THE STORY OF BRIEBE ISLAND

Aboriginal presence in this area spans thousands of years. The island formed when seas broke through the northern end of a long sandy peninsula between 1822 and 1838. The name Bribie was first documented for this area as early as 1836.

Free settlement followed the end of convict transportation in 1839, and by 1859 Queensland separated from NSW. A few pioneers came for the fish and oysters in the Pumicestone Passage but did not live here. By the 1860’s if someone wanted “bush” or was missing, they were said to be “Down at Bribie”.

Archibald Meston, a famous explorer, anthropologist and politician, wrote in 1891:

“Our town was made for Bondaree
Bonagaree was a name for this island in 1912

In February 1893 the greatest daily rainfall ever recorded anywhere in Australia fell on Pumicestone Passage, settling it up and ending its use as a commercial waterway. However, by the 1920’s Bribie Island had become a great destination for mass tourism, with more weekenders here than lived in the whole Shire.

In 1937 Thomas Welsby, historian and businessman wrote the book “Bribie the Basin Maker”:

He created a food-legend about a convict who ran away to marry an island Princess, far from the reality of the penal colony for the worst of the worse, convicted and incorrigible convicts.

Ian Fairweather, most famous resident, world-renowned recluse artist, summed up his views of life here in the 1960’s when he said:

“There may be better places than the sunset strip of Bribie Island, but it’s good enough for me”.

THERE IS SO MUCH TO SEE AND DO

HISTORY

THE FIRST 100 YEARS

1770 Captain Cook sailed past and named the Glass Houses.
1799 First white man, Matthew Flinders with Bonagaree, landed here.
1823 Three canoes were fetched from Sydney and landed on Bribie Island & lived with “Joondonbarrie” native people of Bribie Island.
1824 Calypso landed 29 convicts at Redcliffe, but soon released the new Moreton Bay Penal Colony to the Brisbane River.
1839 Convict transport to Brisbane ended & pioneers move into area.
1840 About 250 Aboriginals lived on Bribie Island.
1859 Queensland separated from NSW with its own Governor.
1867 First land taken at Whitepatch.
1896 Settlers start sheep factory, cattle, honey & oyster farming.
1897 Kati Kuta, the last Bribie “Joondonbarrie” native, died at Ngilgool.

Self Guided ‘Walkabout’

More than 200 years of Bribie Island History

Bongaree

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CRADLE SITE OF QUEENSLAND

In 1770 James Cook sailed the ‘Endeavour’ up the east coast of Australia, sighted & named the Glass Houses and Cape Moreton. By 1788, the ‘First Fleet’ of Convicts and free settlers arrived in Sydney and exploration began, looking for large rivers on the eastern coastline. Just 11 years after the first fleet, Matthew Flinders and Bongaree arrived here aboard the swoop ‘Norfolk’, marking the beginning of recorded history for this island.

Although many things have changed, there are still many interesting reminders of those formative years. This Heritage Walk is designed to bring some of that rich history to ‘life’ by showing and telling just a little bit about some of the people and places that make this the...