



Thomas Welsby aboard the vessel Oceanic, 1911. Image courtesy: State Library of Queensland. Image ID: Neg 112657.

BONGAREE TRAIL

The legend behind Welsby Parade

Welsby Parade, which runs along the foreshore here, is named for one of the great characters shaping Moreton Bay and Bribie – the landscape and legend.

Thomas Welsby (1858 – 1941) was a popular and respected businessman, sportsman, politician, historian and novelist. Above all, he was a seafarer, spending a lifetime exploring Moreton Bay. He was the author of numerous books of local history, as well as personal accounts of the region's waters and islands, their sailing, fishing and shipwrecks.

Welsby was a founding member and early president of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. He bequeathed his 2000 volume library to the society, whose collection today is known as the Welsby Library.

Welsby was a founding member of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, publishing a history of the club in 1918. He was an early president of the Amateur Fishermen's Association of Queensland, whose clubhouse is on Bribie.

Spending his later years here, Welsby's final book was 'Bribie the Basket Maker'. It tells the story of a basket-weaving, fish-hawking convict named James Bribie. This likeable larrikin allegedly gave Bribie Island its name.

Despite a fondness for the story among locals, there are no records of a convict named 'Bribie' or similar. It's probably a romantic retelling of another yarn – perhaps to further the Bribie Island legend!

There would seem to be a lot of the legendary Welsby in Bribie. And a lot of the likeable Bribie in Welsby.

← 400m Bribie Island Seaside Museum

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



Experience more of Moreton Bay by boat

See how and where you can take to the waters around Bribie.



Scan the QR code for further information
<http://mbr.council.gov.au/bongaree-trail-4>



BONGAREE TRAIL

Paving the way to Brisbane's closest surf beach

At this site in 1924, with the opening of the Ocean Beach Road, Brisbane's closest surf beach became that much closer and more accessible.

The Brisbane Tug and Steamship Company, which provided passenger services to Bribie, consulted the Royal Lifesaving Society about forming a club to patrol Ocean Beach (today's 'Woorim Beach') over the summer holidays.

It was soon discovered that two Steamship Company contractors – Bert and Harold Blake – held lifesaving certificates. A lifesaving reel was procured, and Bert and Harold conducted the first patrols of Bribie's Ocean Beach.

The Steamship Company eagerly promoted surfing at Bribie and offered free passage for members of Brisbane's Metropolitan Life Saving Club in return for patrolling the surf beach.

In 1927, the Steamship Company donated a prefabricated house to serve as a clubhouse. Donations were collected on the trip to Bribie to fund fitout and equipment.

In 1933, the Bribie Island Surf Lifesaving Club was officially founded. The clubhouse was destroyed by fire in 1964, but with fundraising a new clubhouse was ready for the summer holiday season.

'First Avenue' as it's known today (opposite here) remains the main route connecting Bongaree with the oceanside and Woorim – and connecting Brisbane with its closest surf beach.

← 330m Bribie Island Seaside Museum

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

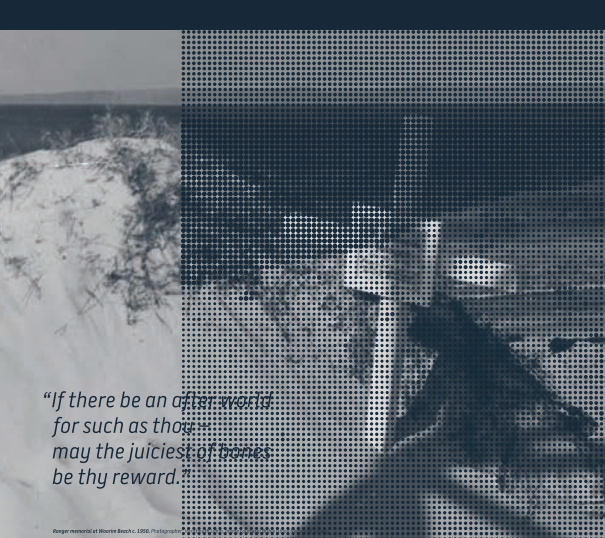


Discover Bribie's many beaches

From Woorim to Lighthouse Reach, there's a beach for every day of the week on Bribie.



Scan the QR code for further information
<http://mbr.c.lnk/bongaree-trail-5>



*“If there be an after world
for such as thou –
may the juiciest of bones
be thy reward.”*

Ranger memorial at Woornie Beach c. 1950. Photographer: Wandsworth Lethin. Image courtesy: Bribie Island Historical Society.

BONGAREE TRAIL

A legendary retriever named Ranger

Arguably Bribie’s most famous dog, Ranger had no one owner, but he had many friends and carers. A black retriever, Ranger was an honorary member of the Surf Life Saving Club and an important part of their team.

Legend has it, when the steamships from Brisbane would dock here at Bongaree, Ranger would be there to greet the new arrivals. He would then race off down Ocean Beach Road, covering the five kilometres to the surf club in ample time to be ready and waiting when the bus arrived.

When the lifesavers were on patrol, so was Ranger. He was first in and last out. He would swim out beyond the farthest swimmer, staying in the water for hours. The legend of Ranger even made the pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

When Ranger the legendary retriever died in 1936, the flag at the surf club was flown at half-mast. The lifesavers buried Ranger beside the clubhouse, overlooking the sea. For decades, a small wooden memorial stood among the sand dunes. The epitaph is reproduced above.

Bribie is the perfect place to walk, run and swim your own legendary companion.

But we no longer let our dogs free-range like Ranger. Much of Bribie is a wildlife sanctuary and national park.

So while many areas are dog friendly – and some off-leash – others are strictly off limits.

Bribie Island Seaside Museum 330m →

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



See where
you can take
your Ranger
on Bribie



Scan the QR code for
further information
<http://mbr.c/ank/bongaree-trail-6>