

Frew Park

A See-Saw & Dragonfly Ink interpretation project for the Brisbane City Council at the former Milton Tennis Centre site.

When Surveyor General John Oxley led his party up the Brisbane River in 1823, his focus was on finding a place for a convict settlement that was easy to defend, with port access, good soil and plenty of freshwater.

In the early 1940s, free settlers moved out onto the fertile river flats to live off the land and raise their families.

The city of Brisbane was born and evolved on a floodplain.



Aboriginal people assembled at various spots along the river to observe these odd new arrivals, who often struggled against the flow of the tides...

The Moreton Bay Convict Settlement was eventually located downriver from here, where Brisbane's central business district now stands.

For the Aboriginal people who lived here, the tides of change were turning.

*The swamp is buried,
the creek is long dry
but when heavy rains come,
will the memories rise?*

**FROM A CHAIN OF PONDS...
...TO URBAN LIFE**

For tens-of-thousands of years, Aboriginal people have lived with the land – sustained, nurtured, respectful of Mother Earth.

Before Europeans arrived, they had everything they needed right here.

The river, woodlands and marshes were nature's pantry. While the men fished and hunted, the women and children gathered fresh, seasonal bush tucker – tubers, berries, wild honey and more.

They used natural materials like stone, wood, bark and reeds to make useful things like tools and bowls. From sap, bark and plants, they created natural remedies to cure their ills.

In 1824, Surveyor General John Oxley and his party were making their way up the Brisbane River in search of a good place to locate a convict settlement.

Aboriginal people assembled at various spots along the river to observe these odd new arrivals, who often struggled against the flow of the tides.

In his journal, Oxley described the men they encountered as "fine and athletic" but was not as impressed when one stole his hat.

In search of fresh water, the party landed where a creek connected a chain of waterholes fringed with reeds.

This may have been Western Creek, which once flowed through the Red Jacket Swamp and into the river.

The Moreton Bay Convict Settlement was eventually located downriver from here, where Brisbane's central business district now stands.

For the Aboriginal people who lived here, the tides of change were turning.

The Brisbane region opened to free settlement when the convict settlement closed in 1842.

Free settlers began to make a new life here, building houses, planting crops, grazing sheep and cows.

Over time, bush tracks became streets and endless woodland views were replaced by a sea of tin roofs.

It didn't take long for the Red Jacket Swamp to fill with sewage and runoff from the growing district – and for residents to rise up against this health menace and eyesore.

The bureaucrats of the day yielded to public pressure, draining and filling the swamp and channelling Western Creek along an open drain to the river.

But residents wanted Milton Drain out of sight.

By 1903, it was buried beneath tons of fill. Red Jacket Swamp and Western Creek had finally been swallowed by Brisbane's urban development.

Swampy lands for the Red Jacket Swamp and the site where the town of Fairfield was once buried. Brisbane's growing suburbs.

Dedicated to a better Brisbane

URBAN MYTHS AND RED JACKETS

A long time ago, when the area was first settled, two local boys were playing in the swampy bushland.

In those days, mothers dressed their boys in white flour sacks, with holes cut out for the head and arms.

The boys were trying to catch a clever frog that day, but it kept hopping just beyond their reach...

Finally, one of the boys crept close to it at the edge of a murky pool. He reached out to grab the frog and... splash! Into the pool he fell.

When he emerged, his flour-bag tunic was stained a dull red colour by the minerals in the water.

His mate thought this was awesome and dipped his tunic in the water too.

Soon their whole gang were sporting red tunics and the marshland became known as the Red Jacket Swamp.

Or so says the legend!

Some said it was really named for the Red Jacket rainforest plant that grew there and produced edible red berries.

Others claimed it was named after a ship bringing immigrants to the Colonies in search of gold.

There are more stories, but the truth disappeared long ago... just like the Red Jacket Swamp.



Published in a series of books

Urban myths and red jackets

A long time ago, when the area was first settled, two local boys were playing in the swampy bushland.

In those days, mothers dressed their boys in white flour sacks, with holes cut out for the head and arms.

The boys were trying to catch a clever frog that day, but it kept hopping just beyond their reach...

Finally, one of the boys crept close to it at the edge of a murky pool. He reached out to grab the frog and...splash! Into the pool he fell.

When he emerged, his flour-bag tunic was stained a dull red colour by the minerals in the water.

His mate thought this was awesome and dipped his tunic in the water too.

Soon their whole gang were sporting red tunics and the marshland became known as the Red Jacket Swamp.

Or so says the legend...

Some said it was really named for the Red Jacket rainforest plant that grew there and produced edible red berries.

Others claimed it was named after a ship bringing immigrants to the Colonies in search of gold.

There are more stories, but the truth disappeared long ago... just like the Red Jacket Swamp.



[illegible]

...this was the Queensland Lawn Tennis Association's (QLTA) vision when it moved to the swampy land between Haig and Milton Roads in 1910.

World War II brought plans to an abrupt halt, but by the mid-1950s Milton was set to take its place on the world tennis stage.

ROCK THE GRANDSTANDS

Before other sporting venues were built around Brisbane, the Wilson Tennis Centre was the perfect place for major rock acts to perform.

Here is where, among other things, grandstands that could hold almost 1,000 people, which had been once jammed into the 'rock pit' in the 1970s.

Thousands have come to see iconic music legends **Jethro Tull** and their support acts perform here in 1970.

Tickets for the late show ranged from £10 to £15 (a £10 for general admission, though to 20% for box seats).

At the time, the average weekly wage in Australia was around £17.



Australian-born rock 'n' roll artist **Jethro Tull** (left) came here to perform in 1970.



Multi-band shows were held at the Wilson Tennis Centre in 1970. The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970.

The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970. The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970.

The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970. The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970.

The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970. The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970.

The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970. The band Jethro Tull performed here in 1970.

"It was February 1973, it was pelting down with rain and the Rolling Stones were playing on an open stage. Patrons were clad in raincoats or large green garbage bags! Sparks were flying on stage. It was a concert to remember."
(Jenny)



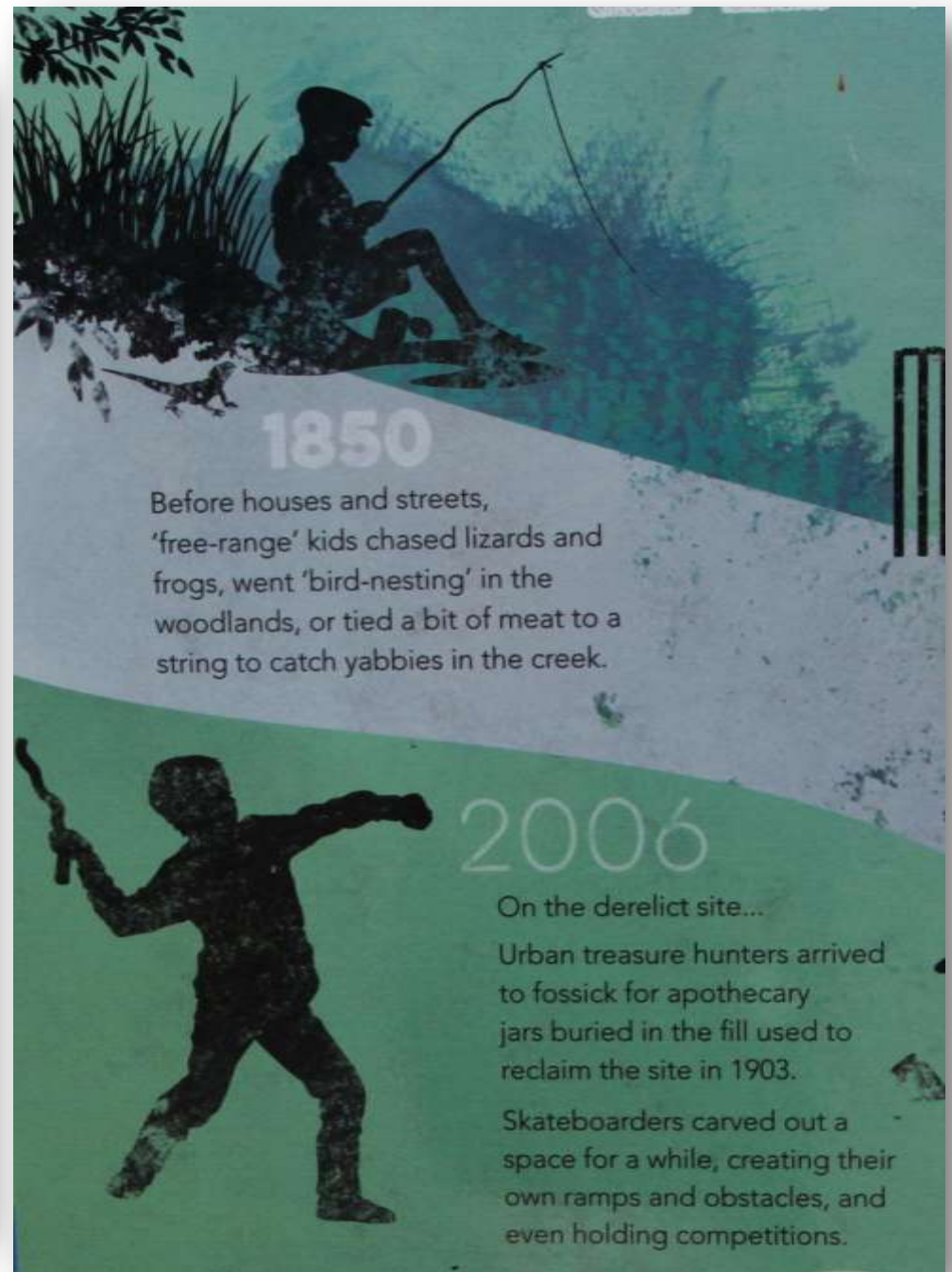
News Ltd / NewsPix



Last drinks at the Alley Bar

This eclectic suburban venue was a launching pad for many local bands – a place for them to build their confidence and their fan base.

When it closed in 2008, it was the end of an era for live music fans and local bands...





In the parklands, an adventurous play space was designed especially for 10-15 year olds, based on the former tennis centre grandstand.

Here, kids can imagine they are climbing on the derelict structure or performing with their friends...

**Are you ready to step
into the Arena?**

