



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.5.2 Breeding animals
- 3.16 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure
- 5.1 Working in harsh conditions
- 5.5 Trying to make crime pay
- 8.10.3 Creating Literature

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers (including Aboriginal, convict)
- 203 Road Transport
- 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying
- 605 Famous and infamous people

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Camel Station, Sandstone includes the Homestead, a picturesque stone ruin. Set within a flat landscape save for the nearby Dromedary Hills and No. 1 Rabbit Proof Fence (P14216), the place has a landmark quality that expresses the beauty and isolation of living on a remote station. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Camel Station, Sandstone demonstrates the expansion of Non-Indigenous settlement into the arid interior of the state, and is associated with the formation of the No. 1 Rabbit Proof Fence (P14216). (Criterion 2.1)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

Camel Station, Sandstone demonstrates the development and use of camels as transport animals in the arid interior, and the state government's attempts to breed their own herds. (Criterion 2.2)

Camel Station, Sandstone is associated with the deaths of Louis Carron, James Ryan and George Lloyd by Snowy Rowles between 1929 and 1931, and was part of the development of the 'perfect murder' by Upfield that was a critical part in the concealment of these deaths. (Criterion 2.2)

Camel Station, Sandstone is associated with renowned Australian author Arthur Upfield, as well as convicted serial killer Stanley 'Snowy' Rowles. The place is also associated with the 'Murchison Murders' and the men who lived and worked in the area. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Camel Station, Sandstone uses a number of basic building techniques utilising local materials that demonstrates the hardship and inventiveness required when living in the remote arid interior of the state. (Criterion 3.1)

Camel Station, Sandstone has significant archaeological potential that may contribute to the understanding of life in the inter-war period, as well as life on a remote station. (Criterion 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Camel Station, Sandstone is infamous in the Murchison region as the site of the murders of Louis Carron, James Ryan and George Lloyd by Snowy Rowles between 1929 and 1931, a crime which was briefly of national attention. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Camel Station, Sandstone is a rare example of a place associated with an infamous crime, as opposed to a place associated with the law and justice system's response to a crime. (Criterion 5.1)

Camel Station, Sandstone is a rare example of a government camel breeding station, which in itself was not a widespread government activity. (Criterion 5.2)

Camel Station, Sandstone is a rare example of a place directly associated with the use of camels as transport animals in the state's arid interior. (Criteria 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Camel Station, Sandstone demonstrates representative characteristics of life and construction on a remote station, including the use of local materials and simple construction methods. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

The Station Ruin is in a completely ruined condition, and the rear of the building requires stabilisation. However the front elevation of the building is still in an adequate condition to demonstrate the layout of the place.

The associated timber structures have been reduced to remnants.

The Well and Tank are in a dilapidated but stable condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Overall, the place has moderate to high integrity. The use and organisation of the place is still apparent, and the Station Ruin has the ability to be stabilised or even restored back to its original function.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Overall the place has high authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the physical evidence completed by the State Heritage Office in April 2017, with documentary evidence, amendments and/or additions by the State Heritage Office and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Camel Station, Sandstone is a former camel breeding station in the state's northern interior that includes the Station Ruins (1920s), a vernacular stone residence; a timber-lined Well and concrete Tank (undated) as well as the remains of timber stockyards and fences. The development of the place is associated with the role played by camels in the expansion of farming into the interior during the early 20th century, as well as a notorious murder that briefly gained national attention.

When British colonies across Australia began to expand into the arid interior of the continent, the camel was recognised as a transport and pack animal suitable for the harsh environment, and there were calls for camels to be imported to help explore the interior.¹ The first camel, named Harry, was introduced to Australia from the Canary Islands in 1840 by the Phillips brothers. Harry was later bought by South Australian farmer Horrocks in 1846 and used for explorations into the interior. Unfortunately Harry was recorded as a bad-tempered animal and his jerking caused the accidental, self-inflicted and fatal shooting of Horrocks, for which Harry was executed atop Horrock's grave.² Despite this negative start, more camels were imported to Australia over the next few years, notably for Burke and Wills' explorations of the interior in 1860.³

The camel was introduced to Western Australia by Ernest Giles in his exploration for an overland crossing from South Australia to Western Australia in 1875, the explorer noting that he faced deserts 'which only the marvellous and sustaining powers of Mr Elder's all-enduring beasts enabled us to cross.'⁴ This is a reference to the first commercial camel herd established in Australia by Thomas Elder in 1866, the businessman having imported 100 camels to Beltana in South Australia for carrying goods to outstations.⁵

The potential for camels to act as pack animals servicing remote stations was quickly realised in Western Australia and calls were made for their greater use.⁶ One of the earliest commercial camel herds in Western Australia was established by Afghan brothers Jemadar Fiaz Mahomed and Tagh Mahomed, who owned 270 camels and operated multiple Afghan camel teams in the state's north and in the

¹ 'The Camel in Australia', *The Australian*, 11 December 1841, pp. 2-3; 'The Camel', *The Australian*, 16 March 1847, p. 3

² *Moreton Bay Courier*, 8 August 1846, p. 4; 'Progress of Discovery – Expedition to the North-West', *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 10 October 1846, p. 4; 'Miscellaneous News', *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, 14 November 1846, p. 2; 'Bill Skelton and his gun', *Burra Record*, 20 August 1880, p. 4

³ 'Parliament of Victoria', *The Age*, 18 January 1860, p. 6; 'The Great Exploring Expedition', *Bendigo Advertiser*, 2 July 1860, p. 3

⁴ 'Arrival of Mr Giles' Exploring Expedition', *The Inquirer and Commercial News*, 10 November 1875, p. 1

⁵ 'The Camels and Donkeys at Port Augusta', *South Australian Register*, 12 January 1866, p. 2; 'The Camels', *South Australian Register*, 17 February 1866, p. 2

⁶ *The Herald*, 31 Dec 1881, p. 3

goldfields.⁷ The significance of this pair's Afghan camel teams in connecting remote stations across the region was widely recognised at the time and to this day.⁸ The Afghan teams were however treated with some trepidation by British settlers, and in the case of Carnarvon banned from entering the town.⁹

The camels imported into the country were mostly from the 'Arabian Breed,' which was a common haulage camel of the Dromedary (single-humped) type, the two-humped Bactrian type being considered too heavily furred for the Australian climate. But by the 1890s it was recognised that an 'Australian Breed' of camels was emerging from the imported herds, which was smaller, stockier and more lightly haired than their Old-World counterparts.¹⁰

The Western Australian government already bred horses in a number of locations, and established a camel breeding pasture at Londonderry near Kalgoorlie in 1903. The first government herd consisted of 8 females purchased for £45 each, with 38 additional camels added to the herd in 1906. The upkeep on the herd initially resulted in a loss, however once the first generation of new camels were old enough to be sold the scheme became profitable.¹¹ Before the advent of rail networks or the proliferation of automobiles, camels were recognised as a vital link in the transport of goods and people into the state's interior, servicing mining settlements, regional towns and remote stations.¹²

Following the success of this venture, the Chief Inspector under the *Rabbits and Vermin Act* Alexander Crawford established a second breeding pasture for camels and horses as pack and draft animals at Jigalong, in the East Pilbara, in 1907, which became a profitable venture by 1916. The use of camels along the No. 1 Rabbit Proof Fence (P14216) was also supported by a supply depot at Burracoppin, which was established in 1901, and expanded to include camel yards in 1907.¹³

Crawford noted the advantages of the 'Australian breed' of camels, and left the selective breeding of the government herd in the care of Afghan cameleers.¹⁴ However by the inter-war period, Afghan camel teams supplying remote stations were competing with British-led teams, leading to tensions between the two groups.¹⁵

The following year a third camel breeding pasture was established near Sandstone, which would help service the Rabbit Proof Fence that ran through the area. A 3,000 acre paddock was marked out at the 163 mile well along the fence, with the area becoming known as the Dromedary Hills after a distinctive double hill by the station bore.¹⁶ The herd grew to approximately 350 camels and a depot

⁷ *The Herald*, 29 Nov 1884, p. 3

⁸ *Victorian Express*, 19 August 1892, p. 2; *Sunday Times*, 24 December 1916, p. 1; 'Mahomet, Faiz', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 4 January 2017, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mahomet-faiz-7459>

⁹ 'An Alien Invasion', *The Northern Times*, 24 January 1914, p. 2; *The Northern Times*, 15 January 1910, p. 3;

¹⁰ *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 4 Jan 1895, p. 5; *The West Australian*, 7 January 1897, p. 3

¹¹ *Western Mail*, 30 May 1908, p. 21

¹² *Western Mail*, 13 Jan 1900, p. 57

¹³ Broomhall, *op cit.*, pp. 57-58

¹⁴ *Kalgoorlie Miner* 25 July 1908, p. 4

¹⁵ *The West Australian*, 2 March 1912, p. 8; *The Daily News*, 19 February 1929, p. 5; *Northern Times*, 19 February 1910, p. 3; F H Broomhall, *The Longest Fence in the World*, Hesperian Press, 1991, p. 8

¹⁶ *The West Australian*, 19 June 1908, p. 2

was later established at the site.¹⁷ By 1914, the local name for the area was either 'Dromedary Hills Station', or 'Camel Breeding Station', or simply 'Camel Station'.

Initially the structures at the site consisted of temporary shacks, followed by a stone homestead established in the early 1920s.¹⁸

Photos of the station taken by Broomhall between 1927 and 1932 depict a small stone residence with a corrugated iron gable roof, and a corrugated iron bargeboard on the main structure, with the southern addition built with a skillion roof.¹⁹ A photo of the southern addition's construction in 1927 shows a large pile of the stone ready to be laid, which appears to have been roughly shaped. Broomhall noted that the stone and 'anthill mortar' walls were roughly squared with a tomahawk, 'quarried from a deposit no greater distance than the fence.'²⁰ These photos also show number of secondary corrugated iron structures on the site, including a garage, stock shed and storage sheds.²¹

Camel Station, Sandstone is associated with a notorious incident that occurred between 1929 and 1932. Arthur Upfield, was working along the Rabbit-Proof Fence as a boundary rider stationed at *Camel Station, Sandstone*. The Upfield's job involved both training camels for harness use as well as providing repairs to the Rabbit Proof Fence (P14216). This was the first of the Rabbit Proof Fences, constructed after 1901 as an attempt to stop the spread of rabbits from eastern Australia where they had been introduced in the 1850s.²² A photo of Upfield's 'outfit' taken in 1927 shows a covered two-wheeled cart carrying fencing equipment, pulled by two camels in harness.²³

Upfield was also an Australian crime novelist, working along the Rabbit Proof Fence while writing the novel *The Sands of Windee*, the hero of which was the Aboriginal detective Napoleon Bonaparte.²⁴ The book called for the 'perfect' disposal of a fictional murder victim, as Upfield felt that murder stories involving a corpse were too easily solved.²⁵ Upfield had discussed the plot problem with a number of local workers between May and October 1929 but particularly with two friends; fellow boundary rider George Ritchie, and a local labourer, Stanley 'Snowy' Rowles. The method involved burning a body near a water hole, as animals that had died in the water were routinely dragged out and burnt to avoid poisoning the supply. The murderer would then sift through the ashes for identifiable metal objects (which were then dissolved in acid) and then crush the

-
- 17 Ellard, K, Seidel, P, *Development of a Sustainable Camel Industry*, Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation, 2000, pp. 7-8;
- 18 Broomhall, *op cit.*, pp. 65-68; Walker, T, *Murder on the Rabbit Proof Fence*, Hesperian Press, 1993; *The West Australian*, 21 October 1914, p. 4; *The West Australian*, 30 October 1918, p. 8; *Mount Magnet Miner and Lennonville Leader*, 4 June 1921, p. 2; *The West Australian*, 11 October 1922, p. 8; *Western Mail*, 12 October 1922, p. 20
- 19 *ibid.*, pp. 66, 150; BA1453/1 *op cit.*
- 20 Broomhall *op cit.*, pp. 66, 68
- 21 *ibid.*, pp. 66-68, 119, BA1453/1 *op cit.*
- 22 'The Rabbit Proof Fence', *Western Perspectives on a Nation*, LISWA website, accessed 19 May 2017, <http://slwa.wa.gov.au/wepon/land/html/rabbits.html>
- 23 'Going to Dromedary Hills. Last Trip 132m. Jan 1927. Arthur Upfields outfit', *Cadd Collection of Photographs*, Battye Library Pictorial Collection, BA2065
- 24 Upfield, A, *The Sands of Windee*, 1931
- 25 'Fence Riding in W.A.', *Sunday Times*, 28 February 1932, p. 7

remaining bone fragments using a miner's mortar and pestle, also known as a 'dolly-pot'.²⁶

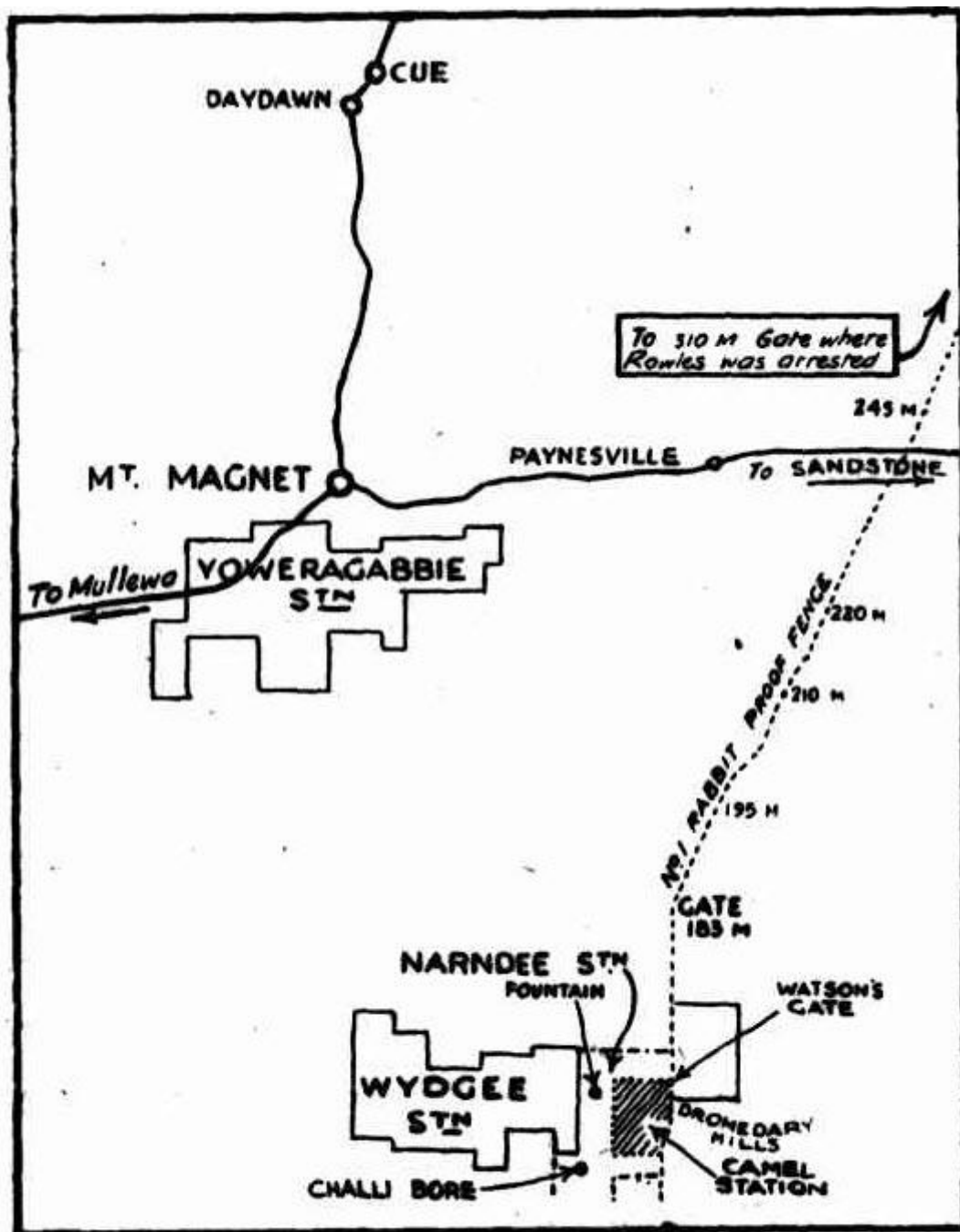
On the 4th December 1929, Rowles returned to *Camel Station, Sandstone* looking for companions to go north on a prospecting trip. However, on the 7th he instead travelled south to Challi Bore to perform fencing work at Narndee Station. Rowles left Camel Station with two local labourers, South Australian James Ryan and local George Lloyd. The trio were later seen at the bore by a local windmill contractor named Wright, who noted Lloyd was a skilled harmonica player.

Narndee Station co-owner Bogle checked on the group at Challi Bore on the 10th, but found only Rowles, who claimed the others were working in the bush nearby. A local prospector named Yates then ran into Rowles at Watson's Camp (north of *Camel Station, Sandstone* and accessed via Watson's Gate) on the 17th December. Asking why Rowles was driving Ryan's truck, Rowles said that he and Ryan had been working west at Yalanga Bore, and he had left Ryan there. Yates was suspicious, and followed Rowles' tracks, finding instead that Rowles had travelled north from Challi Bore, skirting around the rear of the Dromedary Hills behind *Camel Station, Sandstone* so as not to be seen.

On the 18th December Rowles arrived at Youanmi, a mining settlement northwest of *Camel Station, Sandstone*. There he was asked the same question by a Rabbit Proof Fence worker named Maddison, who was known to Upfield and was part of the discussions around the development of the 'perfect murder' plot. Rowles stated that Ryan had sold him the truck for £80 and left the region. Rowles also ran into Upfield at Youanmi on the 24th of December, telling Upfield that Ryan and Lloyd had left for Mount Magnet and had lent him the truck.²⁷

²⁶ Upfield, A, *The Murchison Murders*, Midget Masterpiece Publishing Co., 1934, pp. 16-18; *Daily News*, 18 January 1932, p. 1

²⁷ *Leslie George Brown alias Louis J Carron, George Henry Lloyd, James Ryan. Reported missing from Mount Magnet District. Murder of Brown, Lloyd and Ryan by (Snowy Rowles) John Thos Smith in the Mount Magnet Police District*, SRO AU WA S76-cons430 1931/1931, np



A plan showing places mentioned at the Inquest concerning the death of Leslie J. Brown, also known as Louis J. Carron, which was resumed at Cue on Monday.

Area plan of locations involved in the murders committed by Rowles, *Western Mail*, 11 February 1933, p. 33

Meanwhile, Bogle's suspicions had been aroused as Ryan had not come back to Narndee to receive his payment, and around the 24th December he investigated Challi Bore to find Ryan's and Lloyd's fencing and prospecting tools abandoned at the camp.²⁸

²⁸ *ibid.*

The station owner's suspicions must have been allayed for Rowles was still working in the area in 1930, hunting foxes for their skins and still driving Ryan's truck. On 18th May 1930, Rowles left the Fountain Outcamp of Narndee Station for the 183 Mile Camp along the Rabbit Proof Fence, known then (somewhat portentously) as 'Haunted Hut.' Rowles left with another itinerant labourer from New Zealand named Louis Carron, who had been travelling around the state with a close friend named Jack Lemon. Before Carron left with Rowles, he had had shown Rowles and Lemon a cheque for £25, which he earnt at Wydgee Station near Mount Magnet. Later that week, Rowles cashed a cheque for £25 at the Paynesville Hotel. Rowles was also seen by a local station labourer named Morrissey burning a pile of clothes and papers in the bush near the 200 mile peg of the Rabbit Proof Fence, which Rowles told Morrissey was simply some old rubbish.²⁹

In December 1930 Carron's friends in New Zealand wrote to the Mount Magnet Police, worried as Carron had failed to send his regular letters home. When Jack Lemon also filed a missing persons report for Carron in January 1931, the police were spurred to action. From the 18th of February, local police interviewed locals across the region and traced Carron's movements to the 183 Mile Camp. At this camp they found a number of bonfire remains, and sieving through the ashes they found bone fragments believed to be human, some dentures and a gold ring. Believing they had found the remains of Carron the police renewed their interviews of locals, and on the 27th of February made two important connections; Ryan had just been reported missing by his family in South Australia and Rowles had been involved with Upfield's plot for the 'perfect murder.'³⁰

Rowles was arrested at the Hillview Outcamp on 6th March 1931, and the police then made another unexpected discovery: Snowy Rowles was in fact a prison escapee from Dalwallinu named John Thomas Smith, a man with a history of burglary who had been hiding out in the Murchison. The inspectors spent the rest of the month tracing Rowles movements over the last few years and impounding the items in Rowles' possession at Hillview Station. Amongst these possessions were a number of items known to be owned by Ryan or Carron, including cooking utensils, a Winchester rifle, silk shirts, a hair clipper, and a watch.³¹ A search of eight bonfire remains near Challi Bore, where Ryan and Lloyd had last been seen, turned up a small piece of skull, metal clothes fastenings, and parts of a harmonica. The police were puzzled by the lack of dentures, which Lloyd was known to wear.³²

On the 27th March Rowles was asked for a statement. Rowles protested his innocence, stating the he, Ryan and Lloyd had been travelling north to go prospecting but had broken down at the 212 Mile mark of the Rabbit Proof Fence. Ryan and Lloyd had gone on to Wiluna with some friends in another car that had travelled out to pick them up, and that Ryan sold him the truck for £32 before he left. Rowles further claimed the items in his possession were rightfully his, bought in Perth or bartered from Afghan traders.³³

29 *ibid.*

30 *Ibid*; Upfield, *op cit.*, pp. 22-25

31 SRO AU WA S76-cons430 1931/1931, np

32 *ibid.*

33 *ibid.*

Investigations continued for the rest of the year and in January 1932 an inquest was opened at Cue to determine if there was sufficient evidence to charge Rowles, given that there were no bodies that could be identified as Carron, Ryan and Lloyd. The police called witnesses from around the Murchison region and as far away as New Zealand to state their case, showing that the items found at the 183 Mile camp, Challi Bore and in Rowles' possession belonged to the murder victims, and the lack of bodies could be attributed to Rowles' involvement with Upfield's fictional plot. The watch was shown to have a serial number engraved during repairs in Perth ordered by Carron; and partially burnt wire stitching from the 183 Mile Camp fires was shown to have a distinctive flaw traced to a defective stitching machine in Perth used to make delivery boxes for the watches. The dentures found at 183 Mile Camp were traced back to a New Zealand dentist who remembered distinct features of the items, and the gold ring was traced to a New Zealand jeweller who remembered a distinct flaw in the metal created when the ring was re-sized. The harmonica remains found at Challi Bore were linked to Lloyd, whose family and friends declared was a skilled harmonica player. The contradictory statements Rowles had made regarding Ryan's truck were examined, as well as his suspicious movements, cashing of Carron's cheque and burning of objects. It was also revealed that Rowles had made remarks implicating himself in Ryan's and Lloyd's murders while detained by the police, and had tried to commit suicide twice while waiting for the police to finish their investigation.³⁴ Finally, Upfield himself was called to testify regarding his development of the 'perfect murder' with Rowles.³⁵

On the 13th February the Coroner declared that there was sufficient evidence to move to trial for the death of Carron, and everyone involved was relocated to Perth.³⁶ The Perth trial re-examined the witnesses and evidence and concluded a verdict of Guilty for the murder of Carron, sentencing Rowles to death.³⁷ Rowles protested his innocence of the crime and lodged an appeal based upon the fact that there was no direct physical evidence of murderous intent.³⁸ The appeal was rejected and Rowles was executed at *Fremantle Prison* (P1014) on 13 June 1932.³⁹

Before the execution, one of the police inspectors going through Rowles' possessions noticed a tobacco tin filled with flour. On pouring out the contents, he discovered a gold false tooth and a dental plate held together with gold bands – similar to the missing dentures worn by Lloyd. The new evidence was put to Rowles in prison but he refused to the end to admit any guilt in the murder of Ryan and Lloyd.⁴⁰

The strange nature of the crime garnered national attention, even for years after the trial occurred, including stories of Rowles' 'Death Truck', the 'Murchison

³⁴ *Daily News*, 18 January 1932, p. 1; *Daily News*, 8 February 1932, p. 1; *The West Australian*, 10 February 1932, p. 13; *Geraldton Guardian*, 9 February 1932, p. 3; *Daily News*, 13 February 1932, p. 10

³⁵ Upfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-53; *Sunday Times*, 24 January 1932, p. 24; *Sunday Times* 14 February 1932, p. 6

³⁶ *Daily News*, 13 February 1932, p. 10; *The West Australian*, 11 March 1932, p. 19

³⁷ Upfield, *op. cit.*, p. 59; *Daily News*, 13 February 1932, p. 10

³⁸ Upfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-59; *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 9 January 1932, p. 1; *Western Mail*, 18 February 1932, p. 40; *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 21 April 1932, p. 4; *Western Argus*, 22 March 1932, p. 22

³⁹ Upfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-62; *The New Call*, 16 June 1932, p. 12; *Western Mail*, 16 June 1932, p. 21; SRO AU WA S76-cons430 1931/1931, np

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

Mystery' and Upfield's 'Perfect Crime'.⁴¹ The crime was also reported on as far afield as New Zealand, with the local dentist noted as supplying a significant piece of the evidence against Rowles.⁴²

Upfield later published a book regarding the strange case and enjoyed some fame as a writer over the next few years, but towards the late 1940s grew dissatisfied with what he perceived as elitism amongst Australian literary authors.⁴³ The story of the 'Murchison Murders' was the subject of another book in 1993 and made into a telemovie series in 2009.⁴⁴

The structures at one of the murder sites, known as the 'Haunted Hut,' is reputed to have been shifted in the 1930s.⁴⁵

Camel Station, Sandstone continued to act as a camel breeding station after the murder case, as well as a site for 'breaking in' the camels for riding, however the notoriety of the case may have affected the government's interest in the place and it is suggested that after 1932 the place was no longer used in connection with the maintenance of the No 1 Rabbit Proof Fence. However, another reason may also have been cuts in government spending during the Depression years.⁴⁶

On a larger scale, by the 1930s camels were falling out of use in favour of motor vehicles. The Jigalong camel pasture was abandoned in 1948, and a number of private camel teams were also abandoned around this period. As result many camels from unprofitable herds were released into the wild, where the hardier members continued to thrive. This has resulted in current estimates of there being approximately 500,000 feral camels in the Australian outback.⁴⁷

The number of boundary riders along the Rabbit Proof Fence dwindled with the increasing use of motor vehicles, and by the 1950s there were only a handful of huts being used.⁴⁸ In 1964 *Camel Station, Sandstone* was leased to the Bogle family and appears to have been completely abandoned by this time.⁴⁹

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Camel Station, Sandstone is a former camel breeding station in the state's interior that includes the Station Ruins (1920s), a vernacular stone residence; the remains of timber stockyards, fences and building frames at the station, as well as a timber-lined Well and concrete Tank (undated) approximately 2.5 km southeast

-
- ⁴¹ *Sporting Globe*, 16 November 1940, p. 6; *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 9 February 1938, p. 8; *The Advertiser*, 17 March 1934, p. 9; *The Argus*, 18 June 1932, p. 8
- ⁴² *Northern Advocate*, 14 June 1923, p. 5; *Press*, 15 February 1932, p. 9; *Temuka Leader*, 16 June 1932, p. 1; *Auckland Star*, 12 April 1932, p. 9
- ⁴³ Upfield, *op. cit.*; *Great Southern Herald* 5 January 1935, p. 3; *Sunday Times* 1 January 1933, p. 10; *Northern Times* 24 March 1937, p. 4; 'Upfield, Arthur William', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 5 January 2017, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/upfield-arthur-william-8900>
- ⁴⁴ T Walker, *Murder on the Rabbit proof Fence*, Hesperian press, 1993; '3 Acts of Murder (2009)', IMDB website, accessed 5 January 2017, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1331332/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1
- ⁴⁵ *Western Mail*, 29 August 1935, p. 8
- ⁴⁶ Broomhall, *op cit.*, pp. 69, 135; *Western Mail*, 3 March 1932, p. 45; *Western Mail*, 31 October 1932, p. 8; *Western Mail*, 15 October 1936, p. 10
- ⁴⁷ Broomhall *op cit.*, p. 62; 'The Comet', *South Western Advertiser*, 18 October 1935, p. 5; *The Feral Camel*, Australian Camel Industry website, accessed 13 December 2016, <http://australiancamelindustry.com.au/cjamel/images/pdfs/feralcamels/The.Feral.Camel.pdf>
- ⁴⁸ *Sunday Times*, 9 September 1951, p. 4
- ⁴⁹ Broomhall, *op cit.*, p. 69

of the station. The physical remains of the place demonstrate the nature of living in the state's isolated interior.

Camel Station, Sandstone lies within Narndee Station, approximately 9 km southeast of the Paynes Find-Sandstone Road, and immediately east of two low gentle outcrops known as Dromedary Hills. The place is adjacent to the western side of the Rabbit Proof Fence No 1 (P14216), which runs along a north-south axis, and the place is connected to both the Paynes Find-Sandstone Road and to the Rabbit Proof Fence via unsealed dirt tracks. The local vegetation consists of a shrub-steppe grassland, dominated by spinifex grasses (*Triodia* sp.) and low acacia shrubs (*Acacia* sp.), with isolated acacia trees that become clustered around water sources.⁵⁰ Outside of the Dromedary Hills, the local landscape is almost uniformly flat and there is an extensive floodplain to the east.

The cultural features of the site consist of the Station Ruin, remains of the bush timber stockyard and fence, and a combined Well & Tank to the southwest. The area around the Station Ruin has scattered groupings of artefacts, including tack (animal harness components), galvanised iron sheets, cans, ceramic and glass fragments, as well as tobacco tins. A datable object is a discarded shotgun shell, marked 'Eley-Kynoch 12 12' which was produced as a subsidiary of the Imperial Chemical Industries after World War I, and was advertised in Western Australia from 1924 to at least 1949. However the arrangement of the maker's mark indicates this shell dates more specifically to c.1938.⁵¹

Mapping of every artefact grouping was not performed, however the artefact groups likely represents the dumping of station rubbish. Further spatial analysis might map differing activities across the area.

The Station Ruin (1920s) is the remains of a vernacular residence used by the government employees stationed along the Rabbit Proof Fence. Historical images show that the building was originally a single storey structure constructed of stone set in a mud mortar, with a low pitched galvanised iron roof, containing three rooms. A later skillion roofed room was later added. The main living space is likely to have been the north-east room, which has a fireplace and retains the original front doorway of the house.

The foundations of the ruin are large granite blocks laid directly into the ground, which unlike the walls, appear to have been squared off. However, the squared appearance could also be due to the fact that granite tends to fracture along natural cleavage points, producing blocks with a squared appearance. There is a layer of mud mortar between the granite foundations and the bottom of the wall. The walls themselves have large regularly shaped granite blocks at corners, with smaller randomly shaped blocks forming the walls themselves. As with the foundations, the wall uses a dark brown mud mortar, which is still present towards the front and along the inside of the structure but has largely eroded out of the

⁵⁰ 'Vegetation Map of Western Australia', DPAW website, accessed 19 April 2017, https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/about/science/cswa/articles/PreEuropeanVegMap_Jun_14.pdf; A M E Van Vreeswyk, 'Regional vegetation', *Technical Bulletin No 90: An inventory and condition survey of the Sandstone-Yalgoo-Paynes Find area, Western Australia*, Agriculture Western Australia, 1998, pp. 49-41

⁵¹ 'Kynoch', *Wikipedia* website, accessed 26 April 2017, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kynoch>; *The Cartidge Collector's Exchange*, accessed 26 April 2017, <http://www.oldammo.com/january14.htm>; *Western Mail*, 6 March 1924, p. 29; *Western Mail*, 26 March 1931, p. 15; *Western Mail*, 13 January 1949, p. 64; *Fourten* website, accessed 26 April 2017, <http://www.fourten.org.uk/nostalgia5.html>

rear (western) walls. While the front (eastern elevation) of the structure comprises coursed, roughly dressed stone, the other walls are made of random, uncoursed stones with small stones jammed into the gaps between larger stones. The larger stones display distinct chisel marks, indicating that they were roughly shaped into blocks presumably before construction.

The three main rooms have remnants of a timber floor, where the joists have been laid directly onto the dirt and floorboards nailed in over the top. The timber is heavily degraded and it is unclear what type of wood has been used. The doors and window frames are simple timber frame construction, nailed together and held in place by the stone walls. The weight of the stones above is held largely by the timber lintel, which has stood the test of time remarkably well in this respect. The sill of the window and threshold of the internal door are the same timber board used in the doorframes, however the main entrance has a shaped granite threshold. A photo of the front of the building taken by Broomhall in 1927 shows double casement sash windows and a timber door.⁵²

The fireplace has a roughly arched metal lintel set into the roughly coursed stonework, rather than an arch. The hearth itself is boxed in by two large regular blocks of granite, it is unknown if the fireplace was completely open or had a front face. The edges of two planks of timber were observed at each end of the fireplace, and likely represent where the fireplace was laid out when the foundations of the building were established, with the builder choosing to simply construct over the top of them. The chimney is of similar construction to the walls, and it appears the chimney would have tapered towards its crown.

The fourth room at the southern end of the building appears to be a later addition to the structure. While the walls are of similar construction, the stones are much smaller than on the northern end, and the wall appears to have been constructed from two layers of stones, rather than the single layer in the original structure. The construction of the doors and window are the same as the rest of the building, however the fireplace consists of a single flat metal lintel, with the chimney a metal addition that has since fallen away.⁵³ It is also noted that grey concrete has been added to the interior walls of the southern addition, attempting to cover over the mud mortar.

The verandah of the eastern face of the structure consisted of bush timber posts bolted to rafters, which were in turn bolted to the rafters of the main house. No verandah roof is extant, however historic images show it was clad in galvanised iron.⁵⁴ The roof frame consists of timber rafters and purlins, attached to the walls via a timber wall plate that appears to have been bolted into larger stones. The members are held together via metal straps, wrapped wire and at the rear of the building rafters have been replaced with metal pipes. The surviving roof covering consists of galvanised iron sheeting, nailed into place.

There are no maker's marks apparent on the extant galvanised iron sheets, however the uniform grey colour of the metal (now obscured by corrosion

⁵² Broomhall *op cit.*, p. 150

⁵³ BA1453/1 *op cit.*, also shows a metal chimney and external firebox opening, although the chimney type is different from the one observed at the site.

⁵⁴ Broomhall *op cit.*, p. 66

indicates that these were rolled galvanised iron, a process established at England in 1888 and produced in Australia after 1921.⁵⁵

Immediately southeast of the Station Ruin is a corrugated iron watertank, which would have been connected to the roof of the place. The tank sits on a base of granite and quartz rubble that has been topped with a thin layer of concrete. The tank has a faded maker's mark "Lysaght Orb Galvanised Tinned". The thick font and arrangement of this mark indicates a general date of 1921-1950, however a photo of the site associated with Rowles' inquest shows the structure was in place by 1932.⁵⁶

There are a number of ruined wooden structures surrounding the Station Ruin, which for the most part consist of fence lines constructed from bush timber posts and wire. Fence corners are of more substantial construction, incorporating wooden cross pieces, and the link between the Station fence line and the original No 1 Rabbit Proof Fence are still apparent as closely spaced bush timbers linked together with wire. Photos taken by Broomhall in 1926 indicates that these were part of stockyards for the camels.⁵⁷ Two arrangements of bush timbers posts bolted together were noted on the site, which are considered to be the timber frames of storage sheds. No traces of the garage depicted in the historic photos were observed.⁵⁸

The entire area around the Station Ruin is considered to have some archaeological potential, although this has been impacted by the natural forces of erosion. However, given that the floorboard joists of the Station Ruin were laid directly onto the dirt and the interior of the ruin has not been severely impacted, there is considered to be a high potential for artefacts within the ruined structure that may shed light on life in a remote station during the early 20th century.

Approximately 2.5 km southeast of the Station Ruins lies a Well and Tank that are connected to the main structures via a dirt track. The Well lies within a raised mound of gravel and dirt south of the dirt track and consists of a rectangular shaft approximately 1 m by 2 m in size, lined with bush timbers, with bush timber posts and metal struts on either side suggesting there was once some kind of windlass. This method of construction has widespread use and may have been sunk in conjunction with the construction of the No. 1 Rabbit Proof Fence (P14216) after 1901.

Adjacent to the Well is a concrete Tank, constructed of rammed concrete layered walls over a concrete base, finished with an interior 'float coat' of smoothed

55 'Roofing Corrugated Iron – options for Repair', *Material Evidence Conserving Historic Building Fabric*, Seminar 13-14 April 2000, p. 4-5; D H R Spennemann, 'Recording Historic Corrugated iron ; A guide to Techniques', *Techniques in Historic Preservation*, 2015, p. 3

56 BA1453/1 *op cit.*; also based on evolution of maker's marks 1921-1963, Lysaght Professionals website, accessed 26 April 2017, <http://professionals.lysaght.com/content/resources-publications-0>; specifically 1934 and 1950 editions, [http://passthrough.fw-notify.net/download/397772/http://professionals.lysaght.com/sites/default/files/Download%20Lysaght's%20Reference%20A%20Handbook%20of%20Useful%20Information%20\(25MB\).pdf](http://passthrough.fw-notify.net/download/397772/http://professionals.lysaght.com/sites/default/files/Download%20Lysaght's%20Reference%20A%20Handbook%20of%20Useful%20Information%20(25MB).pdf); [http://passthrough.fw-notify.net/download/295913/http://professionals.lysaght.com/sites/default/files/Download%20Lysaght's%20Reference%20A%20Handbook%20of%20Useful%20Information%20\(28MB\).pdf](http://passthrough.fw-notify.net/download/295913/http://professionals.lysaght.com/sites/default/files/Download%20Lysaght's%20Reference%20A%20Handbook%20of%20Useful%20Information%20(28MB).pdf)

57 Broomhall *op cit.*, p. 67

58 *ibid.*, pp. 66-68, 119, BA1453/1 *op cit.*

concrete. This method of tank construction was common in Western Australia from the period 1900-1950s.⁵⁹

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Camels

A search of the State Heritage Office database for places with the keyword 'camel' returns 97 places, of which 19 are listed on the RHP. However, all of these references are incidental to their cultural significance, and there appears to be no places listed on the RHP specifically for their association with the roles of camels in Western Australia's development.

Two places in the State Heritage Office database are specifically entered for their association with camels:

- P7018 Camel Holding Yard – Site; Shire of Kulin, near Hyden
- P14129 Camel Soak; Shire of Perenjori, near Wubin

There is little information on the extent of the government camel breeding program in Western Australia, however it is known that there were camel breeding stations similar to *Camel Station, Sandstone* at Jigalong and Kalgoorlie, with a supply depot supporting this at Burracoppin. This indicates that *Camel Station, Sandstone* is a rare remnant of the government camel breeding program, and that the practice of government camel breeding for use as pack and draft animals was similarly a rare endeavour.

The role of Afghans has not been explored as part of this comparative research.

Murder/Crime Scenes

A search of the State Heritage Office database for places with the theme "Law & Order" returns 357 places, of which 73 are listed on the on the State Register of Heritage Places (RHP). These places include police stations, gaols, lockups, convict sites and court houses. None of these places are recognised as crime scenes, although one place is comparable to *Camel Station, Sandstone*:

- P628 *Old Gaol* (RHP): a single storey Victorian Georgian style stone building with a corrugated iron roof, significant for demonstrating how the treatment of prisoners has changed and the town's fortunes during the Gold Boom. It is believed the last prisoner at the place was 'Snowy' Rowles.

A search of the State Heritage Office database for places with the keyword 'murder' returns 30 places, of which 5 are listed on the RHP. These entries are a variety of building types but all are more directly associated with a crime than with the law enforcement system. These places include:

- P201 *Cornwall Hotel* (RHP): a two storey Federation Filigree hotel at Boulder composed of brick and stone. The place is a significant Boulder landmark, and is associated with the 1934 race riots and on a more positive note local sporting identities the Osmetti Brothers. The place was involved with the notorious murder and dismemberment of Detective Pitman and Inspector Walsh by W Coulter and P Treffene; the latter of which was a barman at the hotel and the pair confessed to the murders there. The policemen were

⁵⁹ *Western Mail*, 12 January 1907, p. 4; *Western Mail*, 21 July 1916, p. 5; *Western Mail*, 9 March 1922, p. 7; *The Bunbury Herald and Blackwood Express*, 21 September 1923, p. 2; *Western Mail*, 24 November 1932, p. 36; *Western Mail*, 3 July 1952, p. 59.

murdered when they discovered an illegal gold treatment plant, a common crime on the goldfields which was the subject of a Royal Commission in 1907.

- P3957 *Pinjarra Massacre Site* (RHP): a memorial site comprising an area of vacant land and natural bush on the bank of the Murray River, significant as a part of the site with the Binjareb Nyungars were attacked and killed by a group of Non-Indigenous settlers on 28 October 1834. The place marks one of the most significant conflicts between Aboriginal people and the Non-Indigenous during the contact period.
- P4282 *Highgate Hill Police Station, Lockup and Quarters (fmr)* (RHP): a complex of bungalow-style brick and iron buildings established in the Gold Boom. The place is significant in demonstrating the development of police community activity and technology. The murder of Sergeant Marks in 1928, who had been stationed at the place and died thwarting an attempted shooting, led to the introduction of firearm licences in the state.
- P5109 *Butterabby Graves* (RHP): the gravesite of James Rudd and four Aboriginal men from the Wajarri and Nhanhagardi/Wilunyu people. The place was close to the site of the murder of Rudd by Aboriginal men and was the place of execution for the Aboriginal men who had murdered Rudd's partner, Thomas Bott. The place demonstrates the complex, and often deadly, tensions that existed in the Geraldton area during the contact period.

Another site linked to this theme is P424 *Wonnerup Precinct* (RHP), Busselton, which is significant among other things for the spearing of George Layman in 1841, part of a number of deaths of both Aboriginal people and Non-Indigenous settlers during a period of violence in the early colonial period.

A search of the State Heritage Office database for places associated with 'Snowy' Rowles or Arthur Upfield returns no places.

The most notable place associated with criminals is P1014 *Fremantle Prison* (RHP), which was the place of execution for some of the state's most notorious felons. This includes Eric Edgar Cooke in 1964, the last person executed in the state, as well as the execution of 'Snowy' Rowles in 1932.

Overall, the comparative information indicates that places demonstrating the role of camels in Western Australia are rare, indicating that *Camel Station, Sandstone* is rare in this regard. Further to this, the government role in breeding camels was a rare enterprise, and *Camel Station, Sandstone* is a rare surviving remnant of this.

The comparative information further indicates that the theme of Law and Order is well represented in the state register, however *Camel Station, Sandstone* appears to be rare as an example of a place involved with a crime, as opposed to a place involved with judicial or penal institutions.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Spatial analysis of all artefacts across the Station Ruins area may reveal different areas of activity that could shed further light on station life.

Further investigation can be performed to determine what type of bush timber was used to construct the fence posts and line the well.