

The Friends of Tingalpa Cemetery Heritage Group Inc. will provide a program at Tingalpa sharing the story of our culture when Queensland was declared a separate colony and the part Tingalpa pioneers played in this December 10 1859 event and in enlarging the new colony's cultural and spiritual activities. Charles Coxen MLA was a founder of the Queensland Museum and chairman of the Anglican Committee that built Christ Church Tingalpa in 1868 (we celebrate our 150th anniversary this year). R.T. Jeffries was known as the father of music in Brisbane and founded the Municipal Choir and the State orchestra and Christopher Porter was the architect for the Old Normal School and many of Brisbane's grand old homes and his sugar plantation at the mouth of Bulimba Creek gave the name of Murarrie to the new suburb. The Hon William Duckett White of Lota House lent his fine carriage drawn by a pair of white horses to carry the new governor from the Botanic Gardens to Government House to declare the new colony. A procession of 4,000 cheering citizens accompanied the governor. We will share concerns of citizens of that time with the choice of Brisbane as the capital, many preferring Gladstone or Maryborough with their excellent harbours while the Brisbane River was very shallow and full of shoals and a rocky bar across the river at Lytton where aborigines could cross the river here until it was removed by blasting years later. Large ships, like the Cordelia which brought Governor Bowen to Moreton Bay, could not sail up river except in very high tides, so small river steamers would take passengers and goods to and from the larger boats in the bay. The Cordelia entered Moreton Bay near Bribie Island, near Cook's landmark Glass House Mountains, and so troops were posted at Sandgate with orders to ride post haste to the botanic gardens to alert officials of the fact that the Governor had arrived and was on his way to the botanic gardens by river steamer where the crowd waited to welcome him. Governor Bowen was Anglo Irish, like William and Jane Duckett White and he was a frequent visitor to their Lota House, as was Queensland's first premier (later Sir) Robert Herbert, who bought land at Lota, some of it in partnership with William White.

The Tingalpa Pioneers' chapel and cemetery were listed as one of the Sites of Separation in the book of this title by the late Rod Fisher. It is hard to condense this information to describe the fascinating story we intend telling on 12th May, of how the pioneers lived and why and how Queensland came into being. Much the same as today's northerners yearn for a separate state, back in the 1800s people were dissatisfied with distant government from Sydney but they didn't want the capital to be in Brisbane, with its shallow river and convict history and in the south east corner of the huge state. Many wanted the capital to be in the middle, with some preferring the capital to be in Gladstone or Maryborough, with their fine harbours, and rich grazing hinterlands.

We will clear up the confusion about actual date of Queensland's birth, with Queensland Day being celebrated on 6th June and 10th December 1859. Mail took three to four months and while the Queen issued Letters Patent on 6th June, it took until 10th December for the Governor to arrive and declare the new colony on 10th December. Four days holiday was enjoyed by citizens.