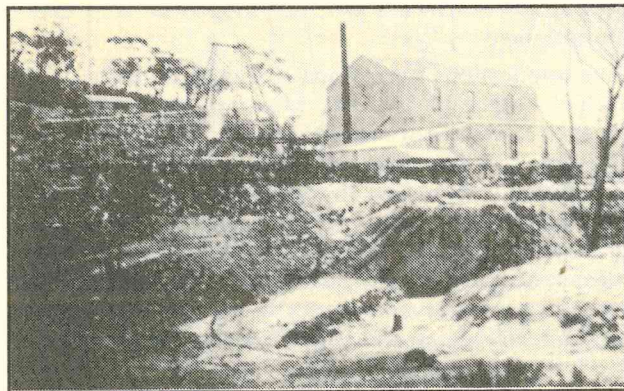
# 11. The Lone Grave

The Lone Grave was erected on Little Gypsum Island surrounded by Goldfields pines on Lake Dundas, one mile due east of the Dundas Townsite.

A baby died of pneumonia and was buried here with the epitaph "In memory of Stanley Arthur Whitehead. He died April the 8th 1897 age seven months". The original headstone is now in the historical collection at the Norseman Museum and a replacement was made by the Barrier Mining Co and erected on the original site.



*May Belle Water Supply Dundas Lake*



*Lady Mary Mine Site—1898*

## Acknowledgements

The Dundas Coach Road Heritage Trail was developed by a committee consisting of:-

B Lapsley, M Harslett, G Nelson and J Best with the assistance of the following:

- Dundas Shire Council
- Mort Harslett
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- Red White & Blue Mine
- G & GM Nelson
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