

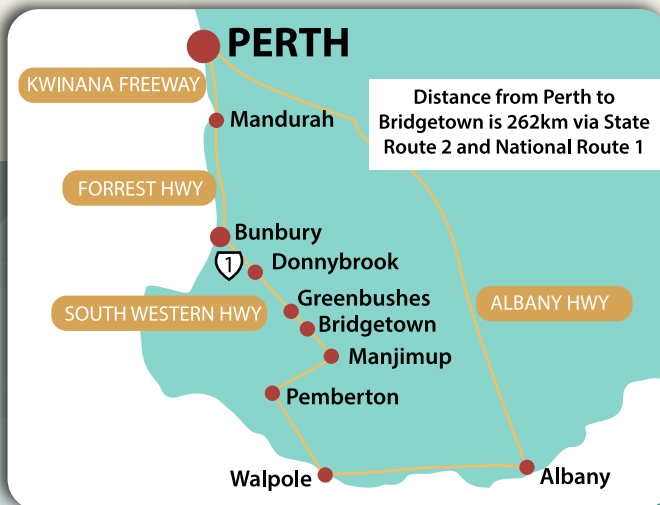
HOW TO GET THERE

Bridgetown is 262km south west of Perth via Bunbury on the South Western Highway, a drive of about 2 and a half hours.

The Little Schools Trail, part of the Geegelup Heritage Trails, is a 212km drive featuring the sites of 25 'little schools' which served the Bridgetown Greenbushes district for various lengths of time between 1903 and 1984. The Geegelup Heritage Trail retraces the early history of the Bridgetown-Greenbushes area and its links with the agricultural, mining and timber industries. Trail brochures are available at the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Visitors Centre and the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes.

Please note:

So that the sites of the 'little schools' can be easily located it is advisable to take GPS. Persons using the Heritage Trails do so at their own risk.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Bridgetown-Greenbushes Visitor Centre
Freecall 1800 777 140
www.bridgetown.com.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Little Schools Trail was originally developed by the Bridgetown Country Women's Association and the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Visitors Centre with support from the Greenbushes Country Women's Association, Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes and the Shire of Boyup Brook.

The review and reprint of the Little Schools Trail has been undertaken by the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes with the support of the Bridgetown Historical Society and the Trails Development Advisory Committee.

The Little Schools Trail map, is available from the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Visitor Centre. It can also be downloaded with GPS coordinates and additional information on each school (including photographs) from www.totaltrails.com.au



Shire of *Bridgetown-Greenbushes* LITTLE SCHOOLS TRAIL



INTRODUCTION

One of the earliest records referring to education in the communities surrounding Bridgetown and Greenbushes was an application to the Education Department for a school by parents, dated November 11, 1902. In early 1903, the Inspector General of Schools, Mr C Jackson, recommended that a “sparsely peopled district school” be established. The district’s first ‘little school’ was established south of Bridgetown, February 2, 1903.

The opening of the Glenlynn School, in a room of a farmhouse near Sunnyside, marked the beginning of the district’s long association with ‘little schools’, which proliferated throughout the surrounding farming communities and townships.

Transport was difficult due to the distances between properties and settlements. Schools sprang up wherever the school aged population was high enough to warrant it. Other schools were formed in conjunction with the establishment of satellite industries such as timber felling.

One of the major concerns for parents, teachers and the Education Department was the maintenance of satisfactory pupil attendance figures. An average of 10 pupils aged between 6 and 14 years residing



Glenlynn- Sunnyside School, photo taken on the School’s porch during October in 1912 (courtesy Mr R. Leigh Smith)

within 3miles (4.8km) of a school was required to warrant a full time school. If the numbers diminished permanently, a ‘little school’ could be reclassified as an Assisted School; functioning on a part time basis in conjunction with another school located close by, a little school could be closed; transferring the pupils to another school or students could take correspondence lessons at home (a Government initiative commencing in 1919).



Teacher and pupils outside Winnejup School in the early 1900s (courtesy Mrs Anne Nix)

TEACHERS

At an Assisted School, whether downgraded or newly established (with a minimum of 8 enrolled students), parents were required to contribute to the teacher’s salary. In the early years, the Education Department paid teachers £7 (\$534.60 today) per child based on monthly attendance figures. Parents of pupils were required to guarantee to meet the balance of the £60 (\$4,582.20) per annum salary and provide free board. Later this salary was increased to £12 (\$916.45) per child with an annual income of £72 (\$5,498.65).

Parents selected teachers from a list of Department approved applicants, often resident ex-teachers returning to their profession or aspiring teachers seeking experience. Parents also provided the

classrooms (for newly established schools) while the Government supplied furniture, consumable materials and equipment.

Teachers usually boarded with parents of pupils, however, some schools provided teachers quarters while other teachers preferred to live in their own home and travel to school on foot, horseback, bicycle and later by car.

STUDENTS

Students usually walked to school through bush paddocks and along dirt roads. One student had to walk 12miles (19km) a day to Hester Siding School and so only attended 3 days per week. Other pupils were lucky enough to ride to school on horseback or in a horse-and-cart while some pupils were required to cross the Blackwood River by boat to attend school.

A Government School Inspector often visited ‘little schools’ in the district to assist teachers with the varied grades they were teaching within a single class room. The School Inspector would also assess students’ work and the conditions of each school.



Kangaroo Gully School Concert in the mid 1940s

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The first classrooms were often a room or veranda off a farmhouse, but later independent school buildings were constructed by parents on private land or on a nearby Reserve. Other schools were built by the Education Department on a Reserve sometimes specially gazetted for school use.

An example of early classroom construction was Brooklyn School, one of the few schools still standing in its original site. The original walls of this school were made of vertical wooden slabs. Later school buildings used horizontal weatherboarding and others used asbestos to form the upper part of the exterior walls. A few of the 'little schools' were made of brick, but this was unusual. The standard corrugated iron roofs were used throughout, often with distinctive tube like ventilation with cone shaped tops for protection. Most classrooms featured a fireplace or potbelly stove for warmth during the cold South West winters.

Alongside the school building stood the vital rain water tank. Most schools cultivated a winter garden as part of their course in nature study. Today, exotic vegetation still flourishes on school sites as evidence of these activities.



Yornup Primary School (courtesy Miss Anne Shute)

DECLINE OF THE LITTLE SCHOOLS

During the early years many 'little schools' closed temporarily, only to reopen as a new generation of children reached school age. 'Little schools' disappeared altogether for a number of reasons including; low pupil attendance, student transfer, teacher illness and fire damage forcing the closure of the Tea Tree School for example, however, the most significant factor for the complete closure of the districts 'little schools' was the advent of the school bus system in 1944, which provided an efficient means of transport for children to attend schools in main town centres, such as Bridgetown and Greenbushes.



School bus service (courtesy Mrs Louie Clarke)

By 1953 all of the districts 'little schools' had closed with the exception of Yornup. Low attendance forced Yornup to close on December 19, 1984. Sadly most of the school buildings have disappeared. Many were dismantled and others were adapted for different purposes such as private homes and community halls. One of the Yornup school buildings was transported to Bridgetown and is currently located behind the Bridgetown Gaol after being used as an extra class room at the Bridgetown Primary School.

*When you're driving down the highway and you see a vacant spot,
See a flagpole and a pine tree and neglected garden plot,
Hear the glory of the trilling of the early morning song,
See a pony saddled ready where the grass is growing long,
Pause, and listen for a moment by the pepperina tree,
Hear the phantom songs of children,
Where the bush school used to be.*



John James Mangan

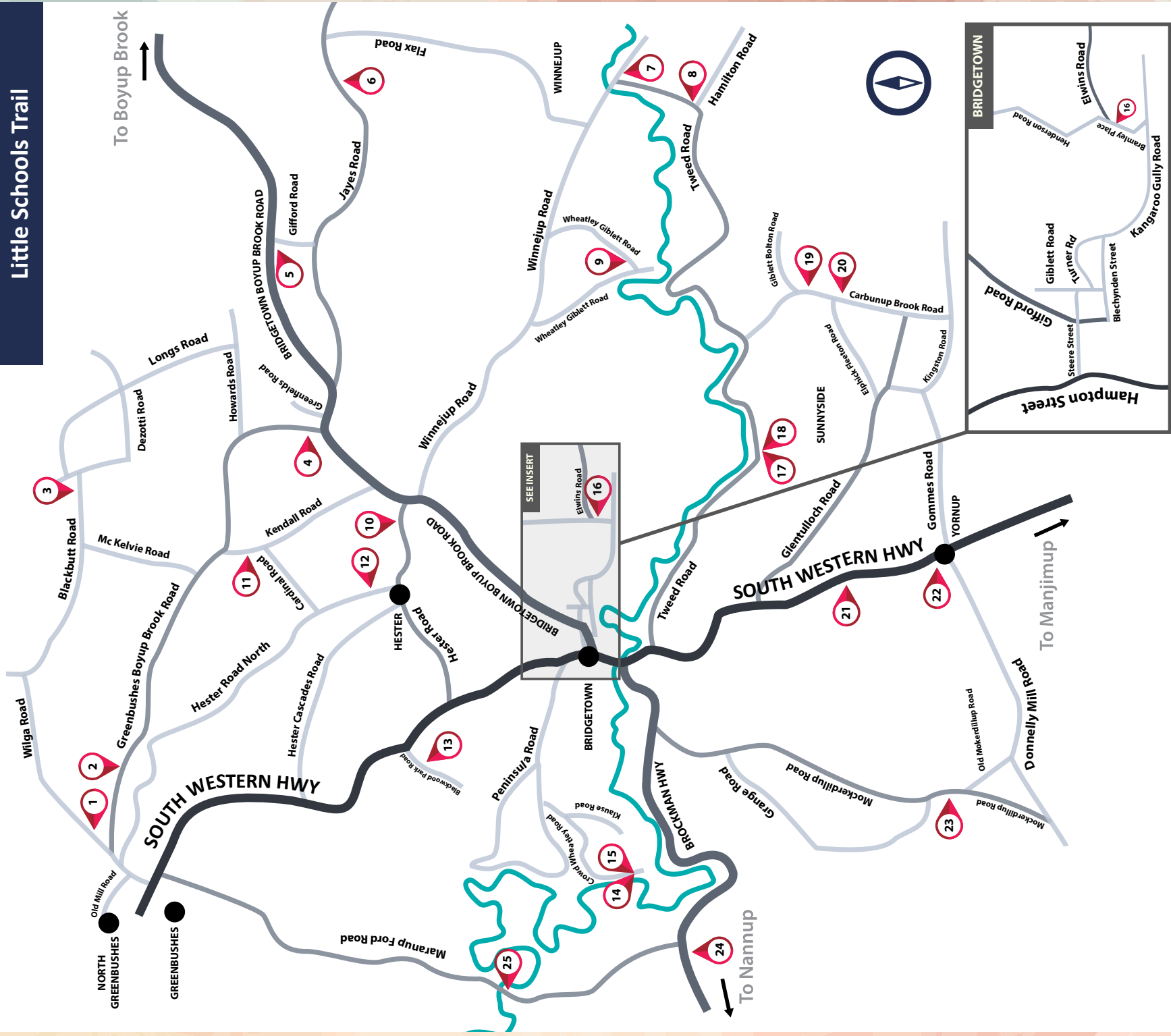


Pupils from the Wandillup School (Courtesy Mrs J. Muir)

THE LITTLE SCHOOLS TRAIL

The Little Schools Trail consists of a 212km drive featuring the sites of 23 'little schools' which served the Bridgetown-Greenbushes district for various lengths of time between 1903 and 1984. The Little Schools Trail, part of the Geegelup Heritage Trail was included in the Heritage Trails network, a community project proposed and supported by the Western Australian Heritage Committee to commemorate the 1988 Bicentenary. The project established a network of Heritage Trails designed to raise awareness and enjoyment of Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

Little Schools Trail



SCHOOL KEY: INCLUDES GPS LOCATIONS

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Greenbushes Mill School 33°49'28.8"S 116°04'48.06"E | 10. Old Hester School 33°54'38.70"S 116°11'04.92"E | 19. Glentulloch School 34°01'09.06"S 116°15'20.40"E |
| 2. Eleura School 33°49'57.18"S 116°06'12.78"E | 11. Group 126 School 33°52'07.02"S 116°10'17.04"E | 20. Brooklyn School 34°01'54.12"S 116°15'05.46"E |
| 3. Group 131 & 132 School 33°49'19.74"S 116°11'41.16"E | 12. Hester School 33°54'19.44"S 116°09'34.14"E | 21. Springside School 34°01'49.08"S 116°04'08.76"E |
| 4. Eight Mile Well School 33°53'11.04"S 116°12'36.84"E | 13. Blackwood Park School 33°54'49.32"S 116°05'58.68"E | 22. Yornup Primary School 34°03'10.74"S 116°10'05.82"E |
| 5. Boronia School 33°52'23.70"S 116°16'21.60"E | 14. Parkville School (new) 33°58'16.92"S 116°03'58.98"E | 23. Wandillup School 34°03'22.98"S 116°05'23.40"E |
| 6. Scammell's School 33°53'36.48"S 116°19'11.70"E | 15. Parkville School (original) 33°58'16.92"S 116°03'58.98"E | 24. West Bridgetown School 33°59'0.12"S 116°02'33.84"E |
| 7. Winneup School 33°58'08.10"S 116°19'37.86"E | 16. Kangaroo Gully School 33°57'36.48"S 116°10'59.70"E | 25. Maranup Ford School 33°56'13.68"S 116°01'25.86"E |
| 8. Mossvale school 33°59'27.30"S 116°19'07.32"E | 17. Glenlynn School 34°00'16.44"S 116°12'20.46"E | |
| 9. Tee Tree School 33°58'20.82"S 116°15'54.18"E | 18. Glenlynn-Sunnyside School 34°00'16.44"S 116°12'20.46"E | |