



BONGAREE TRAIL

Bribie in a can

Bribie was home to several fish canneries in the early 1900s – when fish were plentiful and people were few. ‘Anchor’ and ‘Lighthouse’ brands were produced at the northern (lighthouse) end of the island, opposite Golden Beach, and ‘Diver’ at this site here at Bongaree.

The Diver brand and cannery were built by savvy Brisbane businesswoman Sarah Balls, known as ‘Mum’ for her hands-on approach to business. At its peak, the Diver cannery employed 20 people and was capable of processing two tons of fish and around 10,000 cans per day.

The factory comprised a state-of-the-art refrigeration room and four pressure cookers. The fresh water needed for the canning process was drawn from springs once used by the local Indigenous people. Fishermen delivered catches of mullet, whiting, snapper, bream, flathead, tailor, kingfish and jewfish to an adjoining jetty here.

The long-term viability of the Bribie canneries was compromised by the fact that our warm water fish are not ideally suited to canning – and dwindling fish stocks.

The environmental impact of large commercial operations like the canneries led to the establishment of the *Amateur Fishermen’s Association of Queensland* and the regulation of fishing practices. The original clubhouse still stands on the waterfront at the end of South Esplanade – about 1.5 kilometres south of here.

Although nothing remains of Bribie’s fish canneries today, there are plenty of places along the foreshore here where you can enjoy the local catch of the day.

Bribie Island Seaside Museum **1.1km** ➔

Explore more Bribie stories at the Bribie Island Seaside Museum on South Esplanade.



“The popularity of the Diver brand is increasing every day. The public welcome the advent of mullet, bream and schnapper caught and canned in Moreton Bay.”
Brisbane Truth, 1908

Discover Bribie’s favourite fishing spots



Scan the QR code for further information
<http://mbr.c/nk/bongaree-trail-1>



National Heritage Bribie Store c. 1925. Artie Bestmann seated far left. Image courtesy: Moreton Bay Regional Council, image ID: EUC-82234

BONGAREE TRAIL

Every street tells a story

The nearby Hall, Bestman and Cotterill Avenues take their names from the friends and families behind Bribie's first general store and dairy farm.

Arthur Bestmann was born at Toorbul Point in 1887 and lived on Bribie from the early 1900s. Alfred Hall was a Toowong merchant and regular visitor to Bribie.

Artie and Alf became mates and business partners, establishing *Hall and Bestmann Bribie Store* in 1914. An early advertisement declared, "We stock the best brands of goods procurable ... at Brisbane prices."

The store was located near the corner of today's Toorbul Street and First Avenue. (Bestmann subsequently came to favour the spelling 'Bestman' – which is why the street and store are spelt differently.)

In the 1920s, Artie and Alf developed a dairy farm on several hundred acres here. Alf's niece Emma and her husband Wilf Cotterill migrated from England to work on the farm. The Cotterills ultimately took over the operation, which came to be known as *Cotterill Farm*.

As Bribie at the time was home to just a handful of residents, the many campers and day trippers were valued customers of Cotterill Farm. And of course Hall and Bestmann Store was their main outlet. In the early 1940s, Cotterill Farm also supplied fresh milk to the military forces located on Bribie and at Toorbul Point (now Sandstone Point).

Cotterill Dairy continued to operate until 1960, as the farmlands were gradually subdivided for housing. The original Cotterill farmhouse remained on Hall Avenue until 2008.

Bribie Island Seaside Museum 930m →

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Everyone has a Bribie story! What's yours?
Find out how you can join us and share your Bribie story.



Scan the QR code for further information
<http://mbrc.nsw/bongaree-trail-2>



When the bridge was just a plank c. 1925. Image courtesy: Moreton Bay Regional Council, image ID: 71228.

BONGAREE TRAIL

A creek called Shirley

Shirley Creek is named for Bill Shirley – an early trailblazer and enterprising resident of Bribie.

After serving with the Australian Army Engineers in the First World War, Bill established a contracting business in Brisbane. In 1923, he was contracted by the Brisbane Tug and Steamship Company to clear a path across the island.

This would pave the way for the construction of a road from the Steamship Company Jetty to Ocean Beach – today’s ‘Woorim’. Bill was subsequently appointed construction supervisor and then tollkeeper of the new road. This ‘Ocean Beach Road’ is today known as ‘First Avenue’.

In 1927, the Shirley family relocated to Bribie. The enterprising Bill established a bus service, became a land agent, and developed and operated the Ocean Beach Guesthouse – near where the surf club now stands at Woorim. The two-storey guesthouse comprised comfortably appointed guestrooms, sundeck, dining room, dance hall, post office and shop.

By 1933, Bill – the unofficial ‘Bribie Mayor’ – was appointed the first Honorary Councillor representing Bribie Island. To attend monthly meetings at Caboolture Shire Council, he would travel by steamship to Brisbane, stay overnight, then continue by train to Caboolture. He eventually swapped the three days of return travel for a motorboat, running across Deception Bay and up the Caboolture River.

Bill’s first major achievement as Bribie Councillor was to replace a plank walkway across the creek here – pictured above – with a substantial bridge in 1935. This opened up vehicular access for the burgeoning settlement of Bongaree.



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<http://mbrc.qld.gov.au/bongaree-trail-2>

Bribie Island Seaside Museum 820m →

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