



# Chapman Valley Heritage Trail



A Commonwealth/State  
Bicentennial Project

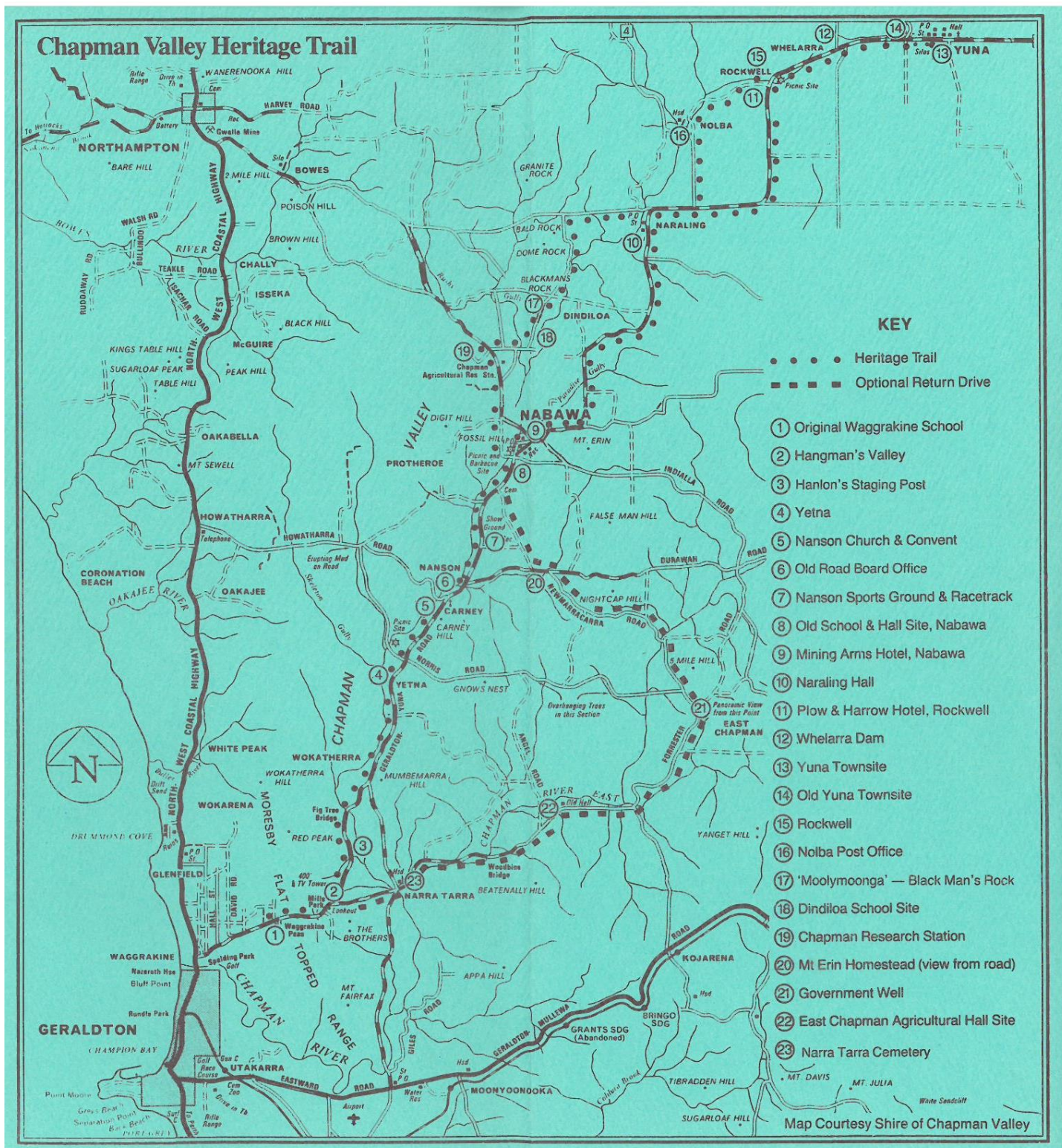
The Chapman Valley Heritage Trail is part of the Heritage Trails Network, a project for community participation devised by the Western Australian Heritage Committee. To commemorate the 1988 Bicentenary, the project established a statewide network of 'Heritage Trails' – routes designed to enhance awareness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



## Chapman Valley Heritage Trail

The Chapman Valley Heritage Trail is a 100km driving tour roughly following the path of the Geraldton to Yuna railway (with an optional 40km return route) and highlighting historical sites of the district. At a leisurely pace the trail provide a pleasant half-days outing.

**Please note:** Persons using this trail do so at their own risk





## Introduction

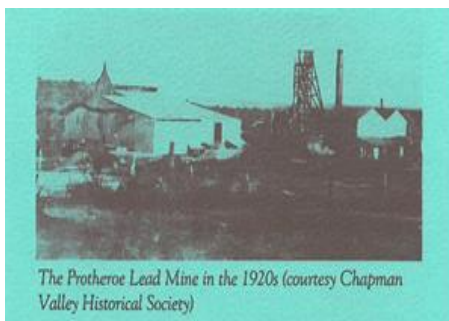
In 1829 Lieutenant George Grey (later Governor of South Australia) was commissioned to spend two months exploring the country between Shark Bay and the Swan River. He and his party named the Victoria Range and the Gascoyne River and on the way back crossed the mouths of the Murchison, Bowes, Chapman, Greenough and Irwin rivers. Substantial tracts of the land crossed were noted as highly suitable for grazing purposes.

In the land-hungry early days of the Swan River Colony such news was most welcome and provided the incentive for settlers to move into the Chapman Valley area. The first freehold land in the area was 64,000 acres taken up by Michel Morrissey about 1860.

The discovery in 1848 of a rich lode of galena (lead ore) in the bed of the lower Murchison River sparked development of the Northampton Mineral Field and the establishment of Geraldton as a garrison and later a port. The first lead mine in Australia, the 'Geraldine Mine', opened in 1849.

*The **Geraldton Heritage Trail** is a 30km driving or cycling tour of Geraldton's natural and cultural heritage, with opportunities for nature and historical walks. A full day should be allowed to complete this trail, which can also be done in shorter sections.*

Copper was mined at Narra Tarra (meaning "hill camp") on Michael Morrissey's Mount Erin pastoral lease from 1863 to 1866. The Fremantle-Champion Bay Mining Company mined the field from 1870 to 1885, when falling prices made it uneconomical. After the mine closed a number of miners settled in the area.

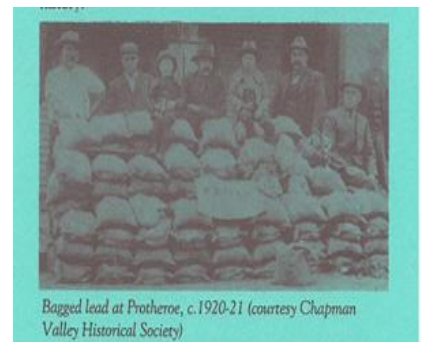


The Protheroe Lead Mine in the 1920s (courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society)

Low prices meant that there was almost no mining on the field from 1892 to 1897. From 1897 to 1902 the WA Smelting Company improved the site to obtain lead for smelting telluride gold ore from Kalgoorlie. Poor results forced the company into liquidation in 1902.

The Fremantle Trading Company took over WA

Smelting assets in 1902 and resumed work on the Narra Tarra mine. A lot of money was spent on de-watering and development, but initial results were not encouraging. Narra Tarra came into production in 1914, when the price of lead began rising. Apart from a temporary closure during the First World War (1914-1918) output from the mine reached a peak of £460,000 worth of lead up to 1925, more than the rest of the field over its entire history.



Bagged lead at Protheroe, c.1920-21 (courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society)

To cater for the workforce the township of Protheroe was established. The Company built a fine house here for the general manager and a row of four cottages-cum-offices, with electric light supplied from the mine. There were family cottages, a street of dwellings for single men, a store, Government school and boarding house which provided meals for the single men.

Lead and copper were mined intermittently in the Chapman Valley area from 1863 to about 1959.

The Shire of Chapman Valley was established in 1901. The railway from Geraldton reached Naraling in 1911 and Yuna in 1913 and served the district until its closure in 1957. Transport with the Shire is now entirely by road.

Nabawa, the administrative centre of the Shire of Chapman Valley is situated on the Main Geraldton-Yuna Road, 40km from Geraldton. Yuna a further 35km from Geraldton is a smaller community centre for its surrounding area.

## 1. Original Waggrakine School

### *Geraldton – Yuna Road*

The first Waggrakine School opened on March 12<sup>th</sup> 1934 and closed on July 31<sup>st</sup> the same year. It was an assisted school, meaning that the Education Department paid a teacher's salary in return for a building being provided.

Local resident Miss Jean Trant had just finished school at the time the idea was proposed, and the Education Department approved her appointment as teacher provided she sat for the first Teacher Certificate. Her father offered a disused building for the school and it was cut in half and moved bodily to its new home on Nanson Road.

The school consisted of one room about 20 feet by 15 feet with a semi-enclosed verandah which was used for a time as a cloakroom. After three weeks it had 12 pupils, including 7 children from Macedonian families who had established market gardens in the district. Mrs Enga Smith (nee Mills) recalls her time at the school:

*...we had all the usual lessons and on Friday mornings, the Rev. J Crooks came from Bluff Point to give religious instruction. The methods of getting to school were varied. Some of the sturdy little Macedonian children walked over three miles to school from the tomato gardens of their parents...*

*Apart from the walkers, some students rode dilapidated push bikes and others rode horses, several children often carried by one patient animal. Once there was grief and consternation amongst staff and pupils when, one hot day, an elderly horse died under the tree it was tied to, worn out from the lifetime of servitude and tired to death of waiting...*

The school closed when a bus was provided to transport to Geraldton, and nothing remains on the site except part of the foundations and Red Gums that the children planted.



*The 'Coffee Pot' (courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society)*

About 500m further along the Geraldton-Yuna Road and 1km north of the road is the 'Coffee Pot' (a corruption of 'Coffee Plot'), a small square building with a pointed roof. This cottage is on the site of an experimental coffee plantation authorised by Governor Weld in July 1870, on the recommendation of Reverend Charles Grenfell Nicolay, who had arrived in Fremantle the preceding April en route to take up an appointment as Chaplain to Geraldton.

Helped by his son Frederick, from Melbourne, Nicolay painstakingly planted coffee seed from Aden and Brazil, built the cottage and a well alongside, and planted several fig trees, one of which still survives. However, by the end of 1873 the plantation had failed – persistent strong winds being held mostly to blame – and the reserve was sold.

## 2. Hangman's Valley

There is a curious story attached to the name of the valley. It seems a police officer and a aboriginal tracker were taking prisoners to Geraldton, when the officer was obliged to go to the Narra Tarra Station homestead. He left the prisoners in the tracker's charge with orders to guard them and not let them get away.

After being at the homestead a short while the officer was surprised to find the tracker had followed him, but had left the poisoners behind. On being questioned the tracker replied, "Prisoners they not get away". When the officer investigated, he found the prisoners hanging from the trees, dead. Whether punishment was meted out to the officer of the tracker is not recorded.

## 3. Hanlons' Staging Post

*Geraldton – Yuna Road*

When the valley was first being settled the ride by horse or coach was a long hazardous haul because of the Moresby Ranges. A staging post and stables was set up by the Hanlon family a mile or so east of the hills, where travellers could change horses and no doubt hospitality was extended to provide food and drink and shelter in bad weather.

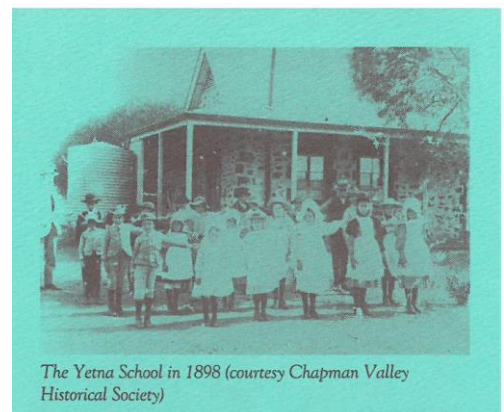
A stone block and gum tree are the only visible evidence left at the site.

## 4. Yetna

*Geraldton – Yuna Road*

The Yetna site was originally a siding set on a spur line of the Geraldton to Yuna railway, but after the railway was closed it was allowed to deteriorate. A mound is still visible at the site and a pepper tree stands nearby.

The nearest property to the siding was 'Glendoone' homestead to the north, and there was still palm trees in the river are nearby which mark the picnic sites used by railway workers and local famers.



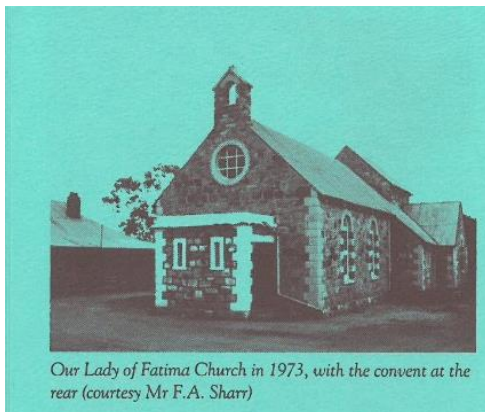
When Narra Tarra estate was divided up the Eastough family took up the smaller holding calling it 'Glendoone'. A very able blacksmith, Eastough also developed the land and built the homestead with a large garden and thriving orange orchard. He cleaned out his blacksmiths shop at some stage between 1875 and 1880 for the education of local children. This was known as the Narra Tarra School. It moved into the weatherboard building about 1905 and finally closed in the 1930's. The school being very close to the homestead, teachers were accommodated with the family.

Near the house was a bake-house built to satisfy the appetites of the large Eastough family. One end of the back verandah was closed in at some stage to house the Post Office, with Mrs Eastough taking on the role of post-mistress and hostess to the mailman and anyone travelling on the mail coach. When the telephone went through a switchboard was added.

A brick kiln stood on the river flat north of the homestead around 1900. Bricks from this kiln were used in the construction of the Upper Chapman Road Board Office in 1913.

## 5. Nanson Church and Convent

*Geraldton – Yuna Road*



*Our Lady of Fatima Church in 1973, with the convent at the rear (courtesy Mr F.A. Sharr)*

The Church of Our Lady of Fatima, designed by Monsignor John Hawes, was built in 1938 and opened by Dr JP O'Collins, then Bishop of Geraldton. The Sanctuary and Sacristy were added by Summerhayes and Associates in the 1950s. Behind the Church is the convent chapel which was also built to a design by Hawes. A simple square building of local stone, it is now a private home and can only be viewed from the Church.

*The **Monsignor Hawes Trail** highlights 15 building designed by the architect-priest John Hawes and other sites significant to his life. Beginning in Mullewa, it is a self-guiding driving tour through the scenic Murchison region, and includes Yalgoo, Tardun, Morawa, Perenjori, Northampton, Nanson and Geraldton. At a leisurely pace it will take up to four days to complete.*



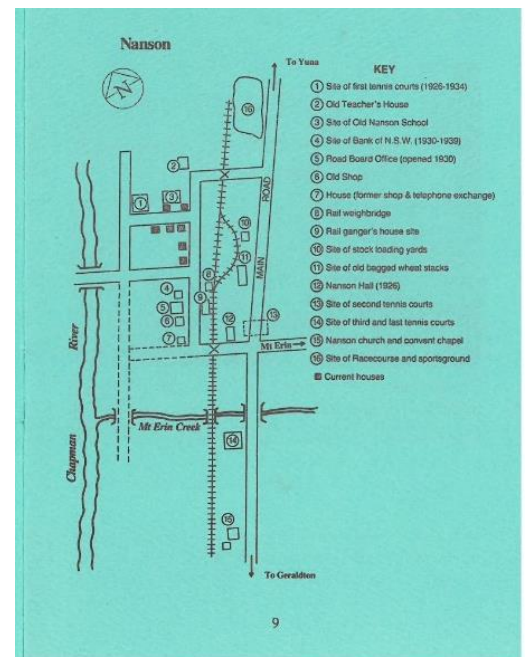
## Nanson

Previously called Mount Erin, in 1904 Nanson became the district's first gazetted townsite when Michael Morrissey's estate was subdivided.

The railway opened in 1910 and operated until 1957. The old wooden bridge can be seen to the west of the Geraldton-Yuna Road, where it crosses Mount Erin Creek.

Nanson was the centre for railway maintenance and home to gangers and their families. Beside the siding there was quite a large railway yard and building to house work trolleys and maintenance equipment, a goods shed and weighbridge and wheat silos.

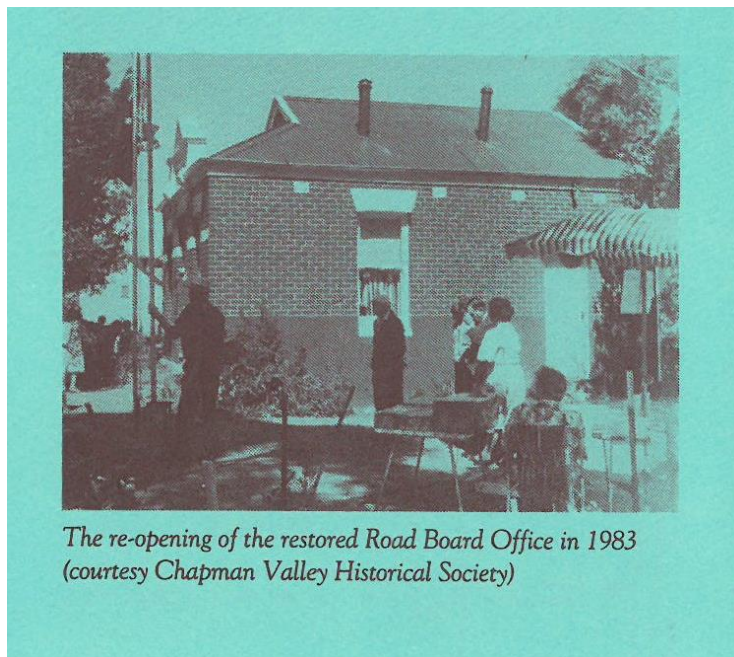
The first Post Office was established in 1910 by Bill and Rose Stansfield.



### 6. Old Road Board Office

#### *East Terrace, Nanson*

This brick building was constructed in 1913 by Bill Stansfield, appointed as the first permanent Secretary-Supervisor to the Upper Chapman Road Board. His wife Rose was the first official post-mistress and their home provided space for the post office, a general store and Road Board Secretary's office until this building was completed. It closed in 1964, when new offices were built in Nabawa, and was used by the Country Women's Association as its meeting place until 1974. The building was restored in 1983 and is used by the Chapman Valley Historical Society.



*The re-opening of the restored Road Board Office in 1983  
(courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society)*

## 7. Nanson Sports Ground and Race Track

### *Geraldton – Yuna Road*

This ground once had a grandstand, and Nanson also had a football and cricket oval opposite the present showground on the river side of the main road. Another race track was located approximately where the present golf course exists.

*Continue along the Geraldton-Yuna Road towards Nabawa. The township of **Protheroe** was situated to the west, four kilometres north of Nanson. Nothing remains there, and the area is risky because of unmarked air shafts and lead tailings.*

## 8. Old School and Hall Site

### *Geraldton – Yuna Road, Nabawa*



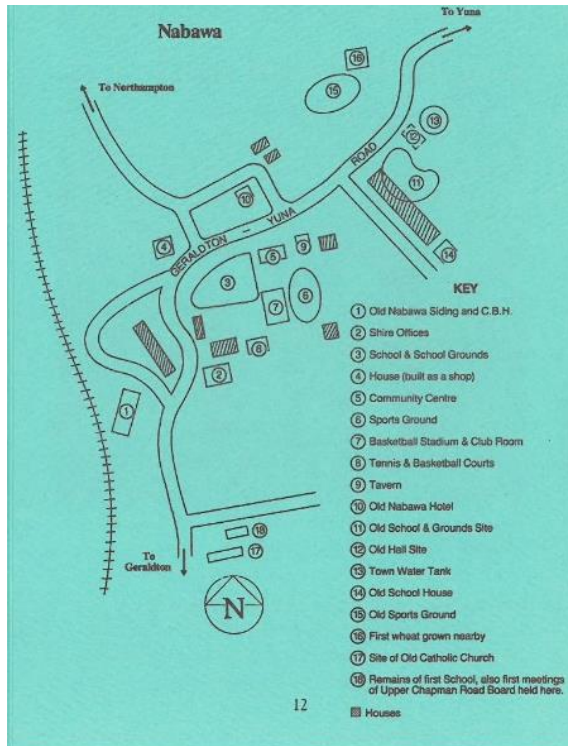
*Teacher and students at Nabawa School in 1910 (courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society)*

On this site was the first school in the Nabawa area, in a rammed-wall building constructed in 1892 by Michael Morrissey of Mount Erin as a Catholic Church. There is now only part of the mud walls remaining.

About 1896 an Agricultural Hall was built nearby on land which is now a parking area for Nabawa cemetery, and the Government reserved the right to use it as a school. Mary Twinett was its first teacher. When a second school opened in Yetna in 1898 one teacher attended both, spending three days a week at Nabawa and two at Yetna.



## Nabawa

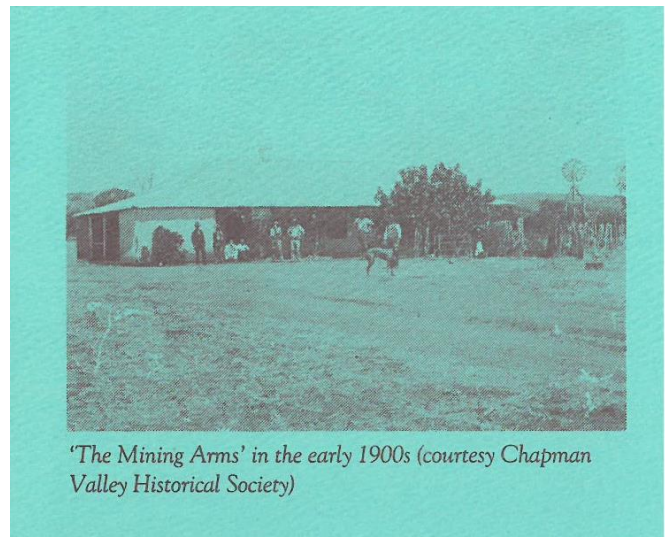


Nabawa is the main centre of the Shire of Chapman Valley, with the Shire Office, sports grounds, basketball stadium, school and tavern. To the north, where the town water supply tank is situated, is the site of the Old Nabawa Hall and third Nabawa School.

## 9. 'The Mining Arms'

### *Hotel Road, Nabawa*

The first hotel in Nabawa, 'The Mining Arms' was built by Samuel Hadley Jupp and opened in 1889. Although the Protheroe mine had closed, some miners settled locally and created a demand which Samuel, a bootmaker by trade, soon satisfied. His brother-in-law Robert Gould bought the hotel in 1910, leased it for a while then sold it in 1939. Jules Heinsen, who struck a rich load of galena in the 1940's became the owner in 1942. He sold it to Geraldton publican Nick Pilatis in 1950, after which it was managed by Cyril and Linda Giltrow.



*'The Mining Arms' in the early 1900s (courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society)*

The hotel closed on June 30, 1973 and is now a private home. A replacement tavern was opened adjacent to the present sports ground on July 1, 1973.

## 10. Naraling Hall

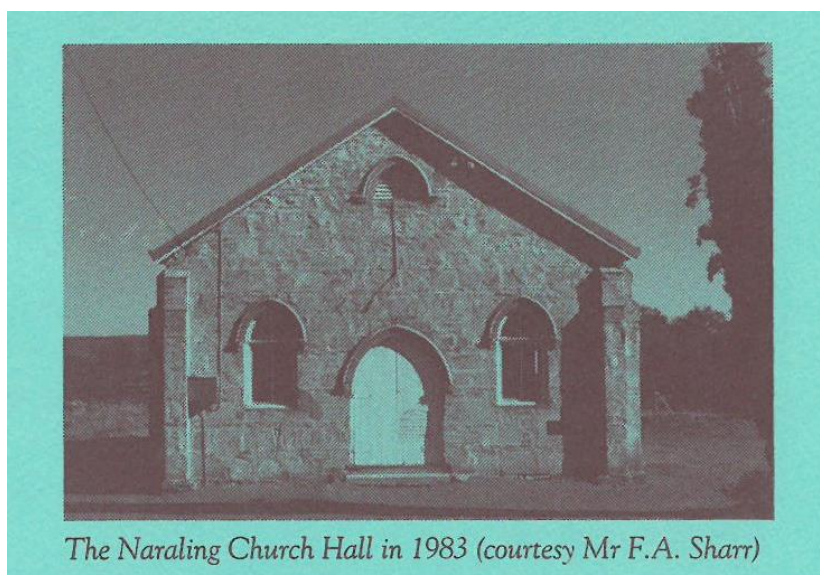
*Geraldton – Yuna Road, Naraling*

Naraling, 54km north-east of Geraldton, was declared a townsite in 1910 when the railway was opened and a blacksmith's shop opened to cater to the influx of settlers.

In 1913 Naraling suffered a severe cyclone, which unroofed a large weatherboard cottage, moved the school off its foundations and partially wrecked several other buildings.

It was decided in 1923 that in the interests of the area a church should be built at Naraling. This stone building, 40 feet by 20 feet, was built on the site of the blacksmiths shop, which was demolished. The foundation stone was laid by James Criddle on August 21, 1926 and it was declared open on November 27, 1926 by Neil Calder. The hall is no longer in use.

Naraling also had a RSL Hall, which has since been demolish and a post office and store.



## 11. Plow & Harrow Hotel, Rockwell

*Geraldton – Yuna Road*

The Plow & Harrow Hotel was built at Rockwell in 1917 by Messrs George and Ton Vine. The hotel prospered until the licence transfer to Yuna in 1939 for a new hotel known as the Yuna Tavern.



## 12. Whelarra Dam

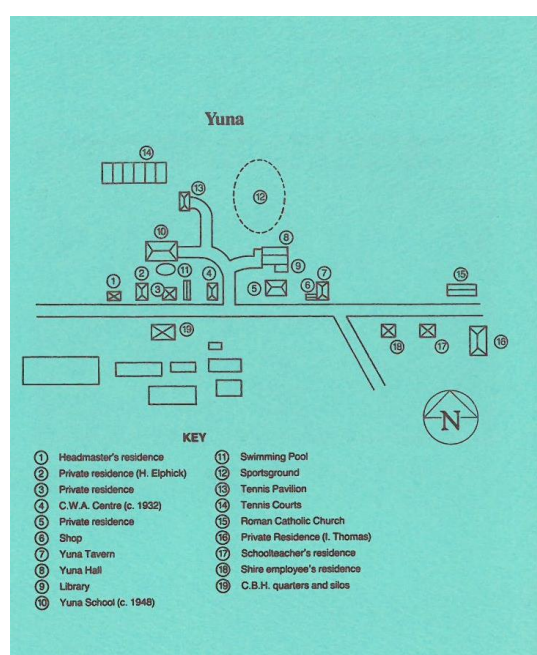
### *Geraldton – Yuna Road*

This dam constructed in 1911-12, primarily as a railway dam providing water for the steam trains. It also created a water supply for Yuna, but proved to contain too much salt for domestic use.

The railway line to Whelarra (first known as Yuna Siding then West Yuna) was begun in 1911. When it reached Whelarra residents requested that it be extended to Yuna, which was done in 1913.

## 13. Yuna

### *Geraldton – Yuna Road*



'Yuna' is an Aboriginal word meaning 'stinking water'. For a long time the only available water was the rock soak at Whelarra. It was about 70cm wide and 2m long with perfectly straight sides. There was never more than a metre of water, two metres down, which in hot weather would be filled with drowned animal and reptiles.

Settlers first moved into the Yuna area in the 1900's clearing their own roads until the Government road cutting team arrived in April 1910. The first mail to Yuna was delivered on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1910. The weighbridge was installed in 1925 and the first store opened in 1927. The bitumen road reached Yuna in 1954 and four years later the railway closed.

## 14. Old Yuna Townsite

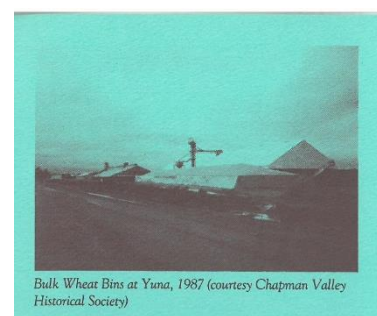
### *To get to Site 14 – Old Yuna Townsite – turn north into Balla-Whelarra Road*

This was the site of the original Yuna town until the coming of the railway. The town was then shifted to its more convenient location.

In 1924 a hall at this site was use as a school, with a Miss Eakins as teacher.

Owing to a disagreement among settlers it was decided to build another school east of Yuna, near the Dartmoor turn-off. However, as most settlers refuse to send children to it, the doors never opened.

A school was then built near the hall in the original Yuna town and remained until the Second World War (1939 – 45) after which it was shifted to the present school area.



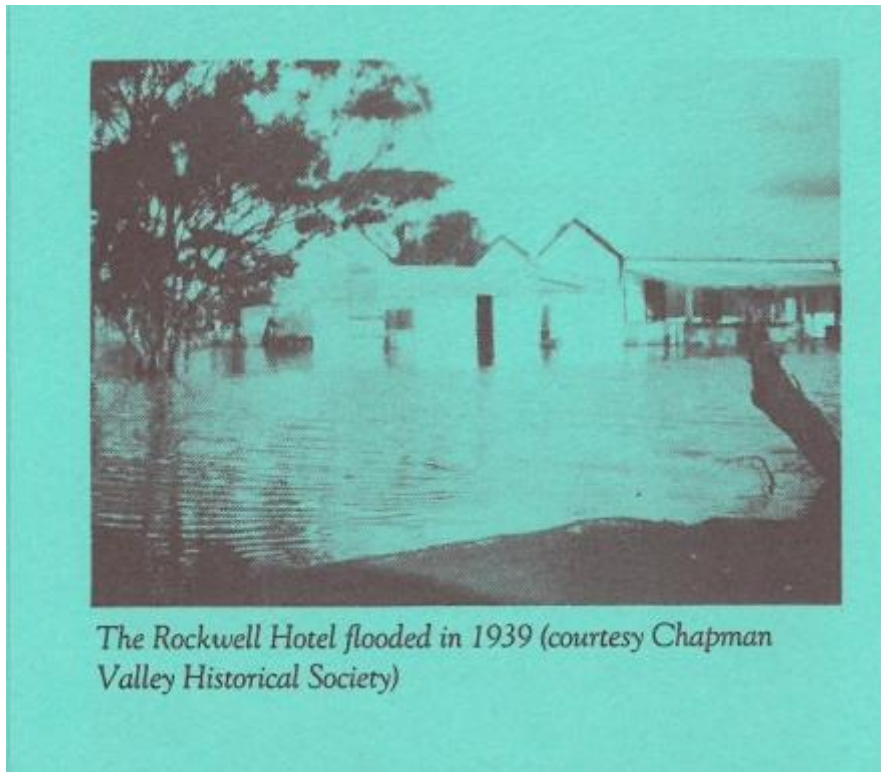
## 15. Rockwell

### *Geraldton – Yuna Road*

A building on this site, owned by the late Mr Dinny Ahearn, was used as the first school in the Yuna area. This building was near a railway well known as Yuna Well. This was later changed to Rockwell. Miss Rimmington, who arrived from Claremont Teacher's College in 1916, was the first teacher.

In June 1918 a Government school was built about 1km north of the original site and Miss Rimmington remained as teacher until December 1918. This school remained open until 1924.

There was also a rail siding and a hall at Rockwell. Settlers held picnics and horse races here and their many dances and social events were held in the hall.



## 16. Nolba Post Office

### *Nolba Road*

For many years a post office and telephone exchange was operated here a short distance from the Nolba rail siding. It was run by various families in the surrounding area. Apparently there was also a school at Nolba in the very early years.

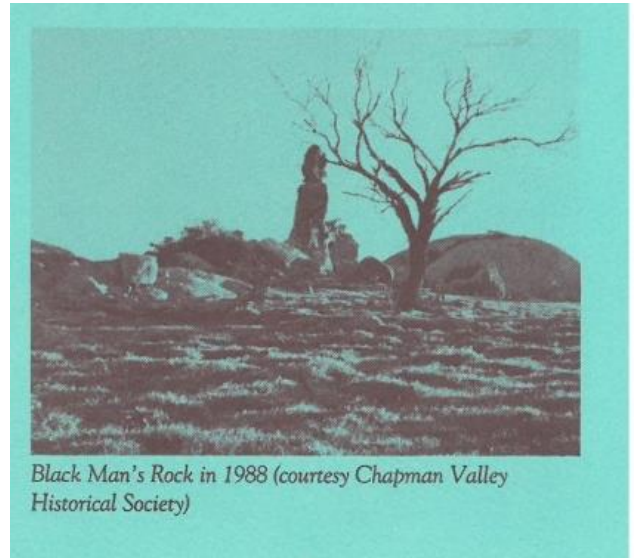
*Turn right into Geraldton – Yuna Road to Naraling and drive west along Dindiloa Road. Turn left into Mazzuchelli-McNaught Road.*



## 17. 'Moolymoonga' Black Man's Rock

*Can be seen from Dindiloa Road and Mazzuchelli-McNaught Road*

This black stone monolith is a well-known landmark of the Dindiloa area. It is on private property, so people wishing to view it more closely should ask permission of the owners.



## 18. Dindiloa School

*Mazzuchelli-McNaught Road*



The Dindiloa School first opened around 1906 and operated until 1919, when it was shifted to the top of Bill Hayward's property about 7kms to the north-west. In 1927 it was moved to East Bowes.

The shifting of schools at that time was a common practice, to cater for population demand.

The pepper trees planted in the 1900's can still be seen at this site.

## 19. Chapman Research Station

*Junction of Mazzuchelli-McNaught Road and Nabawa-Northampton Road (5km from Nabawa)*



*Chapman Research Station cricket team outside “The Miners Arms” in 1913 (courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society).*

This station was set up the Government in 1902 as a demonstration farm to train recently settled local farmers. After 1910 the main interest at the farm shifted to seed wheat and experimentation with new varieties, one of which was named ‘Nabawa’. Between 1918 and 1938 the farm stoked merinos but attempts to improve pasture were not successful. From 1939 to 1965 the merinos were replaced by Border Leicester ewes and South Down rams for the production of lambs. In the latter part of this period experiments resulted in crop yields increasing by 50% and doubling of stock carrying capacity.

The Research Station later disposed of most of its sheep and acquired about 120 breeding cattle in order to study the problems associated with cattle feeding in a district with a short winter season.

*Turn left into Nabawa-Northampton Road and then right into Geraldton-Yuna Road. From here trail users can return to Geraldton directly or take the alternative route by turning left into Durawah Road, 3km south of Nabawa.*



## 20. Mount Erin Homestead

*Durawah Road – Private property: please view from road*

This was the home of Michael Morrissey, who arrived at Fremantle on the 'Ganges' in 1842, from Waterford in Ireland. He first took up work as a shepherd near York, and received sheep in lieu of wages. In 1851, with financial assistance from George Shenton of Perth, he took up a pastoral lease of 20,000 acres here in what was then known as 'Paradise Valley'.

On a small tributary of the Chapman River, about 7km south of a hill which he called, nostalgically, Mount Erin, Morrissey constructed an outbuilding of stone and pise (rammed earth) and a home of brickbats. To this home he brought his wife and family from Ireland late in 1852.

Unable to read or write, Morrissey signed his leases with a cross, and relied upon his wife, son, and George Shenton to do his correspondence. He and his family expanded their holdings with leases on the Murchison, and beyond Talling Peak to Yalgoo. He regularly made pleas to the Governor which altogether earned him three years remission of rent "on account of trouble with the natives, having at least 5,000 acres of useless land, stock losses from poisonous plants, lack of survey to properly determine boundaries, and the expense of bringing out his family from Ireland'.



*Mount Erin School (courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society)*

Boundary disputes led to a particular enmity between Morrissey and his neighbour Burges. One long lasting dispute with Burges concerned a 5,000 acre lease near Tallering Peak. After two years, following his survey, Geraldton's first salaried surveyor, John Forrest, commented that "Burges is as far out in distance as Morrissey is in direction!" Tom Burges complained in a letter dated May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1872 that "...I hear Mr Morrissey and others have lately followed up my tracks and claim to have discovered land which I found in November".

Morrissey died in the 1890's and in 1904 the Government repurchased 56,840 acres of the Station. The remaining land is privately owned and the homestead can only be viewed from the road.

*1km further east of the homestead are the remains of the Old Mount Erin School, which opened in 1909.*

*Turn right onto Forrester Road*

## 21. Government Well Northern Gully

*Forrester Road*

Government surveys in this area noted natural spring areas later developed by digging wells and lining them with stone. This meant that water was always available to stockmen and their animals as well as travellers passing through. This well is midway along the route from the Walkaway area to the Upper Chapman area.



*A Surveyor's camp and the Moresby Ranges in the 1890s  
(courtesy Chapman Valley Historical Society)*



## 22. East Chapman Agricultural Hall Site

### *Narra Tarra Road*

The East Chapman Hall, built by Mr Carwardine about 1912, was financed by donations from local residents and a loan from the Government. The community used the hall for dances, picture shows, elections and other community events. Every September picnic sports were held, with the dance at night being the highlight of the year. The bachelors' and spinsters' ball was also a big event.

In 1924 the hall was used as a school, with 12 children attending, but this closed in 1925 through lack of children owing to several families leaving the district. It reopened in 1926 but again closed the following year.

In 1946, after the end of the Second World War, a welcome home was held here for all returned service personnel. In the early 1950s the C.W.A was formed and this building became an important part of community life. The hall was later used for monthly church services with the Reverend Doncaster, and was demolished in 1965.

## 23. Narra Tarra Cemetery

### *Narra Tarra Road*

This cemetery, on the old Narra Tarra Estate, was the burial ground for some of the pioneer family members. No longer used, it is enclosed by a stone wall but can be seen from the roadside.

*This completes the **Chapman Valley Heritage Trail**. To return to Geraldton, turn left into the Geraldton-Yuna Road.*

## Acknowledgements

The Chapman Valley Heritage Trail was developed by the Shire of Chapman Valley and the Chapman Valley Historical Society, which gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following:

- Mr Bob Calder
- Mrs Cecelia Norris

## Photographs

The photographs in this brochure are courtesy of:

- Chapman Valley Historical Society
- Mr FA Sharr