

# BACKGROUND to HERITAGE PLAQUES Project

Captain Cook first sighted and named Morton Bay and the “Glass Houses” in May 1770, but it was 29 years later before Mathew Flinders and Bongaree sailed the “Norfolk” into the bay, and made the first landfall in July 1799 on what is now Bribie Island, Queensland.

Flinders failed to find a major river flowing into the bay, so too did Capt. John Bingle who came in 1822 aboard the “Sally”.

John Oxley came aboard the “Mermaid” in 1823 looking for a suitable remote site to imprison twice convicted felons. Approaching the Island at “Point Skirmish, so named by Flinders 24 years earlier, he sailed into the mouth of the Pumicestone river and cast anchor there on 29th November 1823, not far from where the jetty stands at Bongaree today.

**“The history of the settlement of Queensland really begins from that day”**

(Sir Raphael Cilento)

An astonishing circumstance however, had already led to the accidental discovery of the long sought Brisbane River by three castaway convicts who had been driven by a huge storm from Sydney to Moreton Island. They had spent many months walking around the bay, and had crossed the big river before staying with the natives on Bribie Island.

The castaway convicts showed Oxley the big river and a year later in 1824 Oxley returned to establish the first Moreton Bay Penal settlement, initially at Redcliffe but later moved up the river to Brisbane. Thirty five years later in 1859 the State of Queensland was officially established and separated from New South Wales

Such was the start of a remarkable series of events that shaped the rich history of Bribie Island. From the pioneer oystermen, through the era of mass tourism and the strategic role of Bribie Island in World War 2, to the present day development, it has witnessed many significant changes.

The Rotary Club of Bribie Island has taken steps in recent years to both preserve and maintain some of these important memories. In 2007 Rotary sponsored a free brochure providing a **“Self Guided Bongaree Walkabout”** to showcase some remaining visible history.

The success of this “Bongaree Walkabout” brochure, part of which is reproduced in this book, led to the application and approval of \$5730 of funding from the Queensland Government 150th Anniversary Fund, to make this history more accessible by the installation of 16 bronze plaques along the waterfront at Bongaree.

This book provides some additional information and background to the brief wording that appear on these 16 Plaques, which have been installed over a distance of two kilometres both north and south of the Jetty.

The project has been the primary initiative of the Rotary Club of Bribie Island, with detailed research and documentation in this book carried out by members of my “Local History” class at the University of the Third Age, and members of the Bribie Island Historical Society.

The Moreton Bay Regional Council installed the Plaques as their contribution to this 150th Anniversary project in this year 2009. It must be hoped that residents and visitors to Bribie Island will continue to value and appreciate the significant historical facts and stories that are told on these Plaques, for the next 150 years.

Barry Clark  
Director, Rotary Club of Bribie Island.  
President, Bribie Island Historical Society.  
Tutor, Local History, University of the Third Age.

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