

Tabourie Memories: Shauna Geraghty

SHAUNA GERAGHTY'S MEMORIES

Around the mid 1960's my parents, Tom and Shirley Geraghty, bought land at 6 Bridge St for approximately £500. Mum's sister Doreen and her husband Ron Keat had already bought and built on the block next door. This was around the same time as the Cresswells and Shelley's bought land and built in Bridge St. Mum was not one to go on holidays as she loved her home in Dundas. She was very close to her sister however and with some encouragement she and dad also decided to come to Lake Tabourie. Dad was an electrician and with the help of the Cresswells and the Keats they built the foundations for their holiday house. Dad had someone else build to lockup stage, then installed all the electrical work and had someone else do the plumbing.

The little two bedroom fibro house was their pride and joy, even with a drop toilet (which moved every few years) outside and water tanks to gather the rainwater. Showers were very quick otherwise it was a top and tails wash. All babies up to the age of three were bathed in the laundry tub. Dad also built a garage used for us kids to stay in when we had friends down. A real sleep out! As the family grew and grandchildren arrived the garage was well used, and dad added another water tank. By late 1998 my husband Barry and I started to use the garage more and more. We added a pergola then a shower and toilet when the sewerage was put on. Best thing ever was that sewerage arrived in Lake Tabourie, and we were able to have long showers and flushing toilets. Then we enclosed the pergola to make a kitchen/dining area and lounge room. It's a grand cottage!

Best part of our holidays: At first, I used to come down and stay at Auntie Doreen's house and slept on the banana lounge in the hallway. Her house had 2 bedrooms, a wood stove for cooking, an outside drop toilet and shower. They had two daughters as well, so the little house was very crowded in summertime. Another aunt, Doris Lawless built on 38 Oak St. She raised my mum after her own mother died very early in life. Doris had 3 boys and 2 girls who also loved coming down for holidays to be with family.

Once the house was completed, we holidayed every January for 4 weeks and 2 weeks at Easter. The Keats, Cresswells and Shellys, all had kids, and it seemed there were kids everywhere - playing cricket on the street or fishing. The road was sand back then and we had a very old timber bridge (this is why our street was called Bridge St) which eventually fell into the creek. A new bridge was built leading into Centre Street. We would go to the beach every day, with towels, buckets, floats and KFC boards. Bathed in oil or nothing we would stay for hours running up and down the sandhills. All the parents taught the kids to swim and stand up on the KFC boards. Dad was a great swimmer and body surfer, so he taught all of us to body surf and to be safe in the water.

In the evenings we would play cards or board games as there was no TV at this stage. Otherwise on a moonless night you would get ready for prawning, with 10 kids and 8 adults in tow with nets and buckets and a torch between 2 kids. Most of the time the mums carried the bucket with a towel in it to stop the prawns jumping out. We had really big prawns back then and they would swim right into your net. You would walk out ankle deep then the next minute you were up to your neck in the water chasing a prawn. We would come back home freezing! We were washed down in a bucket of warm water and got into our PJ's. When Dad cooked up the prawns you could hear them scream, and dad said it was the air coming out of their shells. We would eat some that night and the next until they were all gone, and Dad would keep some for fishing.

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FISHING: The Cresswell's and the Shelley's would put their boats into the lake down near Short St ready for fishing out the back of Crampton Island. Mr Cresswell would come and knock on Dad's and Uncle Ron's bedroom windows at around 6am to get up and go fishing in the 2 boats. When it was good you could ride the boat straight out from the lake to the surf and head for the back of the island. There were no flotation devices back then, but they did have a 2way radio to contact the Cresswell's house. Around 9.30am we would get the call to get ready to go down and meet our dads with their fine catch of the day in plastic washing baskets.

The baskets were full of all types of fish in wonderful colours. The dads would fillet and scale the fish right there on the beach. Then the kids would help pull the boats back into the lake. The best part was all the kids got a ride home in the boats while all the parents walked. During the day I would fish off the old wooden bridge or down at Short St, using bread and if I was lucky a prawn. This was the only activity I was allowed to do by myself. I caught a few but threw them back as they were too small. It's all about the fun of trying catch a fish.

I never knew anything else for holidays in January and Easter and always asked girlfriends from school to come down. We had lots of fun and made lots of memories. Dad bought us a fiberglass canoe which was really heavy. My friend Kerry and I would lug it down to the lake and paddle away. It was really only made for one person, but Kerry and I did our best to get both of us in and bail water out as we paddled. We also swung off the rope or climbed the big tree overhanging the lake. Kerry and I would show those boys we were not scared to try. Going to the outdoor theatre in Burrill Lake was also a big thing. Mum said you had to be 14yrs old to go. I don't know if that is true but that was mum's rule. Seats were 2 pieces of wood with a sack to make the chair. You would take your pillow and blanket to keep warm. The screen was also held together with 4 posts, and it would wave in the breeze as the movie went on. The outside toilet was horrible, so you had to hold on till you got home. Of course, nothing started till the sun had fully set.

On Friday nights all the families would walk down to the lake. Hopefully the lake was at low tide so we could walk across to get to the caravan park for the chocolate wheel and music. Sometimes we even had event nights where you could get up and sing, dance or play a musical instrument. Coming home was sometimes interesting if the tide had turned early, you would be hip high in water coming back home! Fred James had the local shop in Centre St. It was great for lollies and comic books every holiday. Best of all I was allowed to go over on a Saturday night at 6pm to book my call (inside the shop) then wait outside the shop until my call was connected.

Ulladulla: Church was on Sunday mornings but later this changed to Saturday nights around 6pm at Ulladulla catholic church. The ladies and kids would go to church and the men would go to theirs – the bowling club across the road. As the grandsons got to age 17 they did not have to go to girls church they could go to the men's church. We had dinner at the Ulladulla bowling club and enjoyed raffles while sipping a red spider drink. Best time ever. We loved the sponge cake we would buy in Ulladulla. This was a real treat to have in the kitchen with our cup a tea. Sitting outside the Marlin was another thing as females could not go into pubs. Dads would go inside for a drink and buy their beer to bring home. The same white brick wall is still there today.

Home:

Lake Tabourie has always been a safe and homely place and a place I always wanted to retire in. Here I am today with Barry living our life with new friends and some old ones, enjoying the lake, two beaches and Crampton Island. Life could not get any better than this.