

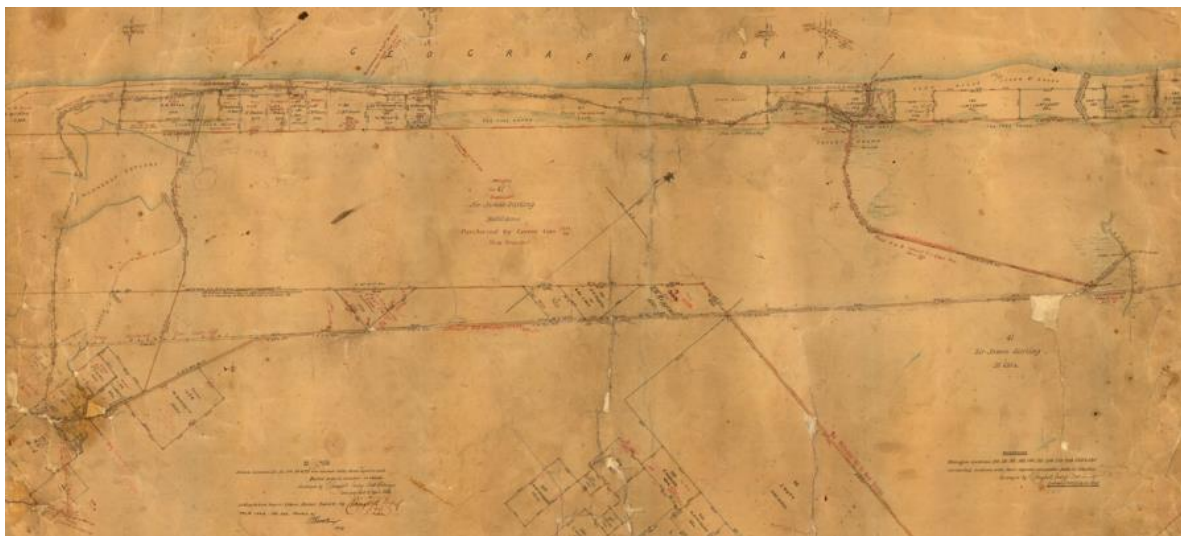
Ludlow Post Office

With the opening up of better overland tracks between Perth and Bunbury in the early 1850's it was deemed safer to transport the mail overland than the more treacherous coastal shipping routes.

Between 1852 and 1854 the Bunbury to Vasse mail contract was undertaken by Robert Lockhart, the mail at first being carried on foot. ([Western Mail, 5 January 1933](#))

In October 1854 it was reported that a bridge had been completed across the Ludlow River, and that 3 other small rivers nearer the Vasse were about to be bridged over. "When this line of communication with this district is thus opened a great boon will have been conferred upon it." ([Perth Inquirer, 4 October 1854](#))

Map below from 1865-66, showing the original Capel Bridge and causeway over the Capel River and Yanget Swamp, with the connecting track over to Geographe Bay. The track then follows the coast passing the original shipping and landing place and squatter's locations. It then heading inland to get around the main body of the Wonnerup Estuary via McCourt's Ford or Bryan's Ford with both fords finishing near the Ludlow Bridge. A later track which bypasses the beach, between Ludlow and the Capel Bridge, named the Georgory Marked Line was added by J. Forrest in 1901.



In 1874 George Rich had the Bunbury to Vasse contract for 5 years. He employed John Robinson who drove the first Cobb & Co. Style coach in the South West. ([EG Davis, Harvey History Online website](#))

The Capel River once flowed into the Wonnerup Estuary via the Yanget Swamp, the river was diverted into Geographe Bay through the Higgins Cut in the 1880's. This enabled farming on the coastal plain that was previously inundated during winter. ([Government of Western Australia, Department of Water, Factsheet 3, Rural Drainage Networks May 2015](#))

The following Timetable shows the stopping points and times for the year 1880. Note that Capel, or Coolingup as it was known then, was not on this list.

TIME TABLE of Arrival and Departure of Post Office Mails at the General Post Office, Perth, and the offices of Canning, Serpentine, Pinjarrah, Brunswick, Australind, Bunbury, Minninup, Ludlow, Lockville, and Vasse, by the Government Mail Coaches, for the year 1880 :-					
Distance from Perth.	Post Town.	Hours for Mails closing at General Post Office.	Time of arrival at Post Towns.	Hours of Mails closing for Perth.	Time of arrival at Perth.
8	Canning ...	Mondays and Thursdays at 10 a.m.	Mondays & Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.	Tuesdays & Fridays, 2 p.m. ...	Tuesdays & Fridays, at 3:30 p.m.
28	Serpentine ...		Do. 4 p.m. ...	Do. 9:30 a.m. ...	
53	Pinjarrah ...		Do. 8 p.m. ...	Do. 6 a.m. ...	
84	Brunswick ...		Tuesdays & Fridays, 2 p.m.	Mondays & Thursdays 4 p.m. ...	
100	Australind ...		Do. 3 p.m.	Do. 2:30 p.m. ...	
112	Bunbury ...		Do. 4:30 p.m. ...	Do. 1 p.m. ...	
124	Minninup ...		Do. 6:30 p.m. ...	Do. 11 a.m. ...	
134	Ludlow ...		Do. 9:30 p.m. ...	Do. 8 a.m. ...	
139	Lockville ...		Do. 10:30 p.m. ...	Do. 7 a.m. ...	
144	Vasse ...		Do. 12 p.m. ...	Do. 6 a.m. ...	

From 1880, when the Police Department took over the mail service, the Capel Inn, situated half-way between Bunbury and Busselton, became the main coaching station on this route. The original structure was built by Charles Properjohn in 1880. He was awarded a contract as a stopover place with the Royal Mail service, for the tending and foraging of horses. However, with a very small local population, the inn did not prosper. Following Properjohn's bankruptcy in 1882, Thomas Larkin acquired the property and took over the contract with the Southern Mail. The Minninup Post Office, which was near the beach between Capel and Bunbury, operated from 1868 until 1882 at which time it was relocated to Capel. ([Harvey History Online, Early Mail Services in the South-West of WA \(1829-1901\)](#), Irma Walter, 2019)

Ludlow – William Moriarty, a bricklayer at the Capel River, ran the Post Office at this stopping place on the Bunbury to Busselton route from 13 August 1870. A daughter-in-law Mrs Mary Moriarty took over on 1 January 1890, followed by another daughter-in-law, Mrs Bridget Moriarty, from 1 February 1896.

The Boyanup to Busselton railway line was opened in November 1894. ([The Western Mail, Saturday 24 November 1894](#))

In 1888, due mainly to costs, it was decided that the Police Department would no longer control the South-West mail services, which in future would be contracted out by the State to private individuals. This system lasted until March 1901, when the Commonwealth took over the service. By that time the bulk of the mail was being carried on the South-West railways, but was still distributed to outlying areas by mail contractors. ([Harvey History Online, Early Mail Services in the South-West of WA \(1829-1901\)](#), Irma Walter, 2019)

Bridget Frances Moriarty, Postmistress, Ludlow, called upon to retire from the Public Service, from 1st November, 1911. Offices Abolished: Postmistress, Ludlow.

Both the above were published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, 2 December 1911.

Thomas Larkin did not sell this property at this time, for he was still living at Ludlow Bridge in 1872 when he unsuccessfully applied for a 'Colonial Wine and Fermented Liquor Licence', and in 1874 when in a newspaper notice he was warning people from driving stock on his land.

Larkin had an auction sale of the Capel Inn, which he owned at the time, along with his Ludlow properties in March 1886. It was said that there was no bids for the Ludlow properties. Could it have been the Larkin properties that were given to Thomas and Bridget Moriarty as a wedding present in 1886 (as per Moriarty family history?)

At some stage both of the Larkin properties, Loc. 26 and Loc. 64, did change ownership. The Capel Rate Book for 1914-15 shows that these two properties were owned by the Moriarty's. It also states that they still had ownership in 1921.

FOR SALE.

A FARM of 65 acres, in fee simple, 50 of which are fenced and partly cleared; 1½ acre trenched, and 1 acre planted with vines, in full bearing. It is favourably situated on the Ludlow River, facing the main road from Bunbury to the Vasse, and has a run adjoining of 1,000 acres, with plenty of good water, well suited for sheep and cattle.

It has a good 4-roomed Cottage close to the road, and all necessary outhouses for farming operations. On account of its situation, (11 miles from Busselton and 20 from Bunbury), it is well suited for a Roadside Inn or Store.

ALSO,—

A Run of 3,000 acres on the Donnelly, well-known for its superior pasture land, and ample supply of water.

For further particulars and terms
Apply to
THOMAS LARKIN.
Ludlow River, Vasse, }
27th June, 1866.

The Inquirer and Commercial News 4 Jul 1866



Map dating pre-1872 showing the main tracks (dotted lines) leading across the Ludlow Bridge. It shows three routes, one that follows the beach, a second that roughly follows the Ludlow North Rd route passing Connells, and a third via Payne's Mill on the Capel River. Payne's Mill was not an official mail stopping place, so I think the most likely mail route would have been the Ludlow North Rd route. Of interest to map shows Loc. 74 & 57, both owned by the Moriary's, also a Location up the Ludlow River named "Yokonup"

