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W.A. Heritage Trails Network

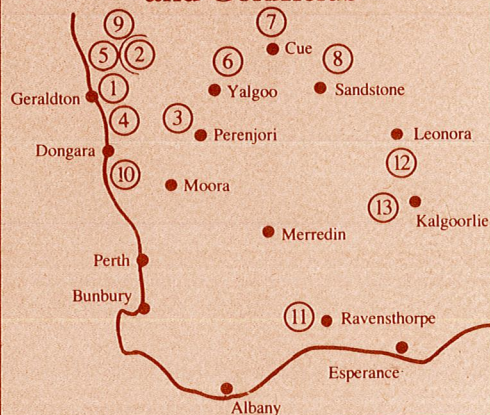
A Bicentennial Project
for Community Participation

The **De Grey - Mullewa Stock Route** is part of 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 Heritage Trails Network was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments under the Commonwealth/State Bicentennial Commemorative Program.

The map below indicates Heritage Trails in the Midwest and Goldfields regions of Western Australia.

Heritage Trails in the Midwest and Goldfields



- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Monsignor Hawes H.T. | 7. Cue H.T. |
| 2. De Grey-Mullewa Stock Route | 8. Sandstone H.T. |
| 3. Perenjori-Rothsay H.T. | 9. Chapman Valley H.T. |
| 4. Greenough/Walkaway H.T. | 10. Dongara H.T. |
| 5. Geraldton H.T. | 11. Cattlin Creek H.T. |
| 6. Yalgoo H.T. | 12. Historic Gwalia H.T. |
| | 13. Eastern Goldfields H.T. |



De Grey - Mullewa Stock Route



Further Information:
W.A. Heritage Committee (09) 322 4375



A Commonwealth/State
Bicentennial Project

How To Get There

Mullewa is 460km north of Perth along the Midlands Road to Mingenew (State Route 116) and then north on the Mingenew - Mullewa Road, a comfortable five hour drive.

The **De Grey - Mullewa Stock Route Trail** is a 125km (return) drive along gravel roads retracing a portion of the early access way taken by men and stock in the 1870s, which in turn became the main road north for vehicular traffic. The trail features three of the original Government Wells and two natural rockholes which provide delightful stopping places in the wildflower season of late winter. The trail terminates at Talling Peak, approximately 60km from Mullewa off the Carnarvon Road. With two prominences and a series of gorges, this is an ideal place to stop for lunch before returning to Mullewa.

Mullewa is also the starting point for the **Monsignor Hawes Heritage Trail**, which features 15 buildings designed by the architect and priest John Hawes at Mullewa, Yalgoo, Morawa, Tardun, Perenjori, Northampton, Nanson and Geraldton. Trail brochures are available from the Shire of Mullewa.

Please note: Since there are no facilities along the trail route it would be wise to observe the following instructions:

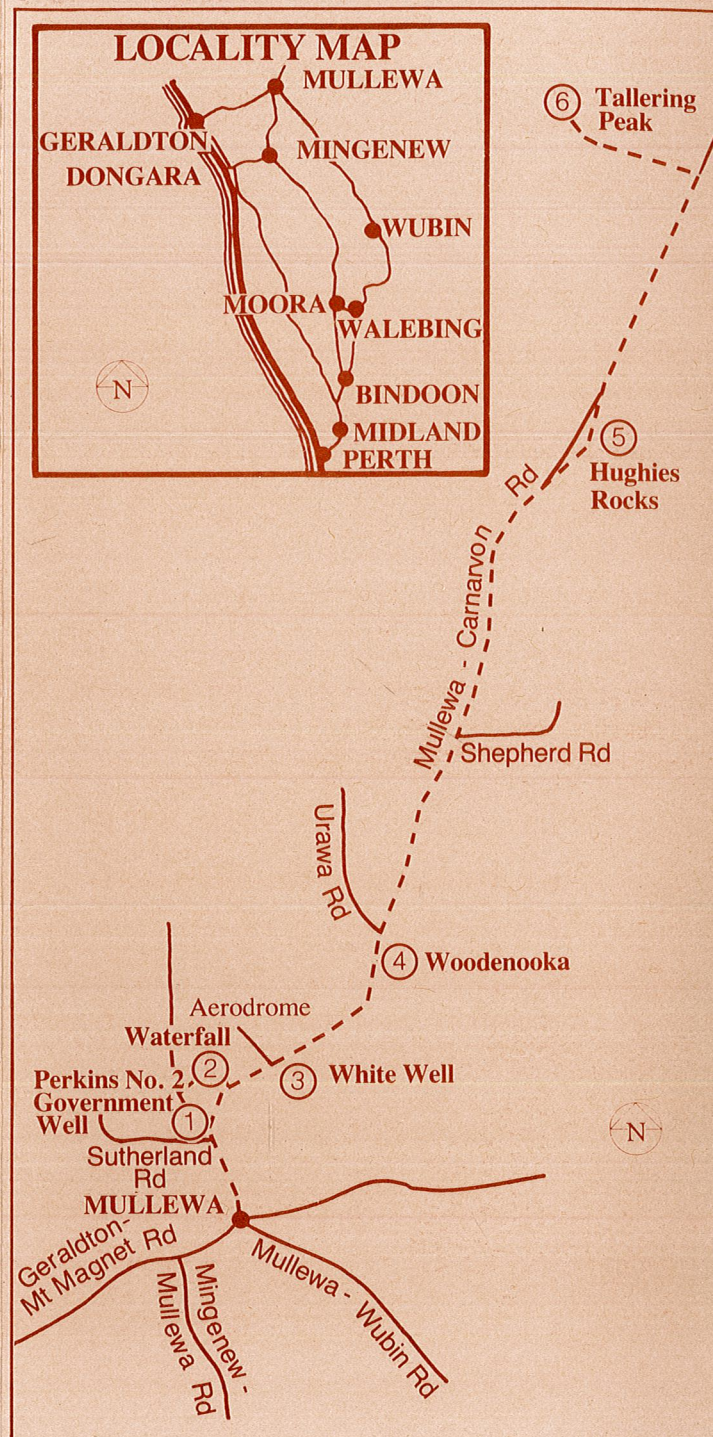
- Carry ample water
- Advise someone where you are going
- Keep the shire litter free
- Extinguish fires and butts

Persons using this Heritage Trail do so at their own risk.

Conversion Table

One foot	=	308.8 millimetres
One mile (80 chains)	=	1.609 kilometres
One acre	=	0.405 hectares
One gallon	=	4.546 litres

Front Cover: Bullocks at Three Rivers Station, near Meekathara. Courtesy Dolly Harrison (BL 67109P).

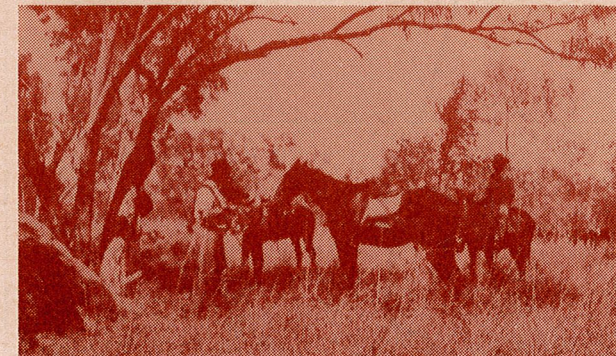


Introduction

'Moola-wa' was the name of a small valley towards the north-western boundary of the Barimaia Aboriginal tribe. A permanent spring there became the base for a shepherd's camp, one of many which were established as European settlement expanded after 1850.

As the demand for land grew in the 1860s and 1870s this expansion increased, often causing resentment among the Aboriginal tribes as water and food supplies were depleted by the stock. Occasionally this resentment turned to violence, as when a shepherd named John Lewis was fatally speared in 1864 near Mullewa. Three Aborigines were sent in custody in Perth for trial; one of them, Willaka, received life imprisonment, the others were acquitted.

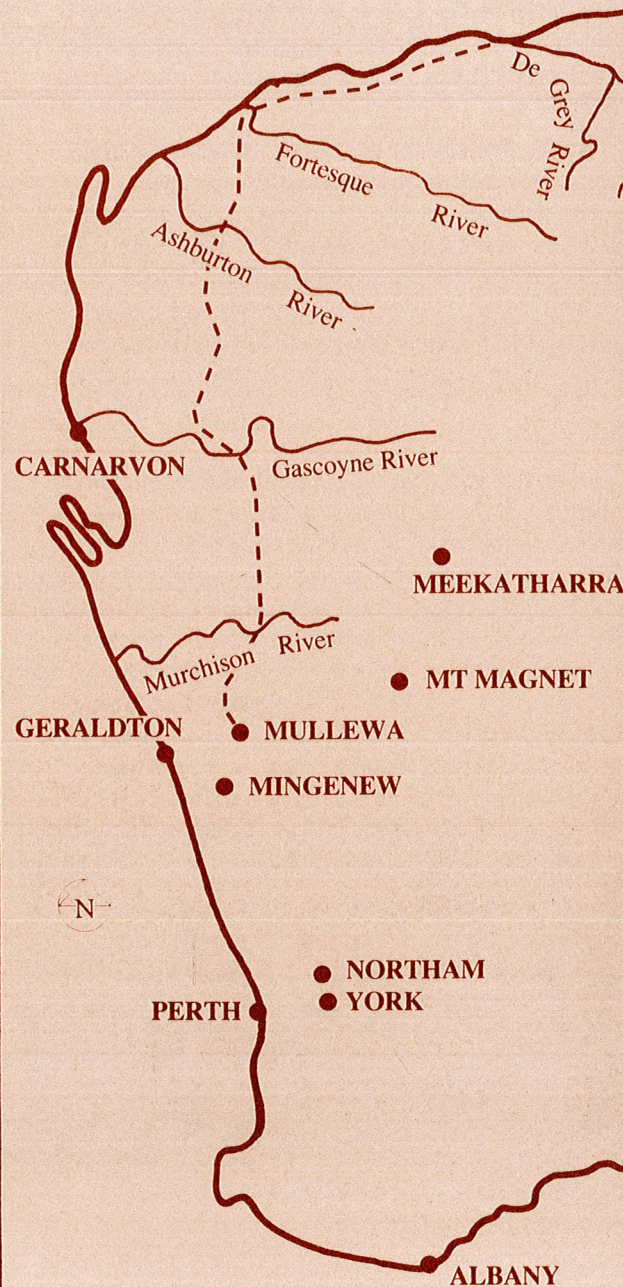
By the 1870s 'runs' or pastoral stations had been taken up in the Mullewa area and a main route became established to provide access for travellers on foot, cart or horseback. Sheep and cattle were walked out from the established runs around Geraldton and the Irwin River by European shepherds. The sheep were taken back to their parent runs for shearing, and the pathways used became recognised stock routes with stopping and resting places 10 to 15 miles apart at watering points. Some of these were springs or rockholes, and others were wells dug for shepherds.



Stockmen on the northern stock route, 1948. (Courtesy Battye Library).

DE GREY-MULLEWA STOCK ROUTE

No. 9701 -----



In the 1890s Government well-sinkers established further wells and equipped them with block and tackle pulleys for whipping (drawing) water. When a drover arrived at a well with his thirsty mob and horses, it took many hours of work to whip sufficient water for the animals using the Government issue canvas bucket, which held 44 gallons. Boss drovers owned a whip horse or used camels to pull water.

In 1905 the entire network of northern and eastern stock routes became gazetted as A Class Reserves (80 chains wide) from the Kimberley in the far north to Perth. This Heritage Trail retraces a portion of the De Grey - Mullewa Stock Route, number 9701.

Although not marked and surfaced as modern roadways are, men and animals managed to travel these routes over a vast, arid, open land. In the 1950s transportation of stock in motor trucks on prepared road systems began. Many of these roads were developed from the old routes, following the most suitable terrain as the first travellers had done many years before.



A camp cart and camels at Talling Station in 1927.
(Courtesy Battye Library).

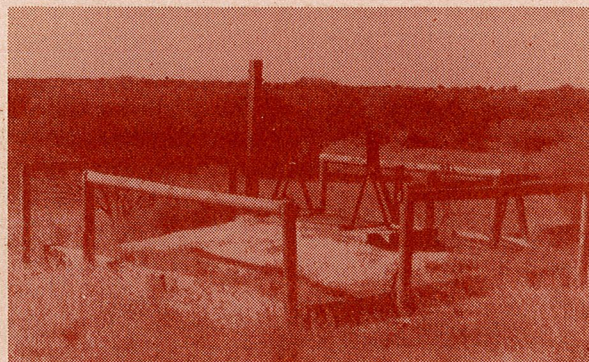
BL 7280B

A Selection of Flora and Fauna to be seen

Common Name	Botanical Name	Aboriginal Name
Bogada	Acacia linophylla	Wanyu
Kurara	Acacia tetragonophylla	Kurara
Minirichi	Acacia grasbyi	Kagaru
Mulga	Acacia aneura	Mulga
Mullarung (bottlebrush)	Callistemon phoeniceus	Kurli
Pine	Callitris columellaris	Burinu
Poplar	Codonocarpus cotinifolius	Karrtila
Quandong	Santalum acuminatum	Walku
Reminder (waitabit)	Hakea recurva	Duraba
Sandalwood	Santalaceae sp.	Thampang
Wattle	Acacia eremala	Pukatya
York gum	Eucalyptus loxophleba	
Everlastings	Cephalopterum drummondii	Kukatan
Everlastings	Waitzia aurea	Tutujina
Flannel bush	Solanum lasiophyllum	Kukilili
Mulla Mulla	Ptilotus sp.	Mulla Mulla
Euro	Macropus rufus	Pigeda
Red kangaroo	Macropus robustus	Marlu
Bungarra (red)	Varanus gouldii	Kweel
Brown Hawk (chicken hawk)	Falco berigora	Mikin
Butcher bird (grey)	Cracticus torquatus	Watu watu
Chiming wedgebill	Psophodes occidentalis	Punpun-garladi
Cockatoo (galah)	Cacatua roseicapilla	Pierli
Cockatoo (Major Mitchell)	Cacatua leadbeateri	Ngaralega
Emu	Dromaius novaehollandiae	Yalapiti
Fairy martin	Cecropis ariel	
Finch (zebra)	Poephila guttata	Nyingarri
Mallee fowl	Leipoa ocellata	Gnow
Parrot (mulga)	Psephotus varius	Puri Puri
Quail (stubble)	Coturnix pectoralis	Purringa
Robin (red capped)	Petroica goodenovii	Ilyara
Rufous treecreeper	Climacteris rufa	Wintara
Turkey	Eupodotis australis	Puridira
Wagtail	Rhipidura leucophrys	Chindi chindi

1. Perkins No. 2 Government Well

Sutherland Road, 4.9km from Mullewa east off the Carnarvon Road.



Perkins Government Well, 1987.
(Courtesy A. Kukla).

This was the second Perkins Government Well, completed by Frank Field in January 1934. It is 34 feet deep and supplied an average of 16 gallons per hour of fresh water.

The first Perkins Well was sunk and equipped by a Government well-sinker named Straker in 1897 where the main road crosses the Wooderarrung River. However, it later went salty.

These Perkins Wells were called Woodearrung No. 1 and 1A on Public Works sheets.

An earlier water supply was at the Woodearrung Spring downriver, where the body of shepherd John Lewis was buried in 1864. A stone-lined well near Woodearrung Spring was sunk in 1861 and used as a base by shepherds in charge of sheep belonging to pioneer settler John Sidney Davis of Tibradden, near Geraldton. At a later period settlers named Sharpe occupied the shepherds' stone cottage at the spring before establishing Wooleen Station on the Murchison River. When this supply turned salty the first Perkins Well was sunk.

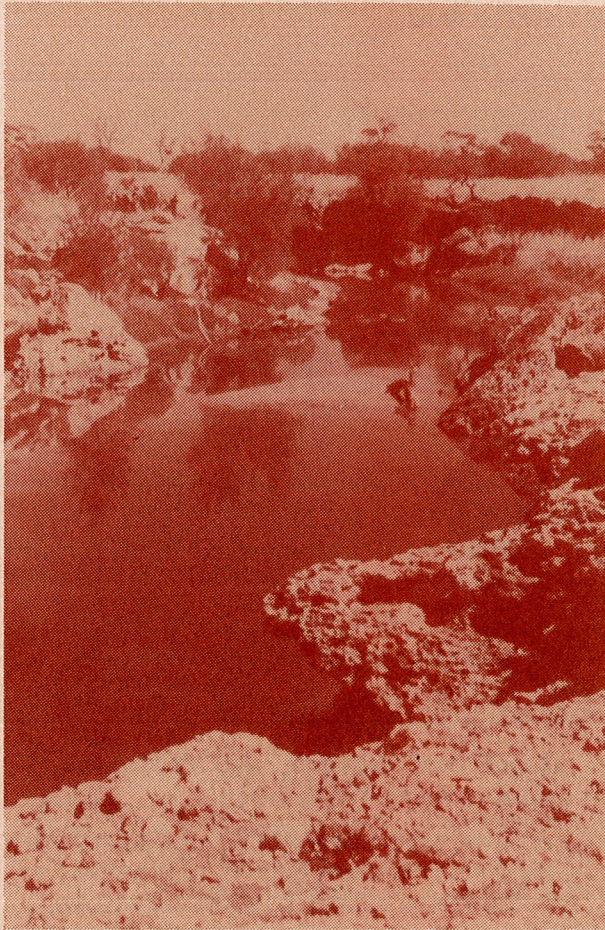
This area contains York gum, Reminder, Kurara and many wattle species which bloom in the winter months. Wildflowers are abundant in a good season.

2. Waterfall

East off the Carnarvon Road, 6.5km from Mullewa.

Picnic area with barbeque facilities.

'Got to find the wila (creek) to find the bubba (water)!'



Waterfall, 1987. (Courtesy A. Kukla).

Waterfall is formed by a natural pool which fills from runoff flowing down the creek bed and over a ledge of laterite after rains. The supply remains fresh during winter and was used as a resting and watering place on the stock route. In the early period travellers went from Waterfall to Wooderarrung Spring and Well, and bush yards (made of scrub laid on the ground to form walls) were used along the routes to hold mobs of sheep at night.

Mullewa resident Frank Shaughnessy described an early scene at Waterfall:

A mob of 500 bullocks coming down from Byro Station were camped at Waterfall in the early 1900s. The country was drummy (hollow) and full of rabbit warrens. During the night the bullocks rushed. They streaked through the burrows, jumping over mounds as if they were wombat holes.

Young Frank Shaughnessy lost his hat in the mad race through the dark bush to head the mob. In the morning he found the hat, knocked off by a big elbow branch of a York gum: "I wonder it didn't knock my head off!"

Saltbush and sandfire species grow along the creek and Flannel bush and Mulla Mulla flower in season.

3. White Government Well

West of Carnarvon Road, 10km from Mullewa.

This well was sunk and equipped about 1920 because of the insufficient natural supply at Waterfall. The water is fresh, contained in a Kaolin or pipe clay soil. A York gum at the well site bears a blaze which could have held one of the tin identification plates with the well's name, number distance to the next water. Placed at every well on the stock routes, they were usually affixed to the gin pole (whip pole).

Excerpts from a Memorandum of Agreement between the stockowners and a drover in 1942:

- 1. The Drover agrees to proceed to Mullewa ... with a complete and capable plant for the purpose of droving approximately 590 bullocks to Mingenew ...*
- 2. The Drover agrees that he will not include in the mob any cattle other than those the subject of this Contract.*
- 3. The Drover agrees to conform to all conditions laid down under the Droving Act.*
- 4. The Drover agrees that he will keep a careful record of any cattle that may be lost en route ...*

5. The price agreed upon for droving is to be at the rate of 2/6 per head.
6. The Drover agrees to pay for any cattle lost through overdriving, incapacity, negligence or drunkenness on the trip ...

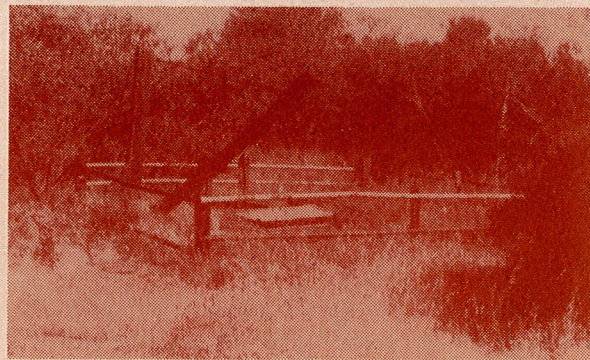


Pioneer Murchison pastoralist Frank Wittenoom, c. 1890s. (Courtesy Royal Western Australian Historical Society).

BL 25457P

4. Woodenooka Government Well

West of the Carnarvon Road, 14.9km from Mullewa.



Woodenooka Government Well, 1987. (Courtesy A. Kukla).

Built in July 1895, this well was seven feet square and 39 feet deep, and provided an average supply of 150 gallons per hour of brackish water. The well lies on the bank of the creek in very pleasant surroundings. Many of the early wells were sunk along creeks in the hope of obtaining water at shallow depths.

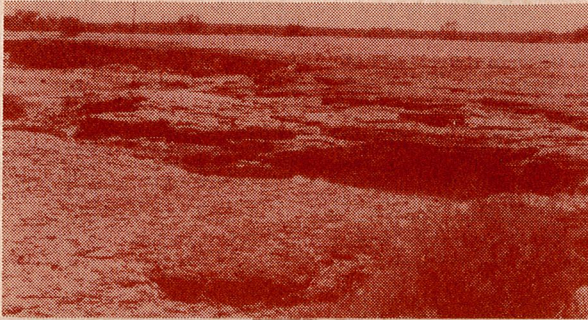
Frank Wittenoom wrote in his **Memoirs** that:

It must not be thought this well sinking was an easy or soft job. A spot would be chosen, often by certain plants that grew around, trees, ants and other not infallable signs ...Dynamite was not known, so until water was struck, loose blasting powder was alright. When water was reached, the powder had to be encased in paper or piece of old moleskin trousers, well buttered with fat, and formed into a cartridge to fit the hole ... Many of these wells were sunk to about 10' without water, when we would leave them then and try another place ...

A reserve was gazetted here in 1891 to protect a well sunk by John Jones near the Woodenooka Spring, situated on the Woodenooka Creek. In 1910 the reserve was enlarged to 10,000 acres for the purpose of resting travellers and stock.

5. Hughies Rocks

East off the Carnarvon Road, 32.6km from Mullewa.



Hughies Rocks, 1987. (Courtesy A. Kukla).

A reserve of 2,000 acres was gazetted around The Rocks in January 1880, the earliest on the trail.

The water supply lies in a deep pool in Hughies Rocks Creek, the bed of which holds large areas of laterite rock containing iron ore. Pads (animal pathways) leading into the water are used by sheep, kangaroo, and goats in the evenings. Please do not disturb them.

Mullewa resident John Park described the droving:

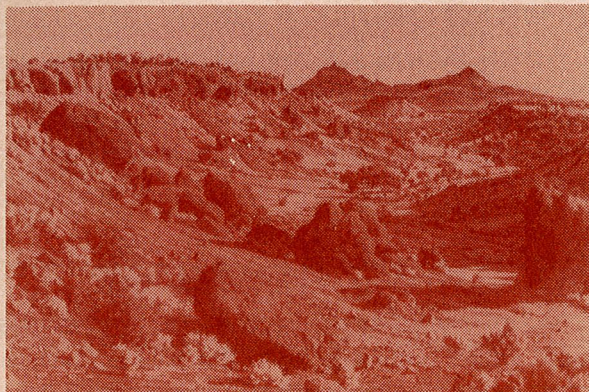
My father had 100 horses but he took 60 on a droving trip and left 40 in Mullewa. He used to take young, freshly broken horses from the farms and return them to the farmers when he finished the trip. He had his own good night horse, Mystery and a day horse, Prince. They fed the night horses with nosebags and sometimes carried lengths of troughing to feed chaff to the rest.

I was 12 when I started droving with dad. I used to take the first watch at night. My father would always take the last watch and move the cattle off camp at daylight by himself while the boys got their breakfast and loaded up. He had nine men plus the horsetailer and cook in a four-wheeled cart.

During the 1934 season, from June to November, 43 boss drovers brought 136,778 sheep and 2,666 head of cattle down the stock route. Bert Troy had a mob of 6,500 sheep which he had to split, travelling a day or two apart.

6. Talling Peak

West off the Carnarvon Road, 60km from Mullewa.



'Talling Peak and Gorge' by Ailsa Small.

Talling Peak stands between two branches of the stock route and is the only prominence of any magnitude in the flat, grey-green Murchison scrublands. John Forrest, then a young surveyor attached to the Department of Lands, noted Talling Peak during trigonometrical surveys in 1873.

The two peaks consist of a concentrated body of iron ore rising from a series of breakaway gorges. These offer spectacular views of the Murchison country and cleared farmland to the south-west as this area marks the demarcation from agricultural to pastoral country. The eucalypt/mulga line also crosses the trail slightly south of Talling Peak.

Mining leases have been held here by Western Mining Corporation Limited in a joint venture since the 1960s. An exploration shaft with stockpiled material outside is situated on the north face of the trig hill. Extensive drilling has been carried out and the remains of living quarters and workshops are visible further down the slope. Further mineral exploration is proceeding.

The vegetation changes slightly at Talling to include trees such as bowgada and quandong which produce edible beans and fruit; sandalwood, harvested for its aromatic wood; pine for timber; poplar, a medicinal tree; and mullarung and minnirichi.

The marlu and biggada kangaroos are present, as are many varieties of lizard including the red bungarra (kweel). Numerous birds which frequent the semi-arid zones are to be seen.

A picnic site with barbeque facilities is situated at the head of the gorge overlooking both peaks of Tallering. The mineral survey tracks which dissect the whole area are suitable for four-wheel-drive vehicles only.

Acknowledgements

The **De Grey - Mullewa Stock Route Heritage Trail** project was developed by the Shire of Mullewa, which gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following:

For identification and compilation:

- Nan Broad

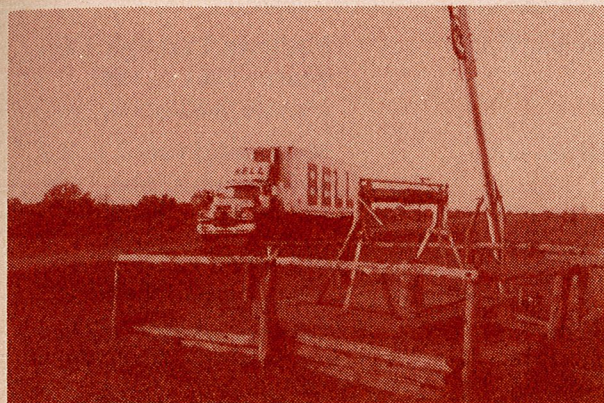
For anecdotal material:

- Frank and Myrtle Shaughnessy
- John Park

For recorded information:

- Maitland Farrell
- A. Clark, Pinegrove Station records
- Department of Land Administration
- A.J. Keeffe
- Water Authority of W.A., Ground Water Branch
- Western Mining Corporation
- F. Wittenoom's **Memoirs**

Photographs



*25 Mile Government Well north of Meekatharra on Stock Route No. 16360. This well was restored by the Meekatharra Lions Clubs in 1976 as a memorial to the drovers.
(Courtesy Nan Broad).*

Photographs in this brochure are courtesy of:

- Nan Broad
- Battye Library
- Dolly Harrison
- A. Kukla
- Royal Western Australian Historical Society

Further Reading

(Available at the Mullewa Library)

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Barden, W.D. | Mullewa Through The Years - 1861 to 1961
(Private publication, 1961) |
| Eakins, G.C. | Memoirs. Parts 1 and 2
(Private publication, 1976 and 1979) |
| Eakins, S.V. | My Land
(Private publication, 1985) |
| Keeffe, A.J. | Conflict South of Mullewa
(Private publication, 1973)
Meaning of Mullewa
(Private publication, 1975) |
| Sharpe, E.I. | E.T. Hooley - Pioneer Bushman
(Private publication, 1985) |
| Wittenoom, F. | Memoirs of Murchison Pastoral and Goldfields Areas
(Reprinted by the Geraldton Historical Society Inc., 1978) |

NOTES