

Tabourie Memories: Ian Cull

My family has been coming to Tabourie for over 100 years! In the mid 1920's my grandparents followed a sand track into Tabourie and decided to camp there. This was close to the spot that later became the campground.

I was born in 1947 and started coming with my parents and extended family in 1950, aged 3. My grandfather had a huge tent, but my cousins and I slept in his Studebaker which was backed up to the tent fly.

I remember a camping trip in the 50's with the Edwards family during which my younger brother David annoyed my father by telling mum there was a snake near our tent. This was after dad told him not to say anything to her!

One Queens birthday long weekend there was a deluge of rain. Late on the Sunday several chaps from the little houses on the "highway" were concerned that their houses would be flooded. They dug a trench across the sand to the south of the island. This opened the lake, and the narrow trench quickly grew to a raging torrent – 25 feet wide with the pressure of the waves speeding the flow. A highly illegal act but it probably saved their homes from flooding.



In the late 50's we moved from the camp area into the cottages, staying at the wonderful cottage "Illagong" which was perched high on the headland looking across to the island and the ocean. We had many happy holidays there with my grandparents, parents, uncles and cousins. One wet and windy night there was a knock on the door and Uncle Fred said "here he is, the man himself". It was Dave Gillies, the lessee of all the cottages dotted through the National Park, and also of the campground across the lake.

Another winter weekend saw a fisherman washed into the sea and nearly drowned. His mates and members of our family carried him up to Illagong where we warmed him up with dry clothes. Fortunately, he was OK.

The James family arrived in Tabourie in 1956, and Fred James took over the management of the cottages. Our family holidays at Illagong continued, mainly during the May school holidays. Our family became good friends with the James family, and I recall one cracker night we had a huge bonfire in the sand dunes, when a very young Mike James joined in to let off his crackers. It was a cold night and he wore a beanie, and for some reason I remember he had a very husky voice!

When National Parks resumed the cottages in the mid 1960's Fred was compensated, and used the money to build the Castaway flats, and our family began to stay there. There were four flats and each were given the name of four of the cottages. We stayed in flat 4, as it was named "Illagong"!

I discovered sailing in the 70's and didn't return to Tabourie till the mid 90's, however mum and dad kept up the Tabourie holiday tradition. One time mum asked me to drive them down as she was concerned about dad driving. As it turned out they didn't end up coming but a mate, Steve, and I did and that

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rekindled my love of the place. We enjoyed the beach and the fishing and ended up staying for a couple of weeks. I am still enjoying holidays at the Castaway and come down every February and Easter. In fact, I have now rented one of the flats for a year, so I can come down whenever I get the opportunity. The current owners of the Castaway, Phillip and Carol, are going to swap over the name plates so that mine will still be called "Illagong"!

Tabourie has always been a sacred place for our family and I'm sure it will continue down through the generations. Rosie, my niece's 2 year old, has been to Tabourie three times now. She loves it already and I can envisage her there with her own children and grandchildren in years to come.

(NOT) THE END

