

Greater  
Geraldton  
HERITAGE  
WALK TRAILS



THE FREEMASONS HOTEL, GERALDTON, LOOKING WEST,

View of Geraldton, c1910. Courtesy Steve Douglas.

RIGHT: Townsite of Geraldton, 1954. AU WA S2168 - cons5698 0677.  
Courtesy State Records Office of WA.





# Introduction

The City of Greater Geraldton Heritage Walk Trails feature *six easy routes* located in the CBD of Geraldton.

Waterfront Walk Trail

Marine Terrace Walk Trail

Rocks Laneway Walk Trail

West End Walk Trail

Victoria Hospital Walk Trail

Bluff Point Walk Trail

All trails suit the majority of fitness and experience levels, with footpaths and wheelchair access along all trails. Toilets and picnic spots are also provided close to or along all trails.

Enjoy the scenery, immerse yourself in the culture, stroll amongst the Norfolk Pines which grace the streets of old Geraldton and learn more about the fascinating history of Champion Bay.

There are additional heritage trails outside the Geraldton CBD waiting for you to explore. For more information about local heritage trails contact:

## Geraldton Visitor Centre

Located within the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery, 24 Chapman Road, Geraldton. Ph: 9956 6670.

## Geraldton Regional Library

37 Marine Terrace, Geraldton. Ph: 9956 6659.

The City of Greater Geraldton would like to respectfully acknowledge the Yamaji Peoples who are the Traditional Owners and First Nation's People of the land on which we stand. The Wilunyu, Nhanhagardi, Naaguja. We would like to pay our respect to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the Yamaji Peoples.



# Waterfront Walk Trail

Geraldton sits nestled along the picturesque shores of Champion Bay, also known as the gateway to the Abrolhos Islands. Bordered by the ancient, distinctive flat-topped Moresby Range (once a seabed), Champion Bay has been the home of the local Yamaji people for tens of thousands of years.

Historic Geraldton (proclaimed 1850) is brimming with tales of adventure, intrigue and significance. Walk the waterfront and streets of old Geraldton and take in stories of early explorers, shipwrecks, convict and settler history. Enjoy the Victorian, Federation and Art Deco architecture, and pause for a coffee or browse amongst the variety of bespoke local businesses the town has to offer.

Learn more about Geraldton, a town pivotal in the history of Western Australia for its links to WWII military and naval operations.

Discover stories about the local fishing industry, mining, rail and shipping.

Enjoy the sunny beaches, family friendly picnic

and play areas, public art, restaurants and other facilities the Geraldton foreshore has to offer.

## Stories of the Yamaji

*The rich waters of Jambinbirri (Champion Bay), along with nearby rivers, provided a landscape where food and shelter were readily available. Items for trade with inland peoples were also in plentiful supply. Early explorers from the 1830s onwards observed well constructed Yamaji huts, wells and pathways in the river valleys along the coastline.*

*Gain an understanding and appreciation of this ancient culture by visiting the Museum of Geraldton or by taking the Yamaji Drive Trail. Learn more about the art of traditional owners from a visit to Yamaji Art, 189 Marine Terrace, Geraldton.*



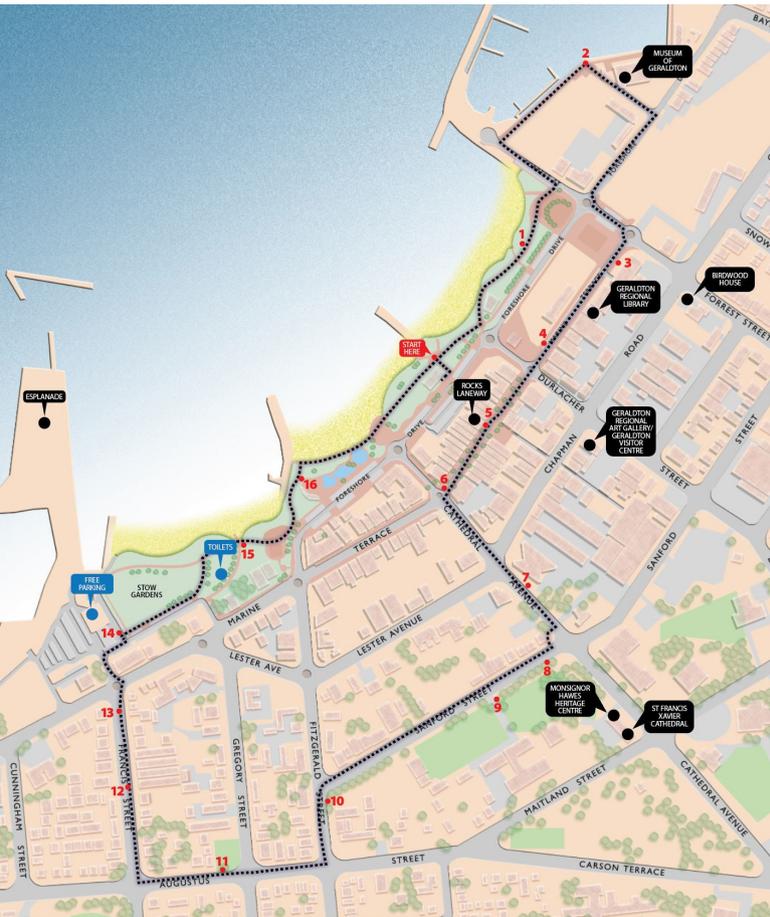
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*Ilgarijiri (Things belonging to the sky) Sculpture, along the Geraldton Foreshore. LEFT: Geraldton Mechanic's Institute Library (original Railway Station), with Railway Jetty in background, c1930. Courtesy S. Thomas.*

# Start of Waterfront Walk Trail:

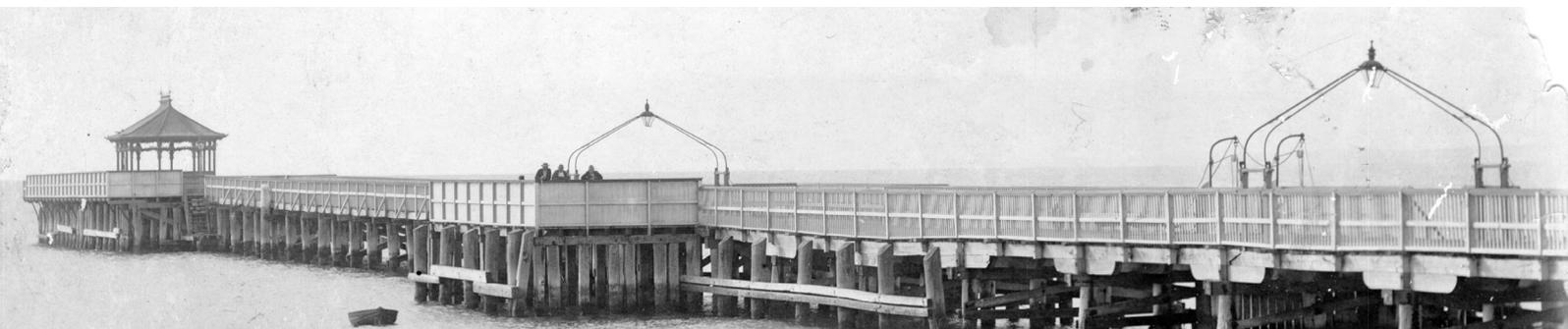
## Beachfront pathway (behind Dome), Foreshore Drive, Geraldton



### Stops 1 & 2: Champion Bay

Champion Bay was first noted as a potential harbour site in 1839 by explorer George Grey. Early in 1840, an inspection of the site was carried out by Commander Dring in his colonial schooner *Champion*. The bay was named after the ship by the Royal Navy hydrographic surveyor, J. L. Stokes.

In 1848 copper and lead were discovered on the Murchison River by explorer and surveyor Augustus Gregory. The following November, the *Champion* returned. Soldiers came ashore and raised the Union Jack on the tallest sand hill – Flagstaff Hill.



Champion Bay was to be the port for exports and a supply base for the settlers taking up agricultural land. It also served as a military garrison against possible retaliatory attacks by Aboriginal people. On 3 June 1851, the townsite of Geraldton was declared. The name honours the Governor at that time. Visit the Museum of Geraldton (ph: 9431 8393) to learn more about the fascinating history of the area.

### **Stop 3: Courthouse**

When completed in 1898, the Public Building became the home of government agencies such as Lands and Mines, Treasury, Police, Customs and Shipping and the new Courthouse. The building features Flemish bond brick construction with rendered verandah colonnades across the front in a Federation Free classical style. It functioned as a multi-agency office block until 1988 when all of the occupants except for the Crown Law Department moved to other premises.

### **Stop 4: Let the Good Times Roll**

Geraldton's popular Freemasons Hotel has been the dominant building at this intersection since 1895. A persistent local rumour was that at one time the large corner block changed hands for a bottle of rum. Construction of the hotel began in March 1894 and by August 1895 the ornate hotel was the talk of the town and a thriving business under the guidance of Messrs Jones and Inglis from South Australia.

A wide balcony extended around three sides of the building, giving guests a fine view of the sea as they relaxed of an evening. Favoured guests were given access to the hotel's dominant tower which gave a

LEFT TOP: Beachgoers enjoying a social gathering on Town Beach, c1900. Courtesy E. Jupp.

LEFT BOTTOM: The first jetty along Geraldton's foreshore was built in 1857 and was known as the Esplanade Jetty. It was demolished in 1944. Courtesy N. Thompson. Photo taken c1898.

RIGHT: Bishop's Palace, c1930. Courtesy C. Shaw.

unique elevated view over Marine Terrace buildings, the Railway Jetty and other features.

### **Stop 5: Rocks Laneway**

Rocks Laneway is named after the well-known family business which stood at this location on Marine Terrace for nearly 90 years. In the early 1900s, a newsagency and shopfront was established at this site by Mr Charles Edgar Snell. In 1934 Mr Arthur Paskin Rock obtained the business, renaming it Rock's Stationer's Hall. The Rock family operated the business (more recently known as Rock's Newsagency) until 2017. Also featured on the Rocks Walk Trail.

### **Stop 6: Geraldton Wool**

The Wittenoom Building was built for Edward and Frank Wittenoom, pioneer pastoralists and businessmen. At one stage the Wittenoom Brothers held over two million acres (809,380 ha) in crown leases in the Murchison and set up Murgoo, Boolardy, Nookawarra, Mileura and Belele Stations.

### **Stop 7: The Bishop's Palace**

Prior to its demolition to make way for the office block you see here today, the Bishop's Palace was one of Geraldton's most magnificent residences. It's removal coincided with a sad period for Geraldton's heritage when a number of buildings were demolished in the name of progress, including the Post Office and Club Hotel in Marine Terrace.



## **Stop 8: A Local Landmark**

In the early days of settlement, this area was the site of an Aboriginal camp. St Francis Xavier Cathedral was designed by Priest Architect Monsignor John Hawes. Work commenced in 1916. However, due to lack of funds it was not completed until 1938, officially opened and blessed by Bishop Collins on 28 August 1938. Visit the Monsignor Hawes Heritage Centre or take a tour of the Cathedral to learn more.

## **Stop 9: Sands of Time**

Looking at Stella Maris Convent and Nagle College today it is hard to believe that standing here in the 1800s you would have been looking at a very mobile sand hill. Under siege from the shifting sands from day one, the settlement of Geraldton was initially built around the local sand formations.

## **Stop 10: School Days**

The Geraldton Primary School was opened to 100 students in 1879, replacing a school in what is now the Missions to Seafarers building on Marine Terrace. This is one of the oldest continuously operating schools in the state outside the Perth metropolitan area.

## **Stop 11: Shifting Sands and Getting a Drink Around Here**

Here once stood a prominent sand hill, used as a trig point to survey the town. As Geraldton became established, a beacon lantern was lit here each night for approaching ships. When the Railway Jetty became too shallow for modern steamships, a new land-backed wharf, with deep dredged water was built. The fill for the land-backed wharf was sand which came from here at Flagstaff Hill. In 1929 horses and drays, together with a steam shovel, loaded trains with sand.

## **Stop 12: Pillar of Society**

Across the road is the former residence of the Police Force Commander (No.18). No.20 was once the Overseas Telecommunications Commission building

(built 1913). During World War I, this was an important facility needed to maintain contact with ships in the Indian Ocean. To protect it a detachment of the Citizen Force Guard kept watch here.

## **Stop 13: Customary Practice**

The Customs Office was built in 1935 following the construction of the major reinforced concrete berth at West End in 1931. It remains in use today as the office for the Australian Border Force.

## **Stop 14: Trail Information**

Learn more about the Marine Terrace and West End Heritage Trails.

## **Stop 15: The Meeting Place**

When the Railway Jetty was built in 1893, the role of the Gregory Street jetty shifted from shipping to recreation. It became known as "The Esplanade" and was the social gathering point for all Geraldton residents, and even a tourist attraction for people from the hot inland goldfields. Here they could enjoy its promenade, bandstand, swimming baths and beach shelters, boating clubs, and of course the kids playground with the merry-go-round.

## **Stop 16: Where Once there was a Wharf**

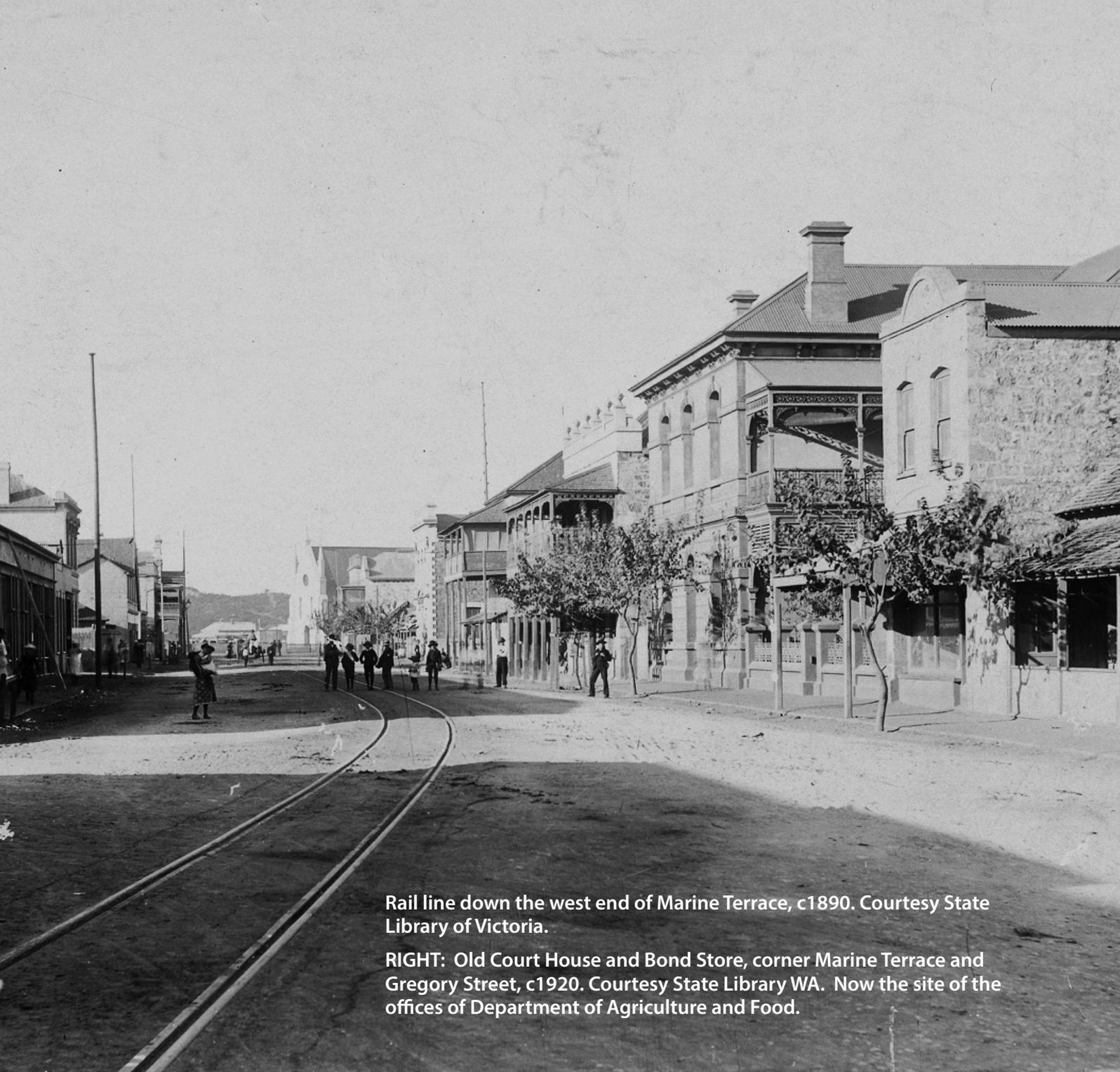
Construction of Geraldton's first jetty took place near here in 1857. Initially only 35m long and less than 2m wide, the Gregory Street Jetty was built of southwest jarrah. The Gregory Street precinct became the business centre of the settlement (this stop is also featured on the Marine Terrace Trail).

**Finish your walk here and take time to enjoy views of the Bay, the family friendly environment and the nearby coffee shops in the vicinity.**

Freemasons Hotel along Marine Terrace, c1895, with old Post Office in background. Courtesy N. Thompson.



MARINE TERRACE, GERALDTON, LOOKING WEST.



Rail line down the west end of Marine Terrace, c1890. Courtesy State Library of Victoria.

RIGHT: Old Court House and Bond Store, corner Marine Terrace and Gregory Street, c1920. Courtesy State Library WA. Now the site of the offices of Department of Agriculture and Food.

# Marine Terrace Walk Trail

Following a leisurely stroll along the Foreshore, take in historic Marine Terrace. Your walk includes a stop at the original Geraldton Railway Station - WA's first Government Railway Station building - opened in 1879. There are plenty of shopping, coffee and eating places to enjoy, along with an opportunity to learn more about local Aboriginal culture at Yamaji Art.

This walk includes a visit to the Batavia Memorial - a sad tale of shipwreck and treachery. Finish this trail at *Ilgarijiri* - a cast bronze and ceramic sculpture which evolved from the interpretation of two paintings - *The Emu in the Sky* by Margaret Whitehurst (Wajarri) and *The Seven Sisters and the Hunter* by Barbara Merritt (Badimaya).

## High Street Experience

*Cast your mind back to 1880 and imagine a railway line heading straight down Marine Terrace. In the years from 1860-70 Geraldton quickly developed into a bustling port town and a rail link to the lead mines at Northampton became a priority. Western Australia's first*

*Government Railway Station (prior to Perth and Fremantle) was completed in 1879, connecting the old Gregory Street Jetty (built 1857) to Northampton along Marine Terrace and then out past Bluff Point, along some 33 miles of rail.*

*The discovery of the Murchison Goldfields led the town to further prosper and various businesses were soon established along the Terrace. Fine Federation buildings constructed of local White Peak stone graced the streetscape. The construction of a new, much larger jetty at the end of Durlacher Street (the Railway Jetty) in 1893 led to the removal of the rail tracks from Marine Terrace.*

*In later years, Marine Terrace continued to play a central role in the life of the town. The development of the Foreshore led to many businesses along Marine Terrace taking advantage of the scenic views and access to Champion Bay. Today, the original "High Street" still offers an interesting and bespoke shopping experience.*

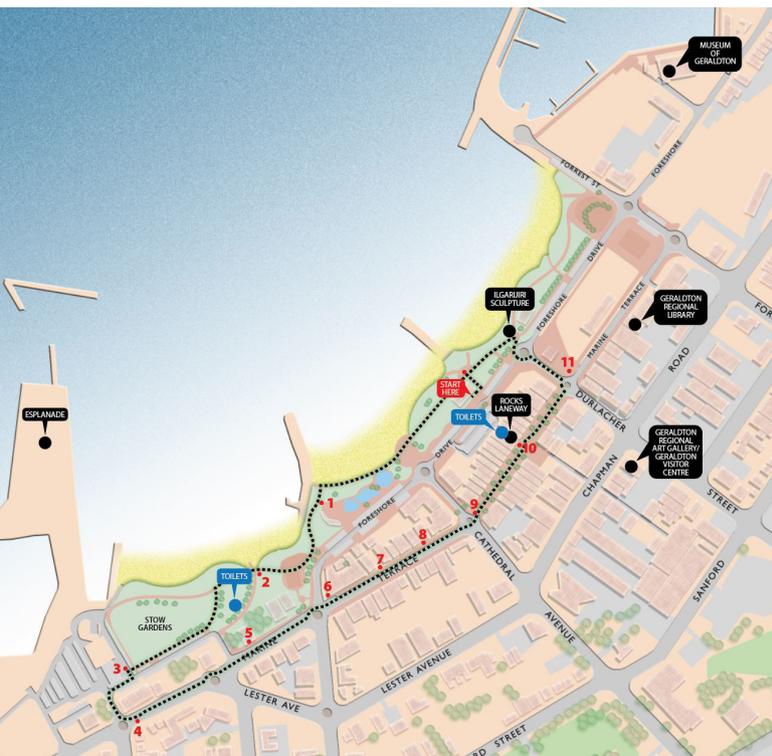


TWO



# Start of Marine Terrace Walk Trail:

Walk/Cycle path along Foreshore (opposite Dome), Foreshore Drive, Geraldton



## Stop 4: The Well Marks the Spot and The Business End of Town

This area of the town was the early centre of Geraldton. It had the first hotel, first post office, bank, courthouse, bond store, railway station, school and merchants. Due to the difficulty of overland transport, most goods and merchandise arrived by sea, via a busy shipping route that traversed along the coast.

## Stop 1: Where Once there was a Wharf

This stop is also featured on the Waterfront Walk Trail (see page 6).

## Stop 2: The Meeting Place

This stop is also featured on the Waterfront Walk Trail (see page 6).

## Stop 3: Trail Information

Learn more about the Waterfront and West End Heritage Trails.

## Stop 5: Original Railway Station

The original Railway Station was Western Australia's first Government Railway Station and was completed in 1879. With the onset of the Murchison Goldrush in the 1890s, the Gregory Street Jetty was replaced with the Railway Jetty and in 1900 the Railway Station was converted to the Mechanic's Institute Library. It remained in use as a Library until it was taken over by the WA Museum in 1979. In more recent years, it was occupied by the Geraldton Visitor Centre. Check out the old Fifty Cent Swing, immortalised by author Randolph Stow, in "The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea".

## Stop 6: Beating the Blues

Events like the opening of the new Yacht Club in 1932 and the construction of the new Radio Theatre Building here in 1937, were occasions for people to kick back and look to better times ahead. The Radio Theatre also contained a service station, motor showrooms, shops and flats. The theatre closed in 1971, for a brief time reopening in the 1980s. Next to the Yacht Club is a monument commemorating the departure of explorer John Forrest from Geraldton in 1874 on his journey of exploration to Central Australia. The memorial was unveiled in 1947, the centenary year of his birth.

## Stop 7: Art Deco

This building was originally constructed in 1939 as the new Commonwealth Bank premises for Geraldton. It's facade is a fine example of the Art Deco architectural style.

## Stop 8: Members of the Club

Over a game of billiards or a drink in the lounge, influential businessmen of the town, pastoralists and mine owners cut deals in the exclusive confines of Geraldton Gentlemens Club. Established in 1885, the Club had these premises built here in 1913.



LEFT: Marine Terrace, looking west, with Wittenoom Building to left, and the Geraldton Club on the far right, 1939. Courtesy T. Budd.

MIDDLE: The Radio Theatre, 1937. Courtesy N. Margetic.

RIGHT: Marine Terrace, looking east, c1950s. Courtesy L. Blakeney.

## Stop 9: Geraldton Wool

This stop is also featured on the Waterfront Walk Trail (see page 5).

## Stop 10: The Ghost Office

Opened in 1893, the Geraldton Post Office, with its distinctive tower, stood proudly here on Marine Terrace for 85 years. After many years of service, and with the construction of a new Post Office, the old post office was vacated in 1975 and the building offered to various community groups. However, no takers were found and the building was demolished in 1979. In 2019 the "Ghost Office" was constructed as part of the Rocks Laneway Project.

## Stop 11: Memorial to Victims of the *Batavia*

Batavia Park honours the memory of the victims and survivors of the *Batavia* shipwreck which occurred on the 4 June 1629 at Morning Reef, near Beacon Island (part of the Houtman Abrolhos). The *Batavia* was a ship of the Dutch East India Company. A catastrophic chain of events surrounded her wrecking, leading to mutiny, murder and a heroic rescue story. Learn more about the *Batavia* at the Museum of Geraldton.

Finish this walk at *Ilgarijiri* - a cast bronze and ceramic sculpture which evolved from the interpretation of two paintings - *The Emu in the Sky* by Margaret Whitehurst (Wajarri) and *The Seven Sisters and the Hunter* by Barbara Merritt (Badimaya).



Old Geraldton Post Office, central Marine Terrace,  
c1940s. Courtesy Willock family.

Right: Australia Day Street parade along Marine Terrace,  
1947. Courtesy Snell family.



# Rocks Laneway Walk Trail

THREE

The Rocks Laneway is a celebration of the built and natural heritage of Geraldton. Central to Marine Terrace, the Laneway begins in the former historic and repurposed Rock's Stationer's Hall, now a meeting place, then takes you on a walk through a stunning wildflower metagraphic art installation by WA artist Trevor Richards.

Along the walk, view the Lightbox Gallery, featuring exhibitions mounted by local artists. Marine Terrace and the CBD boast many shops and restaurants. Why not use this opportunity to sample some local produce? Or find something special as a memory of your visit. Finish your walk with a visit to the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery and enjoy the latest exhibitions. While at the Gallery, have a chat with the friendly, knowledgeable staff at the Geraldton Visitor Centre, located on the ground floor of the Gallery.

## A Central Meeting Place

*Central Marine Terrace is a place where the community gathers, conducts business and enjoys their leisure time. The creation of the Ghost Office Town Square is reminiscent of the role the old Post Office and Rock's Stationer's Hall both once fulfilled - from the heady days of the Murchison Gold Rush in the 1890s, to the War Years, and up until the Post Office closure in 1975 and Rock's in 2017.*

*Two local families, the Snell and Rock families, made their mark on central Marine Terrace, from the early 1900s onwards, playing an important role in advancing the early commercial life of Geraldton with their wonderful displays of assorted goods, stationary, books, musical instruments and toys.*



# Start of Rocks Laneway Walk Trail:

Entrance to Rocks Laneway, Foreshore Drive carpark (Opposite Dome), Geraldton



## Stop 1: Entry to Rocks Laneway

Enter Rocks Laneway via the old rear entrance to the former Rock's Newsagency. Original timbers and bricks are a feature of this re-purposed site completed in 2019.

## Stop 2: The Old Stationer's Hall

Rocks Laneway is named after the prominent family business which stood at this location for nearly 90 years. The original Stationer's Hall was established by Mr Charles Edgar Snell in the first decade of the 20th century. In 1908 he relocated his thriving business from a site next to the Club Hotel, to a large new shop opposite the Post Office in Marine Terrace. Known as Edgar, Snell actively contributed to the business, civic and sporting life of Geraldton over many years. In 1934 he sold his newsagency and stationery interests to Mr Arthur Paskin Rock (Printer and Publisher of the *Geraldton Express*, Director of Geraldton Newspapers Limited) and built an adjacent new store he named

Snells Bazaar. Offering a wide variety of goods in a new and progressive emporium format, the business prospered under the management of his elder son Bill, until finally being bought out by Coles in 1947.

With its wide stock selection, Rock's Stationers Hall became affectionately known as "*The House of a Thousand Gifts*". Following the passing of Arthur in 1943, his only son, John Norman Rock (1922-1998) took over the family business. John was an excellent sportsman and musician, contributing significantly to the development of sporting groups and the local business community.

John's son, Gary Arthur Rock, operated the business (in recent years known as Rock's Newsagency) from 1998 until 2006, and the family continued to own the property until 2011. In 2017, the City purchased this property, redeveloping it into a new community destination known as Rocks Laneway. Prominent red signage on the Marine Terrace frontage is a familiar reminder to locals of this once iconic local business.

### Stop 3: The Ghost Office

On this site once stood the Geraldton Post Office, constructed by Mr Stephen Smith and opened on the 17 November 1893. The building faithfully served the town until 1975, when a new Post Office was constructed on Chapman Road. Despite being offered to various public organisations, this building was demolished in 1979. Stone piers and spandrels were saved and incorporated in the decorative stone wall on this site. The public clock faces used in the Ghost Office are the originals saved from the demolition, and date from 1896.

### Stop 4: Post Office Lane

In the 1890s, Post Office Lane was the site of warehouses, abandoned gardens and neglected workers cottages. Despite being in use for many years, Post Office Lane only became a public road in 1914. In 1926 it was deemed a one-way thoroughfare and remained has this way ever since. Locals recall the Police Boys Club being situated in the Lane following World War II, along with the offices of the popular *Geraldton Greenough Sun* newspaper.

### Stop 5: Post Office Lane Lightbox Gallery

As part of the Rocks Laneway redevelopment, the City established Geraldton's newest exhibition space - the Post Office Lane Lightbox Gallery where artists are invited to showcase their work on a rotating basis. A bold wildflower graphic design by renowned West Australian artist Trevor Richards compliments the site. The Rocks Laneway Project metagraphic represents yellow, white and pink Midwest wildflowers on a bed of dark green sea grass and spans the laneway pavement.

**Finish this Trail with a visit to the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery and Geraldton Visitor Centre, located on the corner of Durlacher Street and Chapman Road.**



FAR LEFT: John Norman Rock, c1950s. Courtesy Rock family.

TOP ABOVE: View of the premises of E. Snell and A.P. Rock along Marine Terrace. Courtesy M. Floyd.

ABOVE: Advertising for Snells Bazaar. Courtesy T. Snell.

RIGHT: Advertising for Rock's Newsagency, *Cathedral Chronicle*, 1 January 1940.



Geraldton Hotel, c1890s. Courtesy Geraldton Regional Library.

BELOW RIGHT: The Residency c1920 prior to it's conversion to a maternity hospital in 1924. Courtesy Geraldton Regional Library.



# West End Walk Trail

The West End Heritage Trail takes you on a journey through this historic part of Geraldton. Now a popular café and bespoke shopping area, the West End was once the primary business district of Geraldton, hosting many businesses, banks, schools and homes. Learn about the life and times of the early town folk as you view buildings dating from colonial times.

## The Business End of Old Geraldton

*Early streets surveyed included Marine Terrace, Gregory and Francis Streets. Many of the buildings constructed in local stone along these streets during the late 19th and early 20th centuries still survive and are a reminder of another era.*

*An important landmark in the West End was the Esplanade Jetty, built in 1857. Goods were loaded and unloaded from the Jetty until 1893, when the Railway Jetty was built in deeper water to better cope with the arrivals of large ships. The Esplanade Jetty is now a breakwater, offering expansive views of the city, Port, Champion Bay and Moresby Ranges from a 360 degree viewing platform – a great way to take in Geraldton!*

*Where the Fishermen's Wharf is now located was once a popular holiday destination known as the West End Beach. About 40 holiday cottages were constructed at this site from 1937 onwards by Geraldton Beach Camps Ltd.*

*During World War II many of these cottages were commandeered for use as accommodation by the Australian Army. Nothing remains of the beach cottages which were demolished after the war, however there are several Norfolk Pines from the camp still located on Marine Terrace near the silos.*

*World War II saw fear of Japanese invasion from the north sweep through Australia. Geraldton was a key training base for the troops recalled from the Middle East by Prime Minister Curtin to fight in New Guinea. At one time 40,000 military personnel were here alongside Geraldton's 4,000 residents. Several military command posts were here in the West End.*

*After World War II, dramatic change came over as the harbour and its infrastructure expanded. Wheat from the vast tracts of the expanding wheatbelt hinterland was shipped through the port, along with iron ore and mineral sands.*

FOUR



# Start of West End Walk Trail:

## Carpark, Francis Street Jetty, West End



### Stop 1: The Residency

Constructed in 1861, the Residency was later used as a Maternity Home (Hospital). Today, this building is owned by the Geraldton Cultural Trust and is used as a meeting place for special interest groups. Visitors are welcome.

### Stop 2: Fishing for a Living

The waters around Geraldton support an abundance of marine life. Over the years the local fishing industry has contributed in so many ways to the local economy. For information about tours to the Abrolhos Islands, the Geraldton Fishermen's Co-Op or other ocean-related activities, contact the Geraldton Visitor Centre.

### Stop 3: Golden Harvest

The massive silos you see today at West End are a working example of the importance wheat exports have long played in the life of Geraldton and the surrounding region. Behind the silos is the busy infrastructure of the Port of Geraldton. In 1966, Geraldton made history, loading the first iron ore cargo from Australia aboard the *Margaret Maru*.

### Stop 4: Going to War

During the Second World War, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) No. 4 Flying School was based at Moonyoonooka (Geraldton Airport). At the base trainee pilots were taught to fly the twin-engine Avro Anson. Around 1,500 WAAAF and RAAF ground staff supported the 200 trainee pilots. For more information, check out the War Years Drive Trail.

### Stop 5: Battle for Australia

In the dark hours of 1942 as Australia braced itself

to meet a Japanese invasion, the defence of coastal positions was an urgent priority. Here at Geraldton, army reserve militia arrived to bolster Corps which were charged with the defence of Western Australia.

### **Stop 6 & 7: Shifting Sands and Getting a Drink Around Here**

From 1886 till 1914, the building just across the road from here was used as the Trefusis Cordial Factory for making aerated waters. Their range of drinks included lemonade, strawberryade, sarsaparilla, seltzer water, ginger ale and potassium and soda waters.

### **Stop 8: The Gregory's Streets**

When the discovery and early settlement of Geraldton is spoken of, two names are usually the first to sound. One is the surveyor and explorer Augustus Gregory. The other is his younger brother Francis Gregory who accompanied Augustus through this area on two separate expeditions in 1846 and 1848.

### **Stop 9: Forrest Lodge**

This fine example of a Victorian residence was built around 1875 by Martin Hosken, mine manager, licensee and manager of the Geraldton Hotel (behind you). In 1939 it became a boys boarding house and continued in that role for nearly thirty years. In 1975 the restored lodge opened as a community education centre.

### **Stop 10: The Well Marks the Spot and The Business End of Town**

This stop is also featured on the Marine Terrace Walk Trail (see page 10).

**Finish this Trail with a stroll along the Esplanade, where playful seals sun themselves on the rocks at the end of the Breakwater. Learn more about the busy Port of Geraldton through signage as you take in the views along the Esplanade.**



LEFT: West End Beach, 1962. Courtesy E. Thompson.

ABOVE TOP: Removal of sand from Flagstaff Hill for harbour extensions, 1930s. Courtesy S. Gratte.

ABOVE BELOW: *Margaret Maru* and the loading of Australia's first iron ore shipment from Koolanooka, March 1966. Courtesy J. Sewell.

Laying of the foundation stone for a new wing at the Victoria Hospital, 1 October 1887. Courtesy State Library WA.

BELOW RIGHT: Front view of the Victoria District Hospital, for men and boys, c1900s. Courtesy N. Thompson.



# Victoria Hospital Heritage Trail

FIVE

The Victoria Hospital Heritage Trail is a journey back through time which explores the many different uses of this precinct over the years. Learn about the history of the penal and medical system in the old Victoria District, from colonial times to the modern day. Discover more about this fascinating site from a visit to the Old Gaol and Craft Centre, or the Memorabilia Display. Take a precinct tour with the Geraldton Voluntary Tour Guides.

## Caring for the Community

*With many of the original buildings still standing, this site has a unique history, evolving from a convict depot originally built in 1857, to a long serving gaol and hospital site.*

*In 1886, the first purpose built hospital building was commenced under Richard R. Jewell (Government Architect), and completed by George T. Poole. The opening of Geraldton's new hospital in 1887 was an occasion of great celebration in the town, coinciding as it did with Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations of that year.*

*By 1903, the gaol cell range was almost complete and included three separate female cells, plus the introduction of daylight and exercise yards.*

*In 1904, the east block of the hospital opened as a home for elderly Geraldton men who were previously sent to the Mount Eliza Invalid Depot. However, by 1924, the old men were relocated away from the site, and the precinct reverted back to being a fully commissioned hospital, renamed the Geraldton Public Hospital.*

*During the 1930s, the front section of the hospital was renovated and used to house the X-ray plant and provide accommodation for nurses. In 1938, a children's ward was constructed to the end of East Wing. This wing was used by servicemen during the Second World War. By the early 1960s, the hospital buildings could no longer accommodate upgrades in medical services readily or adapt to the complexity of modern healthcare. The new Geraldton Regional Hospital was completed in 1966, and the old hospital closed.*

*From 1967 to 1984, the site was controlled by the Prisons Department, as a minimum security prison. In 1988, following a major refurbishment, the place was named The Bill Sewell Community Recreation Complex. Today this site is owned by the National Trust of WA and in 2021 was renamed the Geraldton Heritage Precinct, Ngurra Barlunggu.*

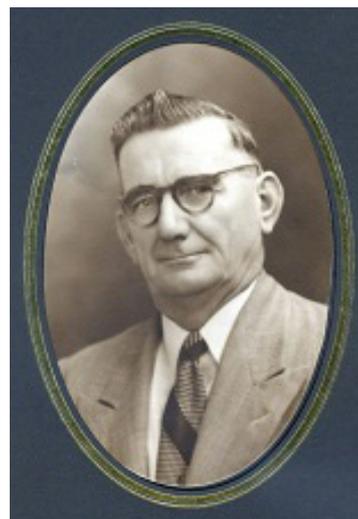


# Start of Victoria Hospital Heritage Trail: Carpark, Corner Bayly Street and Chapman Road, Geraldton



## Stop 1: The Voice of Mungook and the Old Gaol

Start this trail with a visit to the Old Gaol and Craft Centre. Learn more about the fascinating history of the site by taking a tour. Check out the handicrafts for sale and the informative displays, including gemstones. This complex is listed on the State Heritage Register. A number of community groups and local businesses operate out of this site, known as the Bill Sewell



Community Recreation Complex from 1988 until 2021, when it was renamed the Geraldton Heritage Precinct, Ngurra Barlunggu, which means 'hill camp' in the local Wilunyu language.

## Stop 2: Gaolers and Gaoled

In 1857, British convict transportees built the Convict Depot. It played an important role in serving as a hiring station, from which settlers could hire convicts as workers. An undated map, drawn prior to 1862, indicates a number of buildings and compounds on the depot site. The surgery and ward, kitchen, first gaol and gaoler's office (later female cells) are indicated. In 1864, an extension to the convict establishment's surgery was designed by the Superintendent of Towns, Richard R. Jewell. This transformed the surgery into a small hospital and this marked the first stage of the hospital use on the site, foreshadowing its eventual division into hospital and gaol functions.

### Stop 3: Nurturing Nursing

The importance of nurses and nursing as a profession in Geraldton has a strong history dating back to the construction of the Victoria Hospital in 1887 where design principles for the building followed those championed by Florence Nightingale.

### Stop 4: Geraldton Hospital

The first hospital was attached to the Old Gaol and convict quarters. Then during 1864, a corrugated iron hospital called the Colonial Hospital, was built between here and Bayly Street. However, this was soon to be found inadequate and by 1887 the new hospital was completed. A few years later a typhoid epidemic swept the inland Goldfields. In 1895 it became necessary to build extensions to Victoria District Hospital. Once the typhoid epidemic abated, the Hospital was converted to an old mens home for a few years. The extension on Crowley House became the children's ward from 1936 until the whole hospital function moved to the new Geraldton Regional Hospital in 1966 and these buildings became the Regional Prison.

### Stop 5: Survivors

In 1908, a private maternity hospital was built as a separate wing to the main Victoria Hospital. Established by William and Rose Burges following the death of their baby daughter named Rose Ella Burges. Her name lived on first in Rosella Hospital and later in Rosella House, when the building was adapted for other uses once the new Geraldton Regional Hospital opened in 1966.

Finish this Trail with a visit to the Medical Memorabilia Display, located within the Old Victoria Hospital building. Nearby is the site is the HMAS Sydney II Memorial, located on Gummer Avenue.



LEFT: William (Bill) Hawkins Sewell (1901-1980). Bill's tireless work for the community resulted in the renaming of the old Victoria Hospital to the Bill Sewell Community Recreation Complex in 1988. Courtesy Parliament of WA, Member's Biographical Register.

ABOVE: View overlooking the old Gaol and Hospital site with railway sheds beyond, 1930s. Courtesy Geraldton Regional Library.

BELOW: Nursing staff wearing a variety of historical uniforms for their float in the Geraldton Centenary Parade 1950, along Francis Street bound for the Recreation Ground. Courtesy Geraldton Regional Library.



Geraldton's first lighthouse at Bluff Point, c1890. The Bluff Point Lighthouse was first lit on 23 October 1876 and was unfortunately burnt down in 1952. Courtesy Geraldton Regional Library.

RIGHT: View of AA1519 train carrying mineral sands along the old rail line, Chapman Road, Beresford, 1997. Courtesy P. Melling.

# Bluff Point Heritage Trail

The Bluff Point Heritage Trail takes you on a journey around some fascinating sites within the coastal suburb. Learn about its importance to local Aboriginal people as a fishing and midden site. Take in stories about “the Bluff Light” with a stop at the Bluff Point Lighthouse Keepers Cottage. Impressive views across Champion Bay can be enjoyed, along with a family friendly picnic site at St George’s Beach. Nearby, the Jambinbirri Walk takes you along the foreshore to further parks and destinations.

## Geraldton’s First Suburb

*Bluff Point was Geraldton’s first suburb and likely named after a scrubby range that was once located at the end of Ord Street. Despite its name appearing in very early written and verbal reports, Bluff Point was only officially proclaimed in 1903.*

*In 1878 a leading light system was built here with its two components. This involved a lower light being constructed on the shore and higher up on the hill behind, a second lighthouse together with the Keeper’s Cottage. Whilst the lighthouse on the beach was destroyed by fire in 1952, the limestone Keeper’s Cottage still stands today.*

*With Geraldton surrounded by high coastal*

*sand hills Bluff Point provided the only gap that a railway could cut through to get to the flat ground around the port. This meant that Bluff Point became the junction between the Geraldton – Northampton line, as well as the lines coming from Walkaway (and Perth), Mullewa and Meekatharra. A railway gatekeeper, line maintenance gangs and fettlers were housed at the Junction.*

*Larger blocks of land were available here. Dairy farms and vegetable gardens to supply Geraldton were established nearby and later tomato gardens for an export industry.*

*During World War II, Catalinas or “Flying Boats” used the waters just off St George’s Beach as a landing site. Early in 1942 two United States 6 inch naval guns were placed nearby on the hillside between George Road and Eve Street. The Geraldton Fortress Engineer Section placed two searchlights on the seafront between the guns and the beach in order to prepare for defence of the harbour and town.*

*The last train to use the line through Bluff Point was in 2005.*

SIX



# Start of Bluff Point Heritage Trail:

## Carpark, St. George's Beach/Rundle Park, Bluff Point



### Stop 1: Catalinas and the Locals

A few weeks after the World War II bombing of Broome by the Japanese, three United States Navy Catalina flying boats – aircraft capable of landing on water – were based at Geraldton to patrol for enemy shipping. For more information, check out the War Years Drive Trail available from the Geraldton Regional Library.

### Stop 2: Bluff Point Junction

In 1886, just before gold was discovered in the Murchison, the Government brokered a deal to have a railway connecting Perth and Geraldton built in exchange for land. Midland Railway Syndicate (known as 'the MR') was to construct the Guildford to Walkaway section in exchange for 12,000 acres of land for every mile of railway built. However, the land between Walkaway and Geraldton was already largely settled

with no crown land available to grant in return for railway construction. As a result the Government had to build the last 25km of line running into the port. The new Perth – Geraldton line and the associated 'ready-made farms' released along its length, enhanced the development of wheat and sheep farming in the Mid West. The new railway connected in with the existing rail line to Northampton here at the Bluff Point Junction. Across the road is the old Two Mile Well and adjacent Gatekeepers Cottage, both dating from the 19th century.

### Stop 3: Out of Town Schooling

Like many of the small communities dotted around the outskirts of Geraldton, Bluff Point had its own school. This classic Federation style building was constructed in 1913.

### Stop 4: Leading Lights

The Bluff Point Lighthouse Keepers Cottage was originally constructed in 1876 as the upper lead light

marking the channel into the port of Geraldton. Since 1972 the Cottage has been home to the Geraldton Historical Society. It houses a historic photographic collection, maps, research library and displays. For Museum opening hours, ph: 9923 1837 or check with the Geraldton Visitor Centre.

### **Stop 5: St George's**

St George's Anglican Church is a simple and romantic village church modelled along lines of an old English church. The foundation stone was laid in 1935 and the church consecrated the same year.

### **Stop 6: Bluff Point Produce**

Geraldton's mediterranean climate – mostly sunny and warm, plus a bit of rain in winter – enabled tomatoes and other vegetables to be grown on a commercial scale here. There were also dairies established near Bluff Point. Fresh milk was taken to town by horse and cart and ladled out of vats to customers.

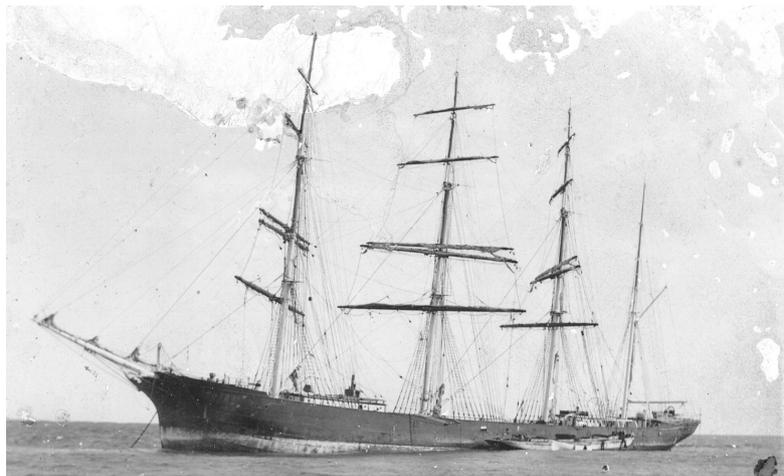
### **Stop 7: The Wreck of the *Mayhill***

On 10 August 1895 a large sailing ship, the 2,121-tonne four-masted iron barque *Mayhill*, with a cargo of railway line from England, approached Champion Bay on a stormy night.

The ship's master – Captain Hume – believed he was looking for fixed red lights at Bluff Light. In fact he was missing a later 'Caution to Mariners' on more recent maps which would have alerted him that the lights were actually white. In looking for the red lights he found himself on a lee shore and was blown onto reefs.

The *Mayhill* was wrecked at Point Moore Reef and only 100 tons of the rails it was carrying for the new line from Mullewa to Cue was salvaged before the ship broke up.

**Finish this trail with a visit to the Lighthouse Monumental seat, followed by the Beresford Foreshore which offers a children's playground and cafe facilities.**



LEFT: American Navy and Air Force personnel in Geraldton during WWII, 1941. Courtesy S. Gratte.

ABOVE: Tomato workers, c1930. Courtesy K. Allen.

BELOW: Wreck of the *Mayhill*, 10 August 1895. Courtesy N. Thompson.



# Acknowledgements

This booklet was created by Heritage Services, Geraldton Regional Library, in 2022. Research and design were carried out by Trudi Cornish, Lorin Cox and Keely Grieve.

An online version of this booklet is available from the Geraldton Regional Library website. These trails are also available as an App. For further visitor information, contact the Geraldton Visitor Centre on (08) 9956 6670.

Do you have a story to share? Contact the Geraldton Regional Library, 37 Marine Terrace, Geraldton. Ph: (08) 9956 6659 or email on [library@cgg.wa.gov.au](mailto:library@cgg.wa.gov.au)



**LEFT:** Aerial view of Geraldton, late 1960s. Courtesy N. Thompson.

**BELOW:** Geraldton Surf Life Saving Club, Women's Team, 1950s. Courtesy Geraldton Regional Library.

**BACK COVER:** Queen Elizabeth II accompanied by Mayor C. S. Eadon-Clarke at the opening of the Civic Centre, 24 March 1963. Courtesy Geraldton Regional Library.





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