



Bridgetown Historical Society Inc.

The Old Gaol Museum

148 Hampton St Bridgetown, Western Australia



First Police Station Bridgetown c. 1862

The original Geegelup (the town was renamed Bridgetown after 1868) police camp was opened in 1862, and was located on the Blackwood River at the Lower Blackwood Bridge, with a toilet added around 1866. The opposite bank of the Blackwood River was an important meeting location for local Nyungars, including the Kaniyang, Bibulmun, Wardandi and Mineng groups. The arrival of white settlers destroyed the Nyungars traditional lifestyle and led to increasingly violent massacres. Mounted Constable James Forrest was the first police officer for Geegelup, but his vast district (for patrols) ranged from Donnybrook to Kojonup, to Busselton, and Walpole, stretching his resources thinly.

Police Constable Abraham Moulton, the first permanent police officer (sent from Bunbury to Geegelup), took over in 1865. Moulton had an Aboriginal Assistant and, periodically, Constable John McAlinden, to help maintain law and order. There were police depots at “Jayes” station and Norlup, to hold prisoners whilst he continued on his long patrols.

By the late 1870s the camp had fallen into disrepair. Moulton resigned in 1877 to open a general store. Tenders for a new police station located in the centre of town were called for in 1879, and the

building was completed by James Gibbs in October 1880. Constable Bovell moved into the new premises on 18 October 1880. The new Police Station (known now as The Old Gaol) was built for the grand cost of £423.

Improvements were soon needed for the Gaol. In 1892 tenders were again called for and requested two new cells, an exercise yard and conversion of the existing cells into a change room. The two slot windows in the exercise yard were to be converted into a large, single window, but the changes never eventuated.



Police Officers Bridgetown c.1870s

The Gaol remained as two cells, a store room, kitchen, exercise yard, office, two lobbies and two police living rooms until 1907, when the Public Works Dept. drew up plans for new police quarters adjoining the Gaol. During these works, the two living rooms were demolished and new arches installed in the lobby. There were plans to line the cells and storeroom with jarrah, probably to prevent prisoners picking

the soft mortar out. It is likely that during the 1907 renovations the storeroom's casement window was removed and replaced with bars and shutters to provide an extra cell. Visitors had been accommodated in the storeroom until 1907.



The Police Station and Quarters c. 1940s

Further renovations & alterations were done in 1918, 1926 (the windows were changed to wider bars), 1950 and 1960. The Old Gaol continued to be used for a variety of police business, e.g. licensing, until 1973. It was then used as a storeroom for various organisations until 1992 when BHS began renovations, including hand-splitting 7,000 jarrah shingles to recreate the original roof, and reinstating the verandah and steps.

The Old Gaol – general information

The Main Booking Room

The desk is a 1920s Government Issue and probably used by the police at that time. The cabinet (originally from the Courthouse) was made by Frederick (Polly) Henry Dakin, a cabinet maker who moved to Bridgetown in 1902. His shop was one of three on the current site of Mitre 10 on Steere Street. He also became the town's first

undertaker. Polly Dakin Drive (the road adjacent to the cemetery) is named after him.

The bare patch of wall above the door shows the original mud render over bricks.

The Sitting Room

Used by police for meal breaks, resting and other private activities during quiet periods. The door to the back verandah allowed food to be brought into the building without going into the Main Booking Room.

The Gaol Cells

They were only used for short-term or overnight lockups, not long-term imprisonment. Minor cases were heard next to the Gaol in the Courthouse (now the Community Resource Centre). Major or serious crimes were held overnight in Bridgetown then transferred to be heard in Bunbury courts. Aboriginal prisoners were leg chained to the bar at the back of the cell, and the chain put through the slit window of the exercise yard so that they could sleep outside on the verandah.

The Kitchen

Used by the policeman's wife for all cooking purposes – police, visitors and prisoners, because the police quarters did not have a kitchen. The heat from the bread oven spread through the walls and provided a modicum of heat to prisoners except those forced to sleep on the verandah.

The Walls around the Old Gaol

Originally painted white to enable a torch or spotlight to reflect and highlight an escaping prisoner.

NB - The adjoining police quarters have been renovated to accommodate Shire staff and are not open to the public.

Permanent Exhibitions at The Old Gaol



John Allnutt in his apple orchard c. 1900s

Bridgetown's Apple Industry

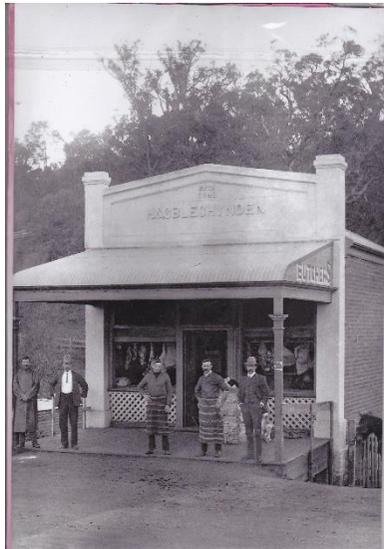
One of Western Australia's early settlers, Mr John Allnutt Snr., came to Australia in 1844 aboard the *Trusty* with his wife Sarah, son John Jnr. and daughter Ann. The family disembarked at Australind, and purchased the Prince of Wales Hotel, which John renamed Henton Cottage. His son, John Allnutt Jnr. (married to Catherine 'Kate' Layman), initially leased the property 'Rosamel' in Australind, but moved to Bridgetown in 1862 after scouting around for good farming conditions for fruit growing. He built 'Nelson Grange', a large house about seven miles south of Bridgetown. John Jnr. immediately established an orchard of Hawthornden apples, which he'd procured from Sydney, and can rightly claim the honour of being the first settler in the region to recognise the potential of the district for fruit-growing.

John Allnutt Jnr. estimated that it cost him between £30 to £40 per acre to clear an area of marri and jarrah for an orchard, but only £3 per acre to clear for grazing land. This was because any tree greater than one foot in diameter was left unfelled. Thus started the industry

upon which Bridgetown grew – in wealth, population and stature. A huge packing shed belonging to West Farmers (now Wesfarmers) once stood behind the current business Blackwood Hydraulics, employing over 200 people to pack fruit that was then sent all over Australia and internationally.

The Butcher's Cart

On 17 March 1930 Mr Maurice Glancy and Mr Hearn purchased the Butchers Shop at 189 Hampton Street Bridgetown, from Mr A W Liddlelow. **The Butcher's Cart** came with the business.



Blechynden's Butchers Shop, Bridgetown c. 1920

The building was built by Herbert Blechynden in the late 1890s and still owned by his wife, who leased it to Glancy and Hearn. The cart was used not only for delivering meat, but also for bringing ice blocks from West Farmers store to the shop's ice box. Glancy bought the first diesel powered cool storage chamber to Bridgetown in 1939.

Meat was delivered to the flatter areas of town in the cart, but for the hillier regions, it was delivered in a basket by Maurice Glancy Jnr. on horseback. Over the many years of usage, the cart had only two drivers, Albert Ettridge and Chum White.

Mr Glancy bought out Mr Hearn's share of the business on 14 January 1936 and it was during this period that the cart was rebuilt. The job was given to a local blacksmiths' shop, Wilkinson and Armstrong. David Armstrong asked his father-in-law, Wally Toyer who was a former wheelwright, to come out of retirement and restore the main body of the cart.

The meat shortage during WWII meant a cessation of deliveries after 1940. The cart was no longer required and was stored in the same shed on the Glancy property in Campbell St Bridgetown, until 1933 when it was given to BHS to restore and care for.

"On behalf of the Glancy Family, I, Maurice Glancy Jnr., give the Old Butcher's Cart to the Bridgetown Historical Society to restore and care for."

Blacksmiths of Bridgetown

A blacksmith is a metalsmith who uses a forge to shape metal with hammers and tongs, bending and cutting it into a variety of objects, for example: gates, grilles, railings, weapons, decorative mirrors, chairs, light fixtures, sculptures, agricultural implements, cooking utensils etc. Some blacksmiths are also farriers who shoe horses or wheelwrights who make wheels or coopers who make barrels. A blacksmith has a broad knowledge of making and repairing objects, from weapons and armory to nails and lengths of chain.



Wilkinson and Armstrong blacksmith's shop, Bridgetown c.1900

Some of the Blacksmiths of Bridgetown:

DENNY, Cornelius	Blacksmith/Springmaker	1871
MORIARTY, John	Blacksmith	1893-01
WOODINGS, George	Blacksmith	1899
PETTY, John	Blacksmith	1899
BLATCHFORD, Charles	Blacksmith	1902-11
SAYERS, W	Blacksmith	1904
TOYER, Walter Owen	Wheelwright	1904-11, 1918-21
MORRISEY, George	Blacksmith	1905-14
ROBSON, Jeremy	Blacksmith	1911-27
MOYES, J J	Blacksmith	1916-19
FIMISTER, N	Blacksmith	1920-26
WILKINSON, A E	Blacksmith	1920-35
O'NEIL, Stephen M	Farrier	1925-37, '39-54
ROBSON, George F	Blacksmith	1931-41
ARMSTRONG, Cliff	Blacksmith	1937-49

Little Schools of Bridgetown

One of the earliest records concerning education in the rural communities surrounding Bridgetown-Greenbushes was an application to the Education Dept. for a school. It was from parents

dated 11 November 1902. This letter spurred on the Inspector General of Schools, Mr C Jackson, and in 1903, he recommended that a 'sparsely peopled district school' be established.



Brooklyn School 1930

The first 'Little School' opened on 2 February 1903 just south of Bridgetown. This was Glenlynn School, which operated from a room in a farm near Sunnyside. It marked the beginning of a proliferation of 'Little Schools' throughout the farming communities and settlements of the Bridgetown-Greenbushes region for many decades.

Because transport was difficult for children to travel between properties, or satellite industries like timber milling sites, to the townsites, 'Little Schools' sprang up wherever there were sufficient school-age children to warrant a teacher. Schools were often just a room in a farmhouse, but later school buildings were usually built by parents on a reserve, which was sometimes gazetted for schools. To set up a full time 'Little School', it required an average of 10 children aged between 6 – 14yrs who lived within a radius of 3 miles (4.8kms) of the school's location. If the numbers dwindled permanently, the school was reclassified as an Assisted School and functioned on a part time basis, with students taking correspondence lessons at home (this was from 1919).

Bridgetown Historical Society Inc.

The Bridgetown Historical Society Inc. (**BHS**), an affiliate of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, is the custodian of a fascinating collection of donated historical artefacts, photos and ephemera relating to earlier Bridgetown society. The BHS always welcomes new objects and photos that might be suitable to add to the collection (please let a member know if you would like to donate an artefact).

The collection includes 1000s of historical photographs, and 100s of objects and ephemera, much of the objects being housed in The Old Gaol Museum, with the remainder stored in the BHS office.

BHS Objectives:

- To encourage the study and writing of WA History, in particular of Bridgetown and its surrounding areas
- To collect, classify and preserve records pertaining to Bridgetown history
- To share information among members of the Society by readings, discussions, lectures and exhibitions of historical material
- To promote public support of preservation of historical relics, & recognition of notable anniversaries of WA history
- To establish and maintain a historical museum(s) in Bridgetown
- To publish articles/selected records/publications approved by the Society
- To fund, subsidise or contribute to any institution, scholarship or prize, which meets these objectives of the Society.

2017 Committee members:

Patricia Higgott (President), Phillip Anderson (Vice-President),
Lorie Marshall (Treasurer), Mary Elgar (Secretary), Cher Grace,
Hazel Larkworthy, Harold Thomas

BHS Open Nights (members & non-members welcome):

1st Tuesday (bi-monthly), 7pm, BHS office

Committee meetings 2017:

2nd Monday (monthly), 4pm, BHS office

Annual membership fees: \$12 renewal or \$15 new members

Contact us:

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Reference:

TAYLOR, Fran. (2014). *Bridgetown the early years: Settlement of the Warren Blackwood District from the 1850s.*

The photos used in this brochure are available through Bridgetown Historical Society Inc.

For further information on early settlement in Bridgetown, please refer to Fran Taylor's book.

Booklet printed by Bridgetown Historical Society Inc.