

Sites

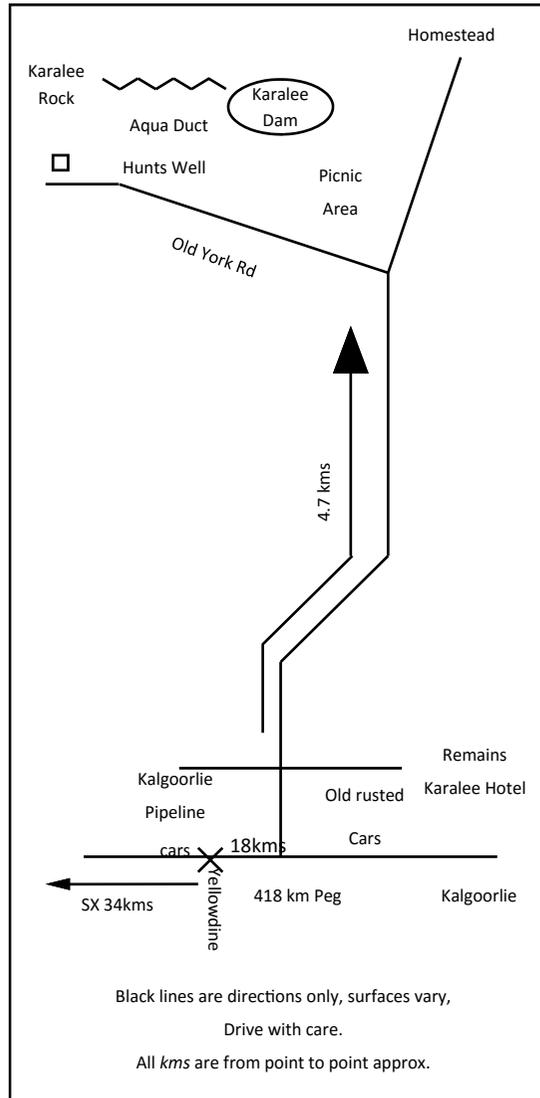
- * Karalee Dam
- * Karalee Rock & Catchment
- * Aquaduct (flume)
- * Picnic Area
- * Old Water Wells (Hunts Soak) & Dam
- * Old Vehicles
- * Concrete site of Hotel
- * View to Mt Clara

SITUATED

Along Great Eastern Highway 52km east of Southern Cross or 22km east of Yellowdine. Turn left at the 418 peg. Drive over the Kalgoorlie Pipeline. Follow track as detailed in map over. Not an all weather track



Karalee Dam & Rock Picnic Site



Well worthy of a detour to visit this remarkable picnic spot to reflect on times gone by and view one of natures secret places.

Produced and Printed by the Shire of Yilgarn

Karalee Dam & Rock Picnic Site



Flume at Karalee Dam



Good Country for Hardy People

Karalee Dam

Karalee Dam was constructed to provide water for slow steam trains enroute to Kalgoorlie. The site was chosen mainly because of the granite outcrop, with rain the outcrop becomes a natural catchment area. Constructed between 1896 and 1897, its capacity is 10.6 million gallons (just over 48 million litres), it is 1487 feet above sea level and 25 feet in depth. Retaining walls of granite slab, all cut from the top of the rock and laid by hand, surround the enormous rock catchment. This enables the water to flow off the rock into the dam via a large semi-circular aquaduct of steel, hand riveted at each joint. This is still in very good condition considering its age and the natural harsh elements. It is well worth the journey to reflect upon the unbelievable manual labour and horse power involved in this construction.

The catchment area is approximately 138 acres. The estimated quantity of water from one inch of rain in one hour is 1,885,920 gallons (more than 8.5 million litres!).

Three other dams were constructed at this time in Merredin, Kellerberrin and Cunderdin along with Karalee. The total cost of these four dams being £15,000, a huge undertaking and cost in 1896.

Other railway dams constructed in the Yilgarn Shire were at Moorine Rock and Bodallin.

Trains would stop at Karalee with suspected "hot boxes" and consequent long waits until they cooled down regularly occurring. When this happened, drivers, crew and many passengers would adjourn

to the hotel. Karalee railway siding, stone cottages for the station master, railway staff and barracks for the train crew, along with the hotel which operated for 74 years until September 1971, were the only buildings established. The cottages and barracks were eventually dismantled and moved to Yellowdine.

The hotel, located between Great Eastern Highway and the narrow gauge railway some 2km south of the dam, catered for travellers and woodcutters who were cutting timbers for mines and the steam operated pumping station. After delicensing in 1971 and the licence transferred to Kwinana where the "Karalee" name still stands, the Hotel catered for travellers, selling petrol, food and apparel. The walls of the Hotel were decorated with black and white paintings with an aboriginal theme.

Vandals have since burnt down this historical architecture.

The Old York Road and telegraph line lie south of the dam. There are also remains remnants of the old forge operated during the construction of the railway dams for the many horses. The deep water well and remains of the rock wall, smaller dam and one of Hunts Soaks are located near the old camping grounds used by weary travellers in the 1890's



Flume gate

Hunts Soak was constructed in the 1860's by convicts and pensioner soldiers.

A walk over the rock enables the viewer to take in the terrain and vastness of the area with the view to Mt Clara, 2kms to the north and Hermit Rock. It is said that a hermit, a Swedish man, made his home here, he excavated a small dam in the granite, grew fruit, vegetables and cereal crops for his own use and on occasion would load his wheelbarrow and walk the 40 miles to Southern Cross to trade for other necessities. He, like so many others, just walked away.



Karalee Dam picnic site

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