

Sites

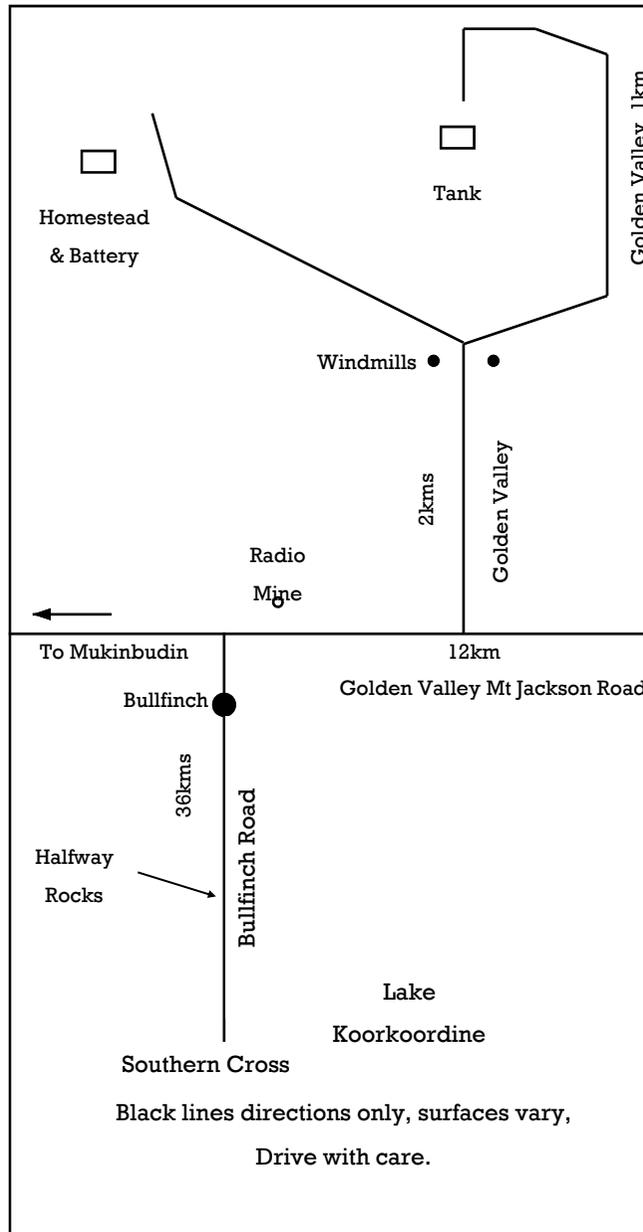
- *Old Underground Tunnel*
- *Shaft*
- *Plaque to site*
- *Old stone house*
- *Battery & machinery*
- *Birdlife (especially wedge-tail eagles)*
- *Views to Lake Baladgie*
- *Baladgie Rock*
- *Wildflower country (seasonal)*

SITUATED

Take bitumen road to Bullfinch (36km). Turn right at "T" junction of Bullfinch/ Mukinbudin/ Mt Jackson Roads. Pass Radio Mine on left, 12kms to Golden Valley (sign posted). Continue to windmills 15kms road on right approx 1km to plaque. Road direct ahead at windmills to old stone house, battery and machinery. Note: not all weather road



Spectacular views and wildflower country (seasonal)



Golden Valley Knutsford

Produced & Printed by the Shire of Yilgarn

Golden Valley Knutsford



Golden Valley Battery site



Good Country for Hardy People

Golden Valley

Named not from gold but from the "Golden Scrub Wattle" which covers the slopes of the valley.

Township of Knutsford

This is where it began, 1887 with the find of a gold reef, paving the way to Southern Cross and other finds within the Yilgarn.

The area was first called 'Cordelia' after the eldest daughter of the discoverer, Greaves. He extracted twenty pounds of specimens then burnt a dead tree on the site so that it could be easily identified. Greaves being very ill at the time due largely to the putrid water he had consumed, told Colreavy of his find and suggested he work the area. Later Bernard Colreavy announced he had discovered gold at a place called 'Golden Valley', however Greaves maintained this was his 'Cordelia'. Following this discovery the first gold mine lease in the Eastern Goldfields was taken out in 1888—Lot No 1 GM Lease # 3811. The mine was called 'The Kathleen', formerly the 'Cordelia', and worked by Colreavy.

Golden Valley was no bonanza as gold pinched out at depths, however gold fever had its way and an ever increasing number of hopefuls flocked to the Valley. Most travelled by train to Northam then walked an average of 20 miles per day, the lucky ones came by horse. Some were experienced miners from Victoria and the Kimberleys but most were from the city and had little idea of the hardship they would face and only a handful were to ever find gold. Lack of water was the main obstacle facing Golden Valley as it had to be carted from 10 miles away where the Government Water Supply spent £1000 and created tanks out of rocks.

The price of one gallon of water was 2/- (two shillings), a large sum of money in those days. A bore was later put down on the flat under Mt Colreavy, the townsite was surveyed to include this bore (it was still producing a good service in 1994). The township became known as 'Knutsford', however despite being gazetted, it was never proclaimed, due to the lack of lasting population. In 1912, the name was cancelled and the township reverted back to being known as 'Golden Valley'. In 1888, a licence had been granted to a Mr Agreen to conduct the Wayside Nugget Hotel on business area No 1. This small building was bought in the same year by Thomas Farren. The Hotel became the centre for everything. When Mrs Farren had to go to hospital for the birth of her fourth child, she travelled in a buckboard buggy 200 miles over a rough bush track. Farren brought to the area pigs, goats and poultry which provided a welcome variation from the usual diet of kangaroo, wild turkey, mallee hen and pigeons. He later acquired a small flock of sheep which the natives learned to shepherd.

In 1894, the Wayside licence was transferred to J Yourell, who in the same year transferred it to Joseph Payne.

Joe Payne and his wife, their seven daughters and one son had left Victoria in 1893, made their way to Fremantle then Southern Cross with wagons, buggies, horses, cattle, goats, household furniture, tools etc.

After six months in Southern Cross, they moved to the Wayside Nugget Hotel at Golden Valley and the surrounding 50,000 acres of station property which ran cattle, horses and goats. For some time all provisions for Southern Cross had to come through Golden Valley. The Hotel catered for prospectors and travellers going

through to the Goldfields. Many happy parties and race meetings were enjoyed with the hospitality, meals and cool drink supplied by the little pub. Tables and chairs would be pushed back and dancing continued into the hours.

Joe Payne was kicked in the head by a horse in Southern Cross and died, with his son having gone north, this left his widow and five daughters to carry on running the Hotel cum store plus station. Mrs Payne sold the station lease for £600 in 1912. She died in 1937 aged 87.

At the census taken in 1903, Golden Valley showed a population of Men – Nil, Women – Five, Total – five. Today only abandoned shafts, piles of red dirt and a large tunnel mark the passing of Golden Valley and the first town of Knutsford. The area is reserved and trusted to the Historical Society of the Yilgarn. More information can be obtained from the Museum.



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