

Information Sheet No. 7



City of
Greater Geraldton
Regional Library



Heritage Services

Geraldton Regional Library

THE GERALDTON HOTEL

Hotels are an integral part of Western Australia's history, the first liquor licenses being issued only six months after the settlement of the colony in January 1830. In Geraldton, as in the rest of the state, the hotel was the centre of the community. People would go there not only to socialise and to quench their thirsts, but also to discuss business and find out the latest news about the town and its inhabitants. The pub was an important meeting place for rest and relaxation. Various sporting groups met at the hotel including rowing, cricket, yachting, cycling and british football (soccer) and darts competitions were a regular fixture.



The Geraldton Hotel, c1890. Photo courtesy of Geraldton Regional Library. P 4908.

Geraldton Regional Library T 08 9956 6659 F 08 9923 9348
A 37 Marine Terrace Geraldton

Mullewa Public Library T 08 9961 1007 F 08 9961 1206
A Thomas Street Mullewa (Council District Office)

E library@cgg.wa.gov.au W library.cgg.wa.gov.au

Geraldton's first pub, the Geraldton Hotel, was built in 1862 on Gregory Street, where it still stands today. It was a two-story building made of stone, with a balcony on the second floor. The hotel's first proprietor was Edward Ridley, a farmer from Greenough. Ridley also built what became known as "Honeymoon Cottage" next to his house in Gregory Street, where newly-weds often stayed for their honeymoons. He remained at the hotel until 1868, following which Martin Hosken became the new landlord. Hosken also manufactured soft drinks in an "Aerated Water" factory on Gregory Street.

Following Martin Hosken, his brother William Hosken took over the Geraldton Hotel. In October 1881, and following William's passing, William's wife, Hannah Amy, became the new licensee of the hotel. It was quite unusual in those times for a woman to be a hotel proprietor. The Geraldton Hotel had two female licensees as in 1932 after the death of her husband, Dora Fielding took over the management of the hotel for more than ten years.

Over the years the Geraldton Hotel had many licensees. One of the better known was local photographer Thomas De Lucy. Mr De Lucy managed the hotel for three years and was well known for his voluntary work with young people and his fundraising for various community groups.



A Premiership football team in front of the Geraldton Hotel, c1899. Photo donated by Steve Douglas. P 5051.

The Geraldton Hotel was an important building in the early history of the town. Meetings of the Geraldton Town Council were held in the Hotel until the (old) Council Chambers were built on Gregory Street in 1871. Women would stay there to give birth to their babies because of the shortage of medical facilities in Geraldton. It was also the venue in 1874 for an extravagant meal that was prepared for the explorers John and Alexander Forrest on the eve of their second journey across Australia. There is now a plaque on the present Geraldton Hotel commemorating this historic event.



The Geraldton Hotel, 1998. Photo courtesy of Geraldton Regional Library, P 4909.

Compiled from sources in Geraldton Regional Library's Heritage Services Collection.

References

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