

Place No:
Dr Foley's Olive Tree, STRATHALBYN

Management Category
1



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place Name:	Dr Foley's Olive Tree
Previous Place Number:	GR176
Other Names:	Lot 12089 Candlebark Drive
Place Type:	Tree

SITE LOCATION	
Street Address:	Candlebark Drive
Locality:	STRATHALBYN
Location Detail:	Across road from 24 Candlebark Drive, on the north side of Honeysuckle Boulevard cul-de-sac
Assessment No:	69366
Survey:	Lot 12089, D088134
Reserve:	42580
GPS Coordinates	6816960mN; 270473mE

HERITAGE LISTING	
State Heritage Office ID:	13941 Parent HCWA ID (if applied):
State Heritage Register:	No
Other Listing:	
Local Heritage Survey:	Municipal Heritage Inventory Initial Assessment 09/12/1997 Municipal Heritage Inventory Last Assessment 15/11/2004

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of Significance	EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE: Essential to the heritage of the locality.
Management Category	CATEGORY 1 Conservation of the place is considered essential. Any proposed change should not unduly impact on the significance of the place and be in accordance with either a Conservation Plan or Heritage Impact Statement.
Statement of Significance	- This Olive tree (<i>Olea europaea</i>) has aesthetic value as a large and impressive specimen that demonstrates the ability of the species to adapt and survive in challenging physical conditions. - The tree has aesthetic value as an unusual and prominent landmark in the landscape which is typically grassland and low shrubs. - Dr Foley's Olive Tree has historic value for its association with Dr Foley, an early settler in the district who was the first doctor in the region. - The tree has scientific value as a rare remaining example of an introduced plant species from the beginnings of settlement in the area.

PLACE USE	
Original Use	Tree
Current Use	Tree
Other Use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction Date	1852;
Walls	N/A
Roof	N/A
Architectural Style	N/A
Physical Description	Located at the end of Honeysuckle Boulevard in the suburb of Strathalbyn, this large old olive tree is on the south bank of the Chapman River. There are several other smaller trees located alongside. The tree has suffered at the hands of wood turners who have cut off limbs for their work and bee infestation. Around the tree is grassland and the Chapman River is located to the north.
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION	
This tree was planted by Dr Robert T. Foley (1804-168) in 1853 and marks the site of the home of this early pioneer of Champion Bay. Dr Foley arrived in Fremantle in 1830 with his wife Elizabeth, nee Hannett. Foley was a Surgeon with the 21st Regiment of Foot. In 1831, Elizabeth returned to England. Foley purchased land in Toodyay and established a private practice in the Avon District. In 1849, Foley accompanied the overland team of 15 men, led by A.C. Gregory who arrived at Champion Bay to examine the lead ore at what would become the Geraldine Mine. Appointed as Surgeon to the soldiers of the 23rd Regiment Foley became the first Doctor in the district from 1857. In 1861, Foley was the Medical Attendant at the Convict Depot in Champion Bay. Foley established a farm at this site which was 57 acres (23 hectares) with 2 cottages, orchards, vineyards, a piggery, stables and a lime kiln. The land was productive and sustained Foley in a comfortable manner. Foley was interested in the customs and language of the local Amangu people and in 1865 supplied the vocabulary for an article published by Augustus Oldfield.	

Foley was befriended by a local Aboriginal man named Dellagah who is believed to have become a lifelong companion. Dr Foley passed away in his cottage on 5 June 1868 aged 64.

It is not known when the cottages were destroyed or decayed. The reserve in which the trees are now located was created in 1993 and the site continues to be used for informal recreation.

In c2013, an interpretation panel was erected on the site with a brief history of Dr Foley and his farm as well as the Amangu association with the place.

Historic Themes:	Governing: Law, Order and Defence Peopling WA: Colonisation Economy: Rural Occupations.	
Associations	Dr Robert Foley	Owner and occupant of the site
Sources:	City of Greater Geraldton Municipal Heritage Inventory, 2019. Interpretation Panel alongside the tree, prepared by the City of Greater Geraldton, 2013.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



PREVIOUS HERITAGE SURVEYS



Municipal Heritage Inventory, 1996

Place No:
Riverside Cottage, STRATHALBYN

Management Category
2



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place Name:	Riverside Cottage
Previous Place Number:	GR174
Other Names:	Cook's Cottage
Place Type:	Individual Building or Group

SITE LOCATION	
Street Address:	71 Tersonia Way
Locality:	STRATHALBYN
Location Detail:	Located on the south side of Tersonia Way in parkland to the west of Chapman River
Assessment No:	69832
Survey:	Lot 487, P046877
Reserve:	
GPS Coordinates	6817417mN; 270221mE

HERITAGE LISTING		
State Heritage Office ID:	13939	Parent HCWA ID (if applied):
State Heritage Register:	No	
Other Listing:		
Local Heritage Survey:	Municipal Heritage Inventory Initial Assessment 09/12/1997 Municipal Heritage Inventory Last Assessment 15/11/2004	

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of Significance	CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE: Very important to the heritage of the locality.
Management Category	CATEGORY 2 Conservation of the place is highly recommended. Any proposed change should not unduly impact on the heritage values of the place and should retain significant fabric wherever feasible.
Statement of Significance	- Riverside Cottage has some aesthetic value for its combination of ruined structures and mature trees in a unstructured landscape adjacent to the river which provides a picturesque contrast to the adjacent suburban environment. - The place has historic values for its association with the early settlement of the district, particularly along the Chapman River and for its association with the Cook family. - Although in poor condition, the construction of the place is representative of the simple stone buildings built by settlers in the mid 20th century. - The place has social value as it has been a ruin well known in the local community that contributes to the community sense of place.

PLACE USE	
Original Use	Residential: Single Storey Residence
Current Use	Not in use
Other Use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction Date	c1860s;
Walls	Limestone/CGI
Roof	Corrugated Iron
Architectural Style	
Physical Description	Located on the banks of the Chapman River, Riverside Cottage is situated at the end of Verticordia Drive, on a large block of land and adjacent to a new residential subdivision. The remains of the cottage demonstrate the construction of random rubble stone with a thin render and stone quoining is evident. There is some remnants of the former corrugated iron roof supported on timbers. Invasive vegetation has lead to the decline of the structures on the site as well as damage through exposure to the elements and vandalism. There is evidence of several structures close together on the site.
Condition	Poor
Integrity	Low
Authenticity	Low

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Riverside Cottage was built in the 1860s by Henry Cook after he inherited the property from his brother, Elija Cook. It is believed that ticket-of-leave labour was used to construct the cottage, the barn and the shearing shed, which is now demolished. Henry Cook died in 1886.

Walter Cook, the youngest of Henry's 10 children, died in 1943, leaving the property to his niece Clara Hackett.

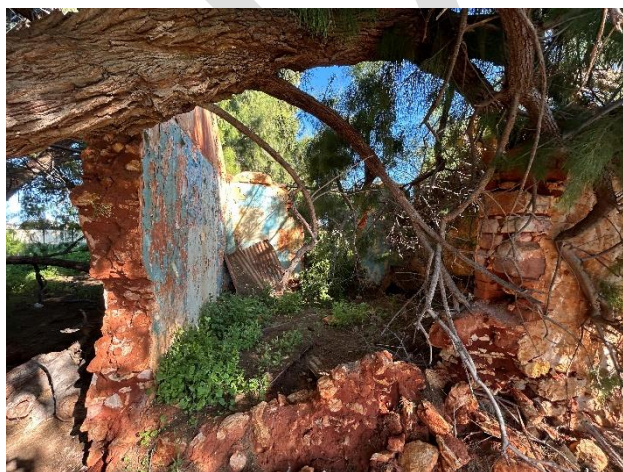
In 1957 the property was sold to Gladys Muir who subsequently subdivided the property, selling some to the Gould family and donated some to one of the local schools.

The house was occupied until 1991 and since then has deteriorated considerably.

Previous research has stated that there is a grave on the property, as well as the remains of stone yard walls and a well.

Historic Themes:	Peopling WA: Demographic Development Economy: Rural Occupations Infrastructure: Development of Settlements and Services.	
Associations	Henry Cook Clara Hackett Gladys Muir	Owner and builder Owner Owner and occupier
Sources:	City of Greater Geraldton Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places 2019. Landgate Aerial photographs. Conversation with Brad Letch and Sylvia Jacobs, August 2025.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



PREVIOUS HERITAGE SURVEYS



Municipal Heritage Inventory, 1997, above images.



Municipal Heritage Inventory 2007, above images.

Place No:
Tom Muir Arboretum, STRATHALBYN

Management Category
3



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place Name:	Tom Muir Arboretum
Previous Place Number:	GR184
Other Names:	
Place Type:	Landscape

SITE LOCATION	
Street Address:	15 Cedar Crescent
Locality:	STRATHALBYN
Location Detail:	15-23 Cedar Crescent
Assessment No:	69901
Survey:	Lot 505, P412784
Reserve:	
GPS Coordinates	6817141mN; 269806mE

HERITAGE LISTING		
State Heritage Office ID:	13948	Parent HCWA ID (if applied):
State Heritage Register:	No	
Other Listing:		
Local Heritage Survey:	Municipal Heritage Inventory Initial Assessment 09/12/1997 Municipal Heritage Inventory Last Assessment 15/11/2004	

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of Significance	MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE: Important to the heritage of the locality.
Management Category	CATEGORY 3 Conservation of the place is recommended. Any proposed change to the place should not unduly impact on the heritage values of the place and should retain significant fabric wherever feasible.
Statement of Significance	• This place has aesthetic value as an area of diverse native planting in contrast to the formal landscape of the adjacent sports reserve within an area of increasing suburban development. • The place has historic value for its association with local farmer Tom Muir who donated this land and also supported many other community organisations. • Tom Muir Arboretum has social value for the members of the community who visit the site for passive recreation. • The place has research value as a source of information about native flora and fauna from this region and techniques of management.

PLACE USE	
Original Use	Park / Reserve
Current Use	Park / Reserve
Other Use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction Date	c1978;
Walls	N/A
Roof	N/A
Architectural Style	N/A
Physical Description	This parcel of land is located between the Strathalbyn Christian College and the Muir Park recreation reserve. The adjacent landholdings are largely residential properties. The arboretum consists of approximately 1.5 hectares of land planted with a wide variety of trees and vegetation in an informal layout. Seating areas have been established using tree stumps and logs, and pathways have been created between the plantings. The pathways are typically gravel or simply cleared and compressed soil. A car park is located in the south portion of the arboretum and fences have been established around the majority of the site.
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION	
This portion of the Geraldton townsite was largely undeveloped until the mid 20th century apart from market gardens further to the west. Local Utkaka farmer Tom Muir (c1900-1992) donated the land in c1978 for the purpose of retaining native plants of the region. In the first years of its establishment the arboretum included plantings from other regions of Western Australia, however this practice is now discouraged the managers preferring to limit the species to those indigenous to the region. The arboretum is managed by volunteers who regularly visit to undertake planting and repair the modest infrastructure, including the pathways and fencing around new seedlings. The volunteers have a policy of reusing fallen trees and dead vegetation to create burrows, or nests, for native animal species.	

On occasion, damage is done to the arboretum by trail bike enthusiasts who use and modify the pathways through the site.

One of Tom Muir's daughters, Sylvia Jacobs, is still actively involved in overseeing the management of the arboretum and maintaining his vision for the site.

The arboretum is used by the adjacent school, Strathalbyn Christian College, and community groups for educational sessions and recreational activities.

Historic Themes:	Social Services: Education Cultural Life: Recreation - Sport Peopling WA: Demographic Development.	
Associations	Thomas Muir Sylvia Jacobs	Donator of land Volunteer
Sources:	City of Greater Geraldton Municipal Heritage Inventory, 2019. Landgate Aerial photographs. Information from the Geraldton Historical Society. Conversation with Brad Letch and Sylvia Jacobs, August 2025.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



ARCHIVAL IMAGES



*Tom Muir at
Empress Spring - Sandy Desert
Located by Explorer David Carnegie.
Relocated by us 1991*

Tom Muir at Empress Spring, 1971



Municipal Heritage Inventory 2007

ARCHIVAL IMAGE

Geraldton Guardian, Tuesday, August 22, 1978—Page 7

'A LAND OF TREES'



... will become a stand of trees for future generations to enjoy...

The farmer is the biggest vandal in the land according to one who tried to atone for his earlier 'vandalism' by growing a unique tree park near Geraldton.

"I've been a farmer all my life and I've killed thousands of acres of trees," said Mr Tom Muir of "Sunnybanks", Geraldton.

So when a friend of his in Perth wanted to give away a number of trees growing in his commercial nursery, Mr Muir decided to set aside 2.2 hectares of his own farm to keep them alive.

That was about 20 years ago. Now 20 varieties of trees — many of which people said would not grow in Geraldton — provide an oasis of charm and a delightful playground for thousands of birds normally not seen in the area.

"We hit too many trees," Mr Muir said as he introduced us to his big "family" of trees.

"This is a tree from Queensland and he grows just as though he's still in Queensland."

"There are no gum trees in Geraldton except those that grow on river beds and those..."

"These native fellows have got me tricked. They grow from seed and they come up beautifully but I can't do it again."

"Did you know there was a male and female tree? This fellow can't live without the other..."

He grows the "eggy" and he grows the pollen, Sunnybanks and they'll

know about it: but ask them about "Strathalbyn" and they won't know what you're talking about.

"It hasn't got the same significance as Sunnybanks."

Shire clerk Mr Bone commented: "Council thought the name Strathalbyn was better."

He said Strathalbyn was the name of property adjacent Mr Muir's which was also bought by the Shire.

Mr Bone understood the word "strath" was Gaelic for river, and the remainder of the name referred to rising hills and higher country.

Stanner added Mr Muir's native tree park has delighted generations of her of a party of school children who were soon to visit the park.

"If they're farmers I'll give them a tree and if they're town kids I'll give them a wattle plant."

He hopes in this way to encourage more and more people to take an interest in trees.

Mr Muir believes that developers should be required to provide a quarter-acre block of natural land for every 10 acres of development.

"It will be good to know that I'll be able to leave something behind wouldn't it, to see it stay, I leave it for the people to enjoy," he said.

... if Tom Muir has his way

Four-leaf clover produced

A Welsh housewife has succeeded where leprechauns failed — she has produced a strain of the clover plant bearing the lucky four-leaf clover.

Mrs Megan Humphrey-Jones has also invented a method of drying and preserving the four-leaf clover so that it retains its color and freshness. She is now looking for export markets.

Her interest in four-leaf clovers began some years ago when she found a plant bearing four leaves.

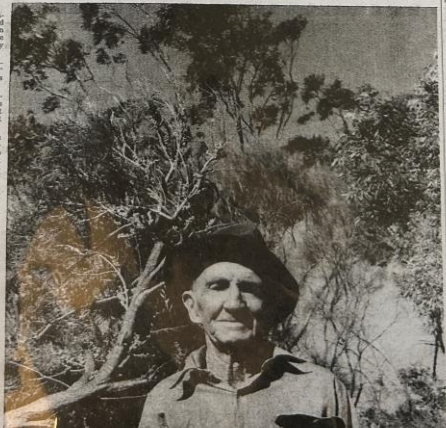
From that she has, through patient cross-pollination and grafting, continued to produce plants regularly producing four leaves instead of the usual three.

The four-leaf clover has from ancient times been a good luck sign.

Mrs Humphrey-Jones said her preserved "four leavers" could be used on greeting cards and for decorating key rings, desk sets and similar novelties.

PROFILE

by Ian Cutler,
photos Ted Smith



Geraldton Guardian, 22 August 1978, p. 7.

Courtesy Sylvia Jacobs