



City of Greater Geraldton  
Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places  
Place Record

Area: Mullewa	Place Number: 43	Category: 1
Assessment Date: 23/03/1995	Last Revision Date: 09/03/2012	
HCWA Number: 5109	Asset ID: MCH126655	

PLACE DETAILS

Name: Butterabby Graves  
Other Names:

### SITE DETAILS

Lot No.:	Lot 15	Assess No.:	577
Reserv No.:		Vol/Fol:	1136/459
Dia/Plan:	8297		

### USE OF PLACE

Original Use:	Grave Site		
Current Use:	Grave Site		
Ownership:	K.P. Keeffe		
Public Access:	Yes	Occupied:	Not Occupied

### DESCRIPTION

Walls: Stone (Rendered)      Roof: Comugated Iron  
Condition: Not applicable      Integrity:  
Original fabric:  
Modifications:

Located approximately 16km south of Mullewa and 1.8km west of the Mullewa-Mingenew Road and set on a low hill is the site of the Butterra bby

stock during the summer months. One such pastoralist, John S Davis of Tibbradden, took up pastoral leases to the east at Kockatea, Wooderamong and Mullewa Spring. During the early 1860s there had been minor skirmishes recorded in the vicinity between the local aboriginal peoples and white settlers, mainly shepherds, overland, watering holes and grazing stock. However the situation escalated with the spearing of John Lewis, a shepherd of Davis', at Kockatea Spring on 17 February 1864. The culprit was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment at Rottnest Gaol. However, at the time the Champion Bay Resident Magistrate noted in his report to the Colonial Secretary that a strong deterrent would be for death sentences to be carried out on the spot the murder was committed. Meanwhile James Rudd, a former Conditional Pardon man took up a pastoral lease at Butterabby, about 6kms west of Kockatea, where he was assisted by Thomas Bott, a ticket-of-leave man. On 22 August 1864, Bott was attacked by 8 Aboriginal men and, although taken into the Champion Bay Depot Hospital he subsequently died of his injuries. Not long afterwards, Rudd was attacked by a small group of Aboriginals and killed. Meanwhile Constable Watson arrested 5 Aboriginal men in relation to the first killing. The prisoners were shipped to Perth for their trial where they were found guilty of the murder of Bott and sentenced to death. The prisoners were escorted back to Butterabby where a small crowd of twelve aboriginal people witnessed the hanging executions of the five men from a nearby tree on 28 January 1865. The bodies were buried at the site. The authorities hoped that the witnesses would communicate with their people about what had occurred and it would deter any future attacks. With closer agricultural settlement occurring in the Mullewa District in the early 1900s, the land on which Butterabby Graves is situated was taken up by John Keeffe in 1912 as Victoria Location 1920. Since then the property has been further subdivided and has changed hands a number of times within the same family. The memorial stone was erected on the site by Bert Keeffe in 1973. Listed as an Aboriginal Site in May 1975, in recent years a small shelter shed was erected on the site for the convenience of visitors.

### HISTORIC THEMES

HCWA:	103 Racial contact and interaction
	403 Law and order
	601 Aboriginal people
AHC:	7.6.4 Dispensing justice
	7.6.8 Administering indigenous affairs
	9.7.3 Remembering the dead

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Butterabby Graves has considerable historic value as a place which provides evidence of the attempted resistance by Aboriginal peoples to the spread of European pastoral expansion in Western Australia. The execution and burial of the five Aboriginal people is an example of Colonial Government policies to deter indigenous resistance and as such provides evidence of the treatment of Aboriginal people under colonial law. Further the place is representative of isolated graves in rural WA.

## MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

Photo Description:  
6/10/2011  
T Henkel  
Granite memorial stone at Butterabby Graves.