

Narrogin Centenary Pathway



039

Shire of Narrogin



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Narrogin Centenary Pathway

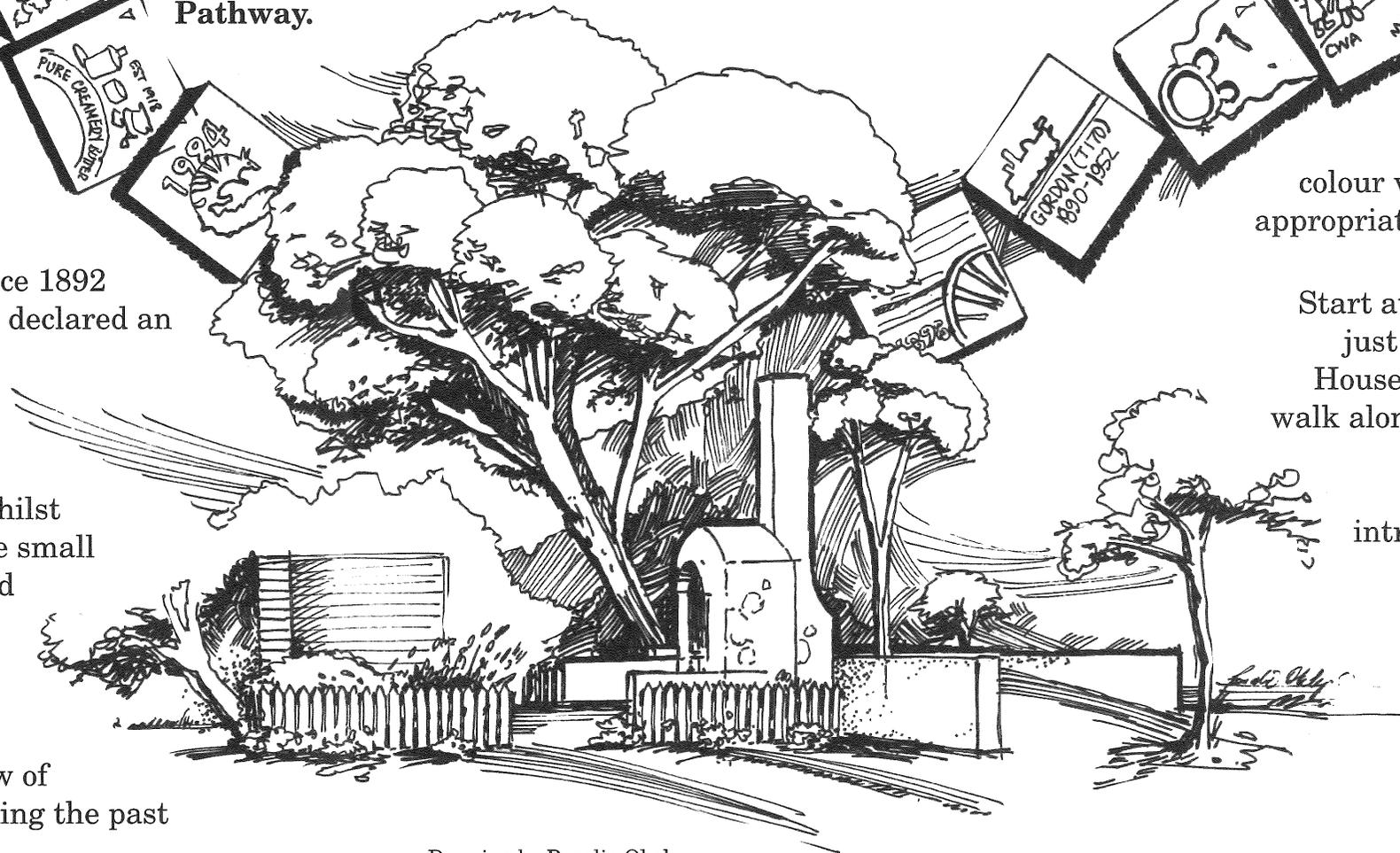
There are 100 black granite tiles in the Narrogin Centenary Pathway.

Each tile depicts one or more events in the 100 years since 1892 when Narrogin was declared an independent Local Government area. Many of the tiles portray important historical events, whilst others are about the small happenings that add particular interest to our everyday lives. Altogether, the tiles give a fascinating overview of life in Narrogin during the past 100 years.

Artist Bernd Kaiser worked with the local community on the project. Many of the designs were drawn by children from the four Narrogin schools, with each school taking a period of 25 years to research:-
East Narrogin Primary School (1892-1916)
St Matthew's Primary School (1917-1941)
Narrogin Senior High School (1942-1966)
Narrogin Primary School (1967-1991)

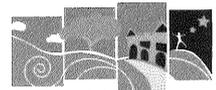
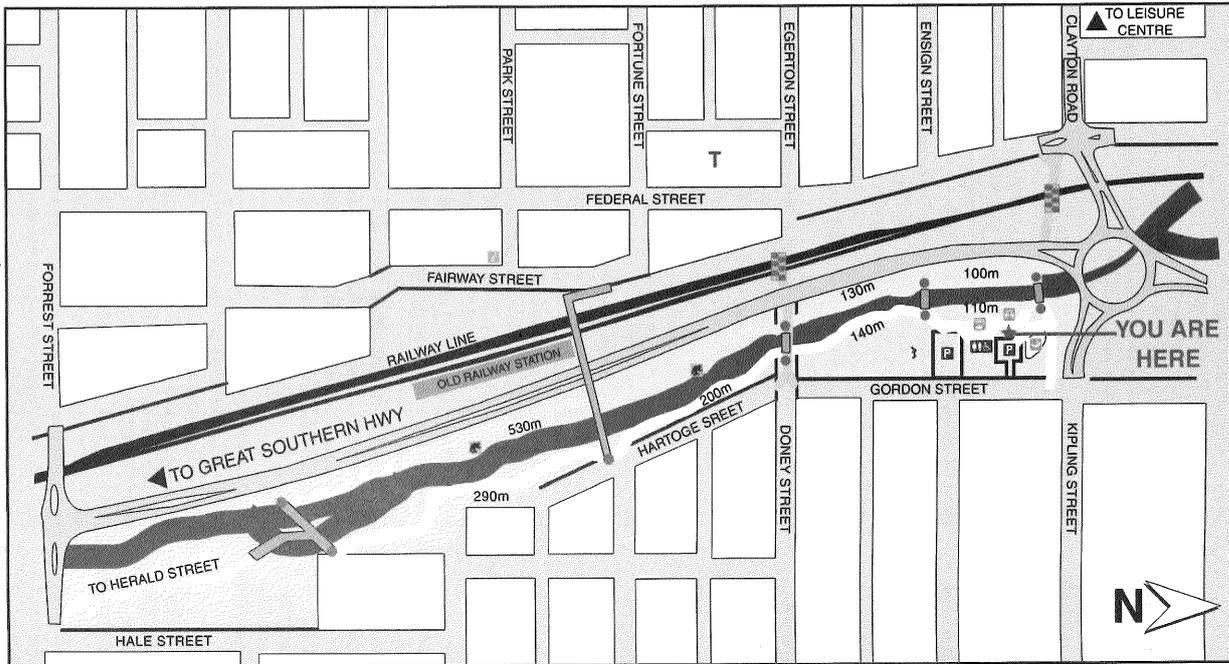
Other designs were drawn by local artists, and the tiles depicting Aboriginal events were done by Aboriginal students at TAFE art and design classes. Local artists from Narrogin Ats Group and Narrogin TAFE then transferred the drawings to the stones ready for sand-blasting.

As a final touch, colour was added where appropriate to enhance the designs.
Start at the Birth Stone just south of Newton House BBQ and take a walk along the Centenary Pathway. You will discover an intriguing collection of stories about Narrogin's first century through the creative imagination of its people.



Drawing by Rosalie Okely

imespant narrogin



Town of Narrogin

Pathway is indicated by white line

PATHWAY MILESTONES

1. WATER – 1892

The first task of the newly gazetted Narrogin Roads Board was to sink a well in Federal Street, near the present Shire office. The population of Narrogin at the time was officially 50. Those early settlers relied on wells for water, but often it became saline.

2. ABORIGINES – 1893

The Noongar people had lived their traditional life in this area since earliest times, but in the late 1800s their footprints began to merge with those of the new settlers.

3. EARLY SCHOOLS – 1894

Narrogin's first Government school – later the Courthouse, Agricultural Bank and the Museum – dates from 1894. The teacher at her desk, with blackboard on easel and map on the wall, reminds us also of the many one-teacher schools in this district.

4. FIRST POST OFFICE – 1895

The first post office and postmaster's dwelling were built in the early 1890s on the corner of Fortune & Rowley streets. The present post office was built next door in 1912.

5. RAILWAYS – 1896

The township of Narrogin began when the Great Southern Railway was built. In 1896 the State Government bought out the private company, and the line between Beverley and Albany became part of the West Australian Government Railway.

6. NICHOLAS BUSHALLA – 1897

The bottles on this tile symbolize the achievements of Nicholas Bushalla. Besides erecting an Aerated Waters factory, he built the Duke of York Hotel, a brewery, a general store and the skating rink which became the Amusu picture theatre.

7. MALLETT BARK – 1898

Cutting the bark of the Brown Mallet provided a livelihood for some early settlers. The bark was exported in ground form from Fremantle to Germany and used in tanning.

8 EARLY SHOWS – 1899

This child's picture of a prize animal and a band remind us of the exhibits and the fun of the annual shows. In Narrogin they date back to 1899 when the first one was promoted by the Agricultural Alliance.

9. ABORIGINAL STATUS – 1900

Here, graphically depicted, is the plight of Aborigines at the turn of the century, when Section 127 of the Constitution excluded them from the Census. In other words, they were not included in the population figures of Australia.

10. THE FIRST CHURCHES – 1901

This magnificent window symbolizes the Christian vision which inspired the people who built Narrogin's first churches to the glory of God. The Anglican was first in 1901, followed by the Baptist in 1902 and the Methodist in 1904.

11. FARMING – 1902

This tile, portraying the four seasons, reminds us that farming has always been Narrogin's major primary industry. The Narrogin Agricultural College had its origin back in 1902 as an Experimental Farm.

12. BANKING – 1903

Here is a child's tribute to the banking services of Narrogin, several of which were present from the first years of this century – the National Bank, the West Australian Bank and the Union Bank (now the ANZ).

13. CORNWALL HOTEL – 1904

Built by William Cornwall (Junior), the hotel dates from 1904. Do the stars represent the famous players from when the Cornwall Hotel was home for the Imperial and Railway Football Clubs – with popular publican Les Fenn as the moon?

14. THE NARROGIN OBSERVER – 1905

This drawing suggests the excitement when the first copies of Narrogin's second newspaper were distributed on 26 August, 1905 from a small iron shed. In 1926 the Observer moved to a brick building in Fortune Street where it continued as a family business with its founding editor Edgar Sydney Hall, his wife and three sons for over seventy years.

15. FIRST MAYOR – 1906

After Narrogin had been declared a municipality on 13 April, 1906, William Edward Carew Moss, a surveyor, became the first mayor (1906-1909). He and the six councillors held their first meeting on 11 June that year.

16. MORE SETTLERS – 1907

In the first two decades of this century major railway lines were built out from Narrogin – westwards to Collie, then eastwards to Wickepin and beyond. More settlers flooded in to open up the new lands for farming.

17. THE TOWN HALL – 1908

As this happy tile records, the major event of 1908 was the Grand Municipal Ball held just a week before Christmas on 18 December to celebrate the opening of the Narrogin Town Hall.

18. TRADING IN NARROGIN – 1909

One of the major stores in the early days was the Narrogin Trading and Agency Co. in Fortune Street, built by Hugh Marsh in 1909, and rebuilt after a fire in 1922. Others included Mannings (opposite the town hall) and Schillings (now part of Parrys) in Federal Street.

19. SKATING – 1910

This intriguing tile recalls the days when skating was a major recreation for young and old. It was enjoyed at Bushalla's rink in Egerton Street and in the Empire Hall in Egerton Street (now Doney Street) opposite the Cornwall Hotel.

20. CATHOLIC CHURCH – 1911

In 1911 the official population of Narrogin had increased to 923. This tile is a child's tribute to Bishop Gibney addressing the congregation in 1908 during the official opening and blessing of the original St Matthew's Church.

21. HARDSHIP – 1912

Restrictions on possum trading in 1910 and mallet-bark stripping in 1912 meant that two ventures by which Aborigines could earn money had been curtailed.

22. ROAMING STOCK – 1913

Lack of adequate fencing led to cows and goats – even bulls – often roaming Narrogin streets in the early days. Straying stock were also a common hazard on the railway lines.

23. ELECTRIC LIGHTING – 1914

This imaginative tile happily echoes the delight of Narrogin people when electricity generated at the flour mill first powered lighting for the town in 1914.

24. NURSE KELLIHER – 1915

From 1914 to 1929 Nurse Bessie Kelliher ran a private hospital at Vailima, the attractive building which her brother Dan had erected for her and which still stands in Havelock Street.

25. THE BULL – 1916

This striking tile recalls a memorable event during the first world war – the Municipal Council purchasing a bull to service the town cows!

26. FIRST ANZAC SERVICE – 1917

Narrogin's first observance of Anzac Day was held in 1917. It took the form of a service conducted by the combined Protestant churches in the town hall, with an impassioned address by the mayor Dr Mackie.

27. BUTTER FACTORY – 1918

In September 1918 the Great Southern Butter Company came into being with 1,000 shares. Opened the next year by the Colonial Secretary, the butter factory flourished for many years but closed in the early 1950s when better prices for wool and other farm products led to a decline in dairying.

28. PNEUMONIC INFLUENZA – 1919

Following World War I, a lethal form of influenza swept around the world in 1919. Despite vigorous attempts at quarantine the disease invaded WA and Narrogin as a railway junction was at risk. There were more than 500 cases here and several deaths.

29. ST GEORGE'S BATHS – 1920

From the 1920s to the 1940s St George's Baths were very popular. Built by local engine driver George Hewitt at the junction of Fox and Gordon Streets they were fed by a spring near the creek.

30. SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE – 1921

In 1921 the Agriculture Department's Farm School (originally the Experimental Farm) was taken over by the Education Department as the School of Agriculture. It became the Agricultural Wing of the local high school in 1955, before achieving independent college status in 1981.

31. HORDERN HOTEL – 1922

The Hordern Hotel was established by the "Father of Narrogin", Michael Brown. The original hotel was replaced with a two storey building in 1905. This was gutted by fire in January 1922 and the present building which replaced it was claimed at the time to be the finest hotel outside of Perth.

32. DOLL FACTORY – 1923

When luxuries were scarce after World War I a cottage industry established by the Burkitt family at 18 Glyde Street flourished from 1918 to 1923. The dolls they made are now rare collectors' items.

33. TOWN RESERVOIR – 1924

Life was easier by 1924 with the Narrogin Water Scheme using water from the new town reservoir. It had been opened by the Premier Sir James Mitchell on 25th November 1922. However the reservoir was to give many problems in later years.

34. NARROGIN POTTERY – 1925

English painter John Barker was brought to Narrogin to manage the pottery in Earl Street near the original saleyards. Although his creation "Alexandra Rose" became world famous, faults with the kiln forced the pottery's closure after a year.

35. FLOUR MILL – 1926

The original mill, dating from 1903 and producing "Kangaroo" flour, was replaced in 1926 by a larger structure for the Great Southern Flour Milling Co. which produced "Henco" and "Dingo" flour. The mill, closed in 1979, was demolished in 1983.

36. WOOL – 1927

Average wool prices fluctuated wildly: a high of 37 pence per pound in 1924-25, down to 23 pence in 1926, a rise to 28 pence in 1927, then the slump – 24 pence in 1928, 14 pence in the early 1930s.

37. FLOODS – 1928

Several times in Narrogin's history, and particularly in 1926, 1939, 1945 and 1955, our creek has flooded and local rail and road services have been badly dislocated. However, water has never reached the eaves!

38. GREAT DEPRESSION – 1929

How well this simple drawing conveys the atmosphere of despair which was so prevalent during the Great Depression. Beginning in 1929, its effects were still being felt in Narrogin when World War II broke out 10 years later.

39. BUSHFIRES – 1930

Bushfires have been a frequent hazard for farmers over the years. Some have been disastrous. They were often caused by sparks from locomotives, particularly when burning Collie coal.

40. TALKING PICTURES – 1931

Early black-and-white films were silent, although a biomegascope singing and talking machine had been used at the National Pictures from 1910. Great interest was shown when E.A. Menzies introduced the first real "talkies" to the Amusu theatre in Egerton Street in 1931.

41. NEW HOSPITAL – 1932

This tile commemorating the opening of the new Government hospital in May 1934 also pays a tribute to the local Red Cross members who were particularly active during the two world wars.

42. HARD TIMES – 1933

The hat on the gate post and the locked gate are dramatic symbols of the effects of the Depression on local farmers in the 1930s. Some sold out; others simply returned the farm to the Agricultural Bank and walked off.

43. POWER HOUSE – 1934

In 1934 the Municipal Council took over provision of electricity to the town from the new power house on the corner of Fairway and Forrest Streets.

44. THE C.W.A. – 1935

This tile pays a tribute to the achievements of the Country Women's Association. The local branch of the organization had been established for 6 years in 1935.

45. WATER RESTRICTIONS – 1936

Although the annual rainfall in 1936 was an average 518.7mm Narrogin's reservoir was not adequate for a growing population. Without enough water for houses and gardens water restrictions were often imposed in the days before the piped water reached Narrogin from Collie twenty years later.

46. HARSH CONTROL – 1937

The Native Administration Act proclaimed in 1937 gave the Department of Native Affairs absolute control over "natives", including the right to place children in institutions and the power to begin breeding out "colour" in the Aboriginal community.

47. FLYNN OF THE INLAND – 1938

Many notable people have been honoured with civic and public welcomes at the town hall over the years. The honour was extended to the Rev. John Flynn, founder of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, when he visited Narrogin in 1938.

48. SECOND WORLD WAR – 1939

This young person's image of World War II may not reflect the Narrogin experience, but it vividly suggests the violence and horror to which many local citizens were exposed elsewhere in the grim years from 1939-1945.

49. CARROLUP – 1940

Many Aborigines from Narrogin, especially children, were among those sent to the settlement at Carrolup, near Katanning, from 1915 to 1922. It was reopened in 1940 and is now known for the remarkable Carrolup child art exhibition which influenced the development of many Noongar artists in the South West.

50. MILITARY CAMP – 1941

For several years during World War II artillery, signals and other army units used the Narrogin Greater Sports Ground as a training camp. The men lived in rows of tents.

51. EVACUEES – 1942

After the Japanese invasion of the countries north of Australia evacuees came to Narrogin in 1942 from Perth, Darwin and other coastal areas. A few, as this tile commemorates, were refugees from Singapore.

52. TEACHERS – 1943

This story was related by Mrs Lorna Metzke who began her career at the one-teacher school at Tincurro in 1943. Because of transport problems, a railway length-runner would take her and other teachers from Narrogin to their schools on his hand-operated trolley.

53. FARM WOMEN – 1944

Although few, if any, local farms were highly mechanised in World War II, this young person's drawing recalls the valuable role played by women when their men were away in the forces.

54. PEACE AT LAST – 1945

After six long years of war, peace was declared in 1945. It was a time to sing for joy!

55. APEX AND "US FELLOWS" – 1946

In 1946 the Narrogin Apex Club charter dinner was held on 22 May, and pipe-smoking Charlie Mitchell founded the Us Fellows Football Club. With their sisters (Us Girls) serving the oranges, local boys played in Mitchell's and Kuhlmann's cow paddocks.

56. THE GARDEN CITY – 1947

The Observer coined the phrase "Garden City of the West" for Narrogin in the 1930s because of its splendid public and private gardens. Champion roses have been grown here, and the Horticultural Society began in 1947.

57. THE MIGRANTS – 1948

From 1948 European migrants, mostly displaced persons, began arriving in Narrogin. Many lived in the tent city on the Wagin Road. Most had unpronounceable "wheelbarrow" names such as the Samulkiewicz family – known to all local Aussies as Summer Cabbages.

58. ROTARY CLUB AND AMUSU – 1949

The Rotary Club of Narrogin was chartered on 14 September, 1948. In those days before TV and video, the Amusu Theatre was keeping crowds happy with such films as Two Blondes and a Redhead.

59. ABORIGINAL HOUSES – 1950

For many years the only accommodation for Aborigines was the appalling humpies on the Reserve. However, things began to change when the first house in town was allotted to Mrs. Penny at 73 Fox Street in the early 1950s.

60. AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX – 1951

On Labour Day, 5 March, 1951, Narrogin hosted the Commonwealth Jubilee Australian Grand Prix, the first time the national event had been held in WA. The course included much of West Narrogin between Lefroy and Fairway Streets, Forrest Street and Clayton Road.

61. GORDON – 1952

Ten locomotives imported by the Great Southern Railway – and given names such as Torbay, Mount Barker and The Governor – later became the WAGR's T class. Gordon (T170) was the last to be withdrawn, in February 1952.

62. MEMORIAL GATES – 1953

The gates to the Greater Sports Ground are dedicated to the memory of Tom and Edward Hardie. On 26th September, 1953 they were unveiled by Charles Mitchell, brother of former Premier Sir James Mitchell who had opened the ground in 1921.

63. NATURALIZATION – 1954

The first naturalization ceremony conducted by Local Governing authorities in Narrogin took place in the Mayor's Parlour on 30 November, 1954 when Mrs. Anna Vavra and Mrs. Rudy Tassell swore allegiance and were presented with bibles bound in scarlet leather.

64. HIGH SCHOOL – 1955

The long-awaited Narrogin Agricultural High School was officially opened on 4 May, 1955. It adopted the motto "Be Thorough" from the Narrogin School of Agriculture which then formed a wing of the new school until 1981.

65. THE COLLIE PIPELINE – 1956

On 10 February, 1956 the Hon. John Tonkin officially opened the pipeline from the Wellington Dam near Collie and turned the valve to release water into the Narrogin Dam. A regular supply of water was assured at last.

66. NARROGIN POOL – 1957

January school holidays in 1957 saw many children using Narrogin swimming pool for the first time. The pool was opened by Premier Hawke on 15th December, 1956. This tile depicts an exciting event at the pool on 1st March, 1960 when world champion Jon Konrads beat State gold medalist Kevin O'Halloran in a 110-yard freestyle demonstration event at the pool before 1500 spectators.

67. THE RESERVE – 1958

Town Reserves were introduced when farms displaced Aboriginal people as newcomers took over land and waterholes and clearing the land destroyed traditional Aboriginal food sources. Many Noongars were still living on the reserve on Clayton Road in 1958.

68. DAWN FRASER – 1959

1959 was a notable year. Both the Railway Institute Hall and the new stockyards were opened – and the great Dawn Fraser unofficially smashed the local 55-yard open freestyle record in our pool on 22 March.

69. THE RESERVE – 1960

Many Noongars moved from Clayton Road to the Reserve on Cuballing Road in 1960-61 as the housing there was a little better. The Type 64 homes had cement floors, an electric light in the kitchen and a water tap outside.

70. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE – 1961

The Department of Agriculture's Narrogin district office was officially opened by the Hon. C.D. Nalder on 11 August, 1967. It then had a staff of 15 officers serving an area of 10,000 square miles – from Brookton to Wagin, from Boddington to Corrigin and Kondinin.

71. CHILDBIRTH – 1962

The pioneer women were helped by midwives and nannies. Then came the Vailima, and finally the Maternity Wing of the Narrogin Regional Hospital which was opened on 23rd March, 1962.

72. HIGH SCHOOL HOSTEL – 1963

Caloola House Hostel was officially opened in June 1963, and Reillys of Narrogin presented the first driver-training car in 1966 – a new Vauxhall Viva, not the vintage model shown on the tile!

73. BARRY CABLE – 1964

Many local footballers went on to play in the big time, but none is more famous than Barry Cable, who once lived in a house on this park. His Sandover Medal in 1964 was a red-letter day for Narrogin!

74. KARINYA – 1965

The delightful atmosphere of rest and peace depicted on this tile is a fine tribute to the care bestowed on the elderly at Karinya Hostel, the first five units of which opened in December 1965.

75. ART GROUP – 1966

Spinning, painting, china painting, pottery – here is a fine acknowledgement of the energies and talents of the Narrogin Art Group which was formed in 1966.

76. RECOGNITION – 1967

1967, the year in which Australians began to add postcodes to their addresses, saw a referendum held in May. This led to repeal of Section 127 of the Constitution, enabling Aborigines to be counted in the national census.

77. LIONS AND MECKERING – 1968

The Lions Club of Narrogin received its charter in the Railway Institute on 7 September, 1968. Some five weeks later, on 14 October, the flour mill swayed and people trembled as tremors were felt from the Meckering earthquake.

78. THE CLOCK AND THE MOON – 1969

In 1969, the year Tom Hogg and Ernie Wiese unveiled the Pioneers Memorial Clock, another two men, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, set foot on the moon, keeping Narrogin people glued to their black and white television sets.

79. OLYMPIC POOL – 1970

1970 was another significant year; the Olympic-size pool came into use, the Hon. A.F. Griffith opened the new courthouse on 30 October and Will Manning opened a new high school hostel wing on 6 November.

80. FIRE STATION – 1971

The Narrogin Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed in 1924 and the original fire station, corner of Egerton and Earl Streets, opened in 1926. The new station was officially opened by Chief Secretary R.H.C. Stubbs on 27th August, 1971, with ribbons cut by Mrs. R. Twaddle.

81. ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS – 1972

1972 saw the beginning of improved conditions for Aborigines with the formation of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. In September local member Will Manning had appealed strongly in the Legislative Assembly for a select committee to conduct an inquiry.

82. SNOW – 1973

Snow rarely falls in Narrogin, but it did on 5 September 1973 when the maximum temperature was 6.3C. It also fell on 24 September 1971, max. 8.8 causing postponement of the high school's athletics carnival, and again in 1992 when the Geneive Car Rally from Perth to Albany was held on the Great Southern Highway. Maximum temperature was 7.7C and it was the latest snowfall ever recorded in WA.

83. GOLF CLUB – 1974

The Narrogin Golf Club, begun in 1906, had its new clubhouse and course officially opened by senior life member Joe Sussex on 6 April, 1974. Leo Graham, who had done much of the planning, was made a life member.

84. COLOUR TELEVISION – 1975

The advent of colour TV in March 1975 brought excitement for viewers and increased business for television hire and repair firms. The Amusu, already hard-pressed by the Clayton Drive-in operating six nights each week, now closed after some 65 years.

85. THE MUSEUM – 1976

The present museum building began as the first Government school in 1894, housed the Agricultural Bank (later the R&I) from 1925 to 1949, was twice used as the courthouse, and opened as the Old Courthouse Museum on 18 September, 1976.

86. COLES – 1977

The famous shopping trolley has been a common sight in Narrogin since the Coles New World Supermarket opened for business on 3 May, 1977, being the 35th to be opened in WA since the first at Fremantle in 1969.

87. CYCLONE ALBY – 1978

When Cyclone Alby swept through Narrogin on 4 April, 1978 it may not have resembled a child's top, but the high winds were still very spectacular, causing dust storms, fires, unroofed buildings, fallen trees, broken fencing and an 18-hour power failure.

88. TRIPLE WHITE – 1979

A brilliant win by Mrs. Joan Carr's Triple White, ridden by South Australian Rodney Angel, in the Dunhill Championship Three-Day Event in Narrogin on 17-19 August, 1979 took both horse and rider closer to Moscow Olympics selection.

89. AIRSTRIP LIGHTS – 1980

The flare path at the Narrogin airstrip was officially opened in August 1979 by Dr Harold Dicks, past president of the R.F.D.S. and husband of the legendary "Sugar-bird Lady". Night-time use, especially by the air ambulance, was now much safer.

90. THE WAY THROUGH – 1981

Narrogin's history book "The Way Through" was launched by Mr Will Manning, Freeman of the Town on Sunday 3 May 1981. It was written by Mr Ossie Pustkuchen, curator of the Old Courthouse Museum, assisted by his wife Edith.

91. FLOODS – 1982

Though not as damaging here as in Katanning and other areas, the record-breaking January rains (155.4mm) in 1982 caused Narrogin farmers to lose an estimated 30,000 sheep worth some \$300,000, quite apart from soil erosion and destroyed fencing.

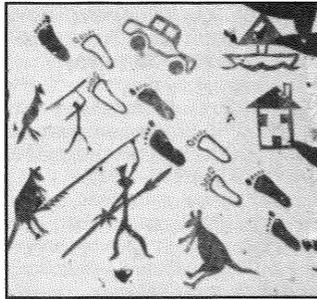
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The Centenary Pathway

A century of local history from 1892 is depicted in the 100 black granite tiles in the 1km pathway.



Take a walk along the Centenary Pathway to discover an intriguing collection of stories about life in Narrogin over 100 years



Artist Bernd Kaiser worked with local school children to research, design and lay the tiles.

