

*H*ERITAGE
TRAIL



– *CATTLIN CREEK* –

Development of the Ravensthorpe District



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The Cattlin Creek Heritage Trail commences at Ravensthorpe, 532km south-east of Perth via Albany Highway (State Route 30), Wagin (State Route 107), and Lake King (State Route 40).

6. Mine Detour (optional)

DETOUR at this point for those interested in viewing the spodumene, tourmaline and lepidolite mine workings - experienced fossickers only on this bush track.

Please Note:

- As part of the Trail is on private land, trail users are requested to keep gates closed and respect other people's property.
- Persons using this Heritage trail do so at their own risk.

5. Mt Cattlin Mine

Mt Cattlin gold/copper mine operated between 1901 and 1919, and re-opened between 1960 and 1970. The mine can be seen from the trail but entry is prohibited.

4. Cattlin Creek Crossing

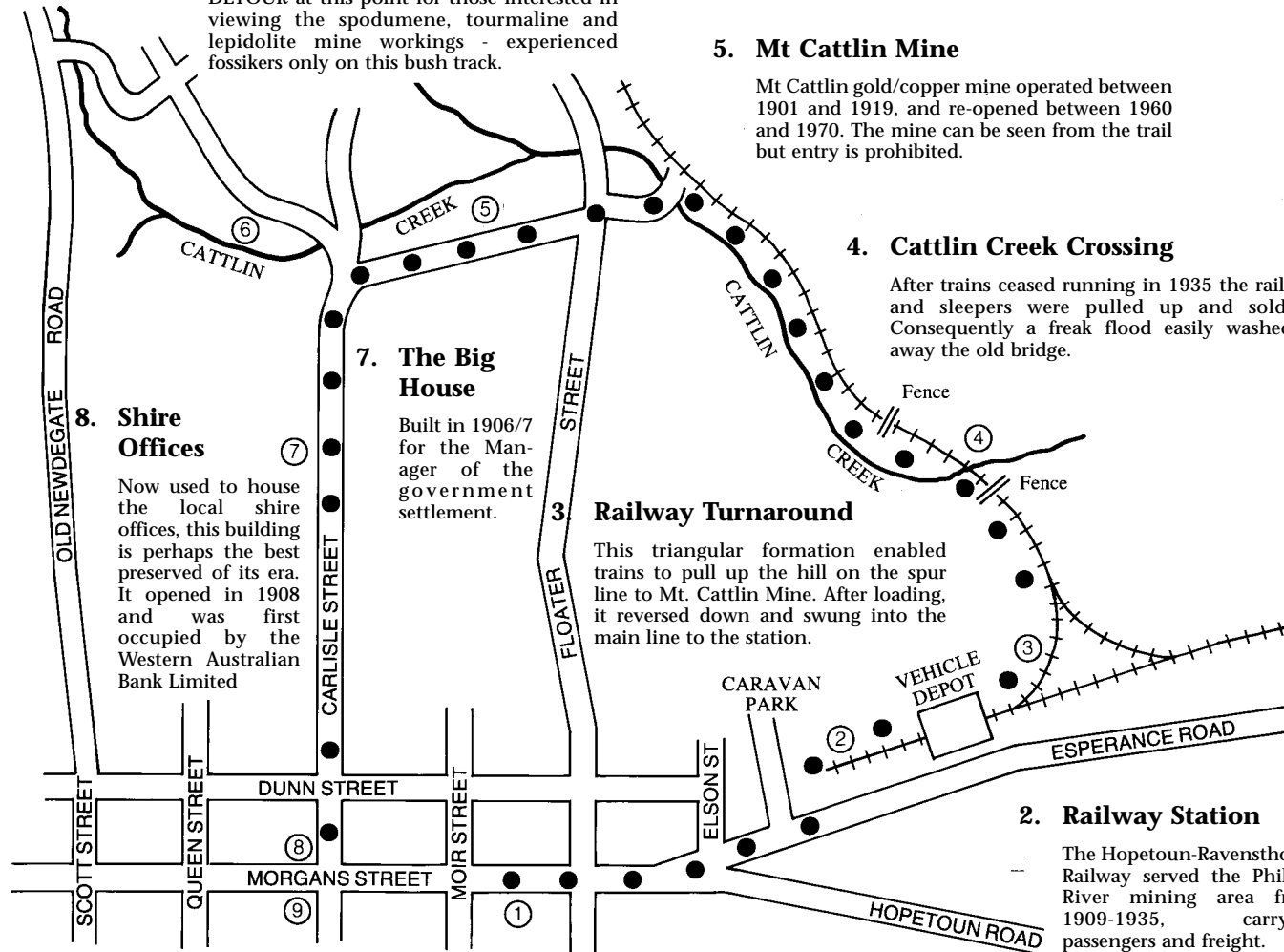
After trains ceased running in 1935 the rails and sleepers were pulled up and sold. Consequently a freak flood easily washed away the old bridge.

3. Railway Turnaround

This triangular formation enabled trains to pull up the hill on the spur line to Mt. Cattlin Mine. After loading, it reversed down and swung into the main line to the station.

2. Railway Station

The Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe Railway served the Phillips River mining area from 1909-1935, carrying passengers and freight.



9. Palace Hotel

A typical country pub of the goldmining era, this building features wide verandahs, ornamental staircase and stained glass window

1. Dance Cottage Museum

Built in 1900 by prospector George Dance, it now holds an excellent collection of historical artifacts from the Ravensthorpe area.

The Cattlin Creek Heritage Trail is part of the Heritage Trails Network, a project for community participation originally devised by the Western Australian Heritage Committee (now known as the Heritage Council of Western Australia) in commemoration of the 1988 Bicentenary.

The Heritage Trails Network which was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments under the Commonwealth/State Bicentennial Commemorative Program was established to provide the Community with a Statewide network of "Heritage Trails" - routes designed to enhance awareness and enjoyment of Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

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

Heritage Trails in the Midwest and Goldfields

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monsignor Hawes H.T. 2. De Grey-Mullewa Stock Route 3. Perenjori-Rothsay H.T. 4. Greenough/Walkaway H.T. 5. Geraldton H.T. 6. Yalgoo H.T. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Cue H.T. 8. Sandstone H.T. 9. Chapman Valley H.T. 10. Dongara H.T. 11. Cattlin Creek H.T. 12. Historic Gwalia H.T. 13. Eastern Goldfields H.T.
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In 1868 brothers John, James, Robert and Walter Dunn leased a holding at Cocanarup, 20km west of the present Ravensthorpe townsite. With the aid of Aboriginal shepherds they brought the first sheep into the district from Albany in 1872 and established a sheep station.

The discovery of gold by James Dunn in 1898 quickly attracted interest in the district. Clarence Cattlin pegged a minesite in December 1899 at what was later named Mount Cattlin and in 1900 the townsite of Ravensthorpe was surveyed and gazetted in 1901.

Goods were brought in and ore shipped out through the coastal port of Hopetoun, necessitating the beginning of the building of a railway line in 1907.



The Dallison Brothers' Store at Kundip (about 18km south-east of Ravensthorpe), c.1900. Brothers Reg, Tom and Harry Dallison were among the first prospectors in the Ravensthorpe area (courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society).

The **Cattlin Creek Heritage Trail** is a leisurely two hour walk exploring the early history of the Ravensthorpe area and its links with the mining industry. Commencing at the Dance Cottage Museum the trail follows the Creek and the route of the old railway spur-line which connected the Mount Cattlin Mine with the main Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe line.

Following the trail map, look for the signs bearing the Heritage Trails Network symbol.

Mining

The first recorded mining to take place in the Ravensthorpe area was in 1891/92 when George and Tom Stennett began prospecting along the Ravensthorpe Range. It was not until 1898 however, when James Dunn discovered gold in large quantities, that the interest of the other prospectors was aroused.



Early camel team, c. 1905 (courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society).

Dunn's discovery caused a rush from the Norseman area, and prospectors soon set up camp near Cattlin Creek. The Phillips River Mining District (named after the nearby river) was declared in 1899 and hopes among prospectors ran high. Early gold finds excited eager miners, and were followed by the discovery of a large body of copper and, over the years, small quantities of silver and gold mixed with the copper.

By 1908 the search for gold was at its peak. 53 gold and copper mines were in operation, and hundreds of men crossed the fields from end to end in their search for new finds. A depression in world copper prices in 1911 brought about a sudden cessation in mining activities, but with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the Government leased and ran smelters, treating ore from all parts of the district.

Nearly all mining ceased around 1919 but there was renewed interest in goldmining at Kundip (between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe) for a few years from the late 1930s to 1942. Another resurgence in mining activity occurred between 1956 and 1972 when the Elverdton Copper Mines (12km south of Ravensthorpe) resumed operations.



Ravensthorpe Smelter, 1908 (courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society).

Smelters

Because prospectors were unable to extract gold from the copper a smelter was built near Cattlin Creek in 1903. This was followed in 1904 by the installation of a Government smelter near the 'Gap' on Esperance Road (7km east of Ravensthorpe). As more mines opened, however, this smelter could not cope, and a much larger plant was built on the Hopetoun Road in 1906.

The smelters closed in 1919 when large-scale mining ceased, but a private treatment plant opened in 1945 and operated for about 25 years, using three different methods for treating local ore.

Agriculture

As the hopes of miners faded, many turned their attention to farming. In 1901/02 miners Arthur Chambers and Dave Neil grew the first grain in the district on their small, eight hectare plot. Small Miners' Homestead Leases were made available by the Government and fine crops of oats were grown to meet the demand for stock feed. Horses were the main source of transport for carting goods and every household had a dairy cow. In the late 1920s there were 76 farmers operating relatively small farms in the district but after the Great Depression of the 1930s only 12 farmers remained.



*Threshing machine at work, c.1920s
(courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society).*

The land boom of 1960-70 saw 325 new farms established in the area. The introduction of phosphate fertilisers, barley and improved farming methods in general enabled the development of large-scale farming on the sandplains that were once considered too dry and barren for this purpose.

1. Dance Cottage Museum

Morgans Street

Open by request.

Contact Ravensthorpe Tourist Office (08) 98 38 1277.

When Ravensthorpe was surveyed in September 1900, George Dance bought one of the first blocks and built this house for his family. He was originally a prospector,



The wedding of Arthur Chapman and Lucy Dance in 1901 outside the cottage of George Dance, who is second from the right (courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society).

then worked as a teamster carting supplies between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe, and later a road board contractor helping to build roads and dams. Dance sold the cottage to Mr W. Taylor whose daughter later sold it to the Shire of Ravensthorpe.

The house was used as a residence until the early 1980s and in 1984 the Shire made it available to the Ravensthorpe Historical Society for use as a museum.

Dance Cottage houses an interesting collection of old photographs, household artifacts and other items of Ravensthorpe's early years, including a unique collection of shoes.

The original town gaol, built in 1900, now stands in the grounds of the museum, along with one of the passenger coaches and the guard's van from the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe railway.

2. Hopetoun - Ravensthorpe Railway

The raised platform and old crane are now all that remain of the once bustling Ravensthorpe Railway Station. The railway connected with the coastal port of Hopetoun, 50km to the south, which, like Ravensthorpe, was surveyed in 1900.

Following the discovery of gold, and later copper, the population of the district increased rapidly and horse, donkey and camel wagon teams were brought in to provide transport for building materials, mining machinery and general stores. These were unloaded at Hopetoun from sailing ships and steamers which then departed with ore from the Ravensthorpe district.

The decision to provide a railway between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe was made by the Government in 1906 with one spur-line to the Mount Cattlin Mine and another to the smelters.



*First train from Hopetoun to Ravensthorpe, April 1909
(courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society).*

Construction began in 1907, and the railway opened in 1909 with the arrival of passenger coaches, trucks and 2 G-glass engines. Before the end of the year a daily rail service was operating between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe, and the population of the district had reached 3,000.

By 1923 great improvements were being made to the road service at Ravensthorpe. This coupled with the decline of mining in the area made the authorities in 1931 decide that it was no longer economical to continue the rail service, except at harvest time. During the mining slump railway staff organised summer weekend excursions from Ravensthorpe to the coast and passengers often stopped along the way to pick wildflowers.

On February 23rd, 1935 trains ran for the last time, removing all the rolling stock to Hopetoun and thereby ending an important era in the district's history. The station buildings were removed in the late 1930s.

3. Railway Turnaround

This triangular rail formation was necessary because only one line was constructed to the Mount Cattlin Mine. Trucks were pulled up the slopes of Mount Cattlin to the mine by a steam engine and after loading, were reversed down the slope to the turnaround and back onto the main line.

4. Cattlin Creek Crossing

A few wooden posts are the only remains of the small bridge that used to cross the Creek at this point. It was built around 1908, but after the railway line closed in 1935 the iron rails and wooden sleepers were pulled up and sold locally to farmers, who used them for fencing and in local buildings. As a result the bridge deteriorated rapidly and shortly afterwards it was completely washed away during a freak flood.

5. Mount Cattlin Mine



Mine workers at Mt. Cattlin mine shaft, c. 1900 (courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society).

After pegging the minesite in December 1899, Clarence Cattlin formed a syndicate with brothers Walter and William Kingsmill to work the mine. Little is known of how successful their venture was, but in 1905 an option on the mine was taken out by Chas Kaufman, who was trained as a mining engineer at Freiburg in Germany.

Kaufman, a well-known mining figure in Western Australia, arrived in Ravensthorpe in 1894 as a representative of the West Australian Exploring and Financial Corporation Ltd. and London and Glove Finance Corporation Ltd. By 1896 he was already responsible for capital to the value of £1.55m in mining areas such as Kalgoorlie and the Murchison.

It was in 1903 that Kaufman became aware of the copper potential in the Ravensthorpe area. After taking the option on the Mount Cattlin Mine, he was instrumental in the formation in January 1906 of the Phillips River Gold and Copper Co. Ltd. Through this venture Kaufman proposed to develop the copper-mining and smelter industry at Ravensthorpe to an extent where it might rival the goldmining industry. It was his intention to equip the mines with the most up-to-date appliances and plant. However, a slump in copper prices and a disagreement with a new company director saw him sell his substantial interests in the company by April 1909.

6. Mine Workings

Optional detour

For those who are interested, it is possible to detour at this point to explore the old mines where lesser known minerals such as spodumene and lepidolite (used in the hardening of metals) and tourmaline (a semi-precious stone) were mined. Other minerals to be found in the area were opaline and garnet crystals. None of these were ever found in abundant quantities and copper and gold remained the primary source of mining in the area.

7. The Big House

Private property, please view from the road



The Big House, c. 1910 (courtesy Ravensthorpe Historical Society).

This stately old home was built for the manager of the smelters in 1906/07. The interior of the building was meticulously finished with very high ceilings, huge open fireplaces, folding doors between dining and sitting rooms, ornate stained glass windows and wide verandahs.

8. Shire Offices

(formerly the Western Australian Bank)

Corner of Morgans and Carlisle Streets

Opened on September 16th, 1908, this building became the new premises for the Western Australian Bank Ltd., which had established a branch here as early as 1901. The bank remained in operation until 1926 and, as a result, the building is closely identified with the early history of mining in the area.

It is one of the few buildings of this era in Ravensthorpe to remain virtually unchanged since the time of construction.

9. Palace Hotel

Corner of Morgans and Carlisle Streets



Palace Hotel, 1974 (courtesy Mr F.A. Sharr).

A typical country pub of the early 20th century, the Palace Hotel was built of local brick and completed in 1907. Its wide, handsome verandahs feature intricately patterned woodwork and the stained glass window and ornamental staircase reflect the prosperity of the period.

The **Cattlin Creek Heritage Trail** was developed by the Ravensthorpe Historical Society which extends its thanks to the following:

- Kingsley Bond and Ivor Row, for their painstaking efforts in clearing the railway line of overgrown vegetation and building the gates to cross the fences.
- Mrs Win Chambers, Curator of Dance Cottage Museum, for providing historical data and photographs from the museum archives.
- Lynda Hargreaves for collating information and photographs.
- Helen Taylor.
- All other residents who have contributed to the project.

Photographs

Photographs in this brochure are courtesy of:

- Ravensthorpe Historical Society.
- Mr F.A. Sharr.

Further Reading

- Archer, A.W. **Ravensthorpe - Then and Now**
(Imperial, 1977).
- Chambers, W. **Hopetoun Jetty 1902-1983**
(Ravensthorpe Historical Society, 1984)



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