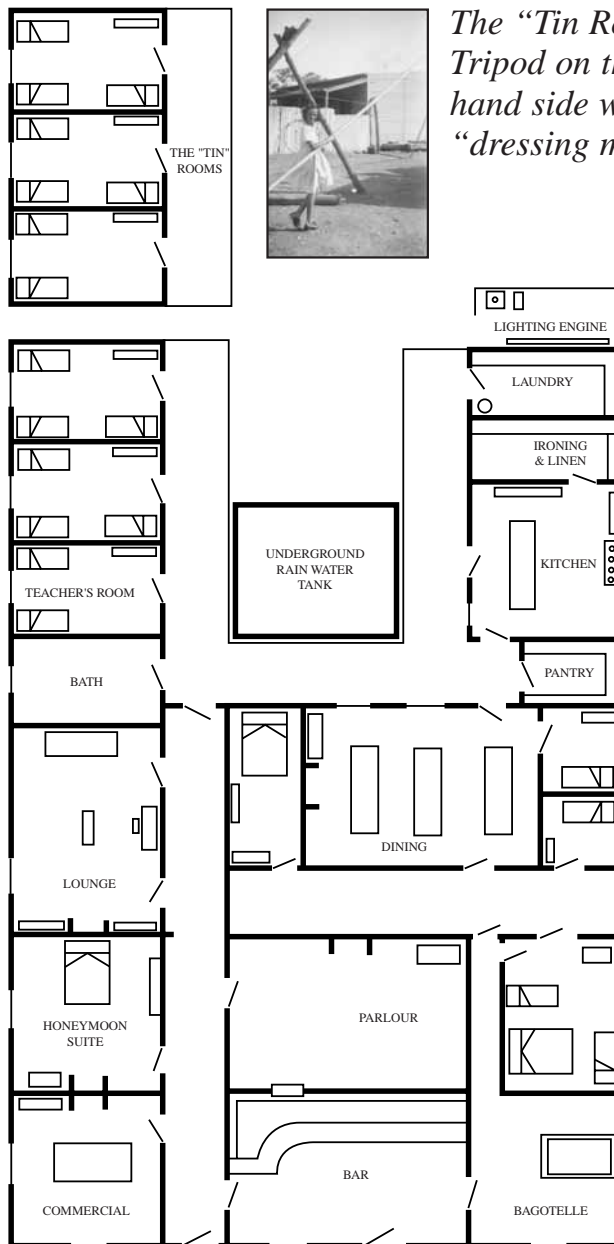


The Royal Victoria Hotel

The land for this hotel was purchased on 19 July 1878. The hotel's early days were quite unsettled. During the first eight years there were two owners and eight lessees, seven of the lessees dying early in their contracts. Practically every year thereafter there was a change of owner, licensee, lessee or mortgager. It was in 1942 when the legendary local Beltana identity, Lance Nicholls, took over the Royal Victoria Hotel and eventually bought it and maintained it free of mortgage. Lance was also the local grave digger, well digger and general handyman. While he and his sons were away for some time, the hotel kitchen ran out of meat, so his wife Jessie and one of the daughters killed and dressed a sheep to keep the hotel guests satisfied.

Hotels are usually built in central or prominent parts of a township and offer a common meeting ground for socialising where problems are shared and help given. On one occasion a teamster was given assistance by the patrons after his wife and four of his children had died from burns in a house fire. Commercial travellers and stock agents were regular guests and the Bishop of Willochra called quarterly. He would use the Smith of Dunesk Chapel for an evening service, then on the next morning would stride, resplendent with mitre and all, to the chapel again to conduct communion. Lance Nicholls closed the Hotel in 1958. It is now a private residence.



The "Tin Rooms". Tripod on the left hand side was for "dressing meat".



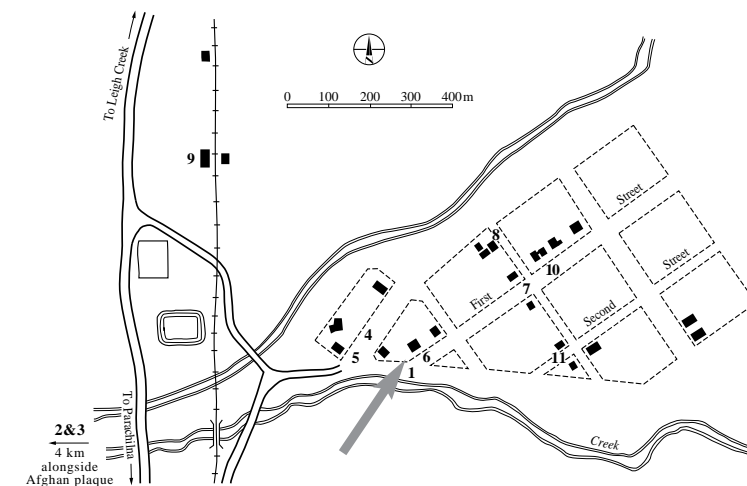
Royal Victoria Hotel 1950



Beltana Tennis team at Royal Victoria Hotel c1940



Local identities at Royal Victoria Hotel



Location Plan



The Beltana Sport & Social Progress Association
and the Beltana Memorial Committee
Supported by the Commonwealth



Heritage South Australia
Government of South Australia