Tabourie Memories: Jim and Helen Rouse

A Tabourie timeline by Helen Rouse

WW Campbell in 1924 built Tabourie House as a holiday house and died in 1928. His wife never visited the house. The Government road to Burrill went through the property and the parish maps show the property did not go all the way to the lake, but the property was extended to the lakes edge in exchange for the straightening of the road. The boat shed has a different roof line from the existing shed. His family lived in the house during the depression

The house was sold to, Mr John Wheat, a Sea Captain, it is unsure if he ran the property as a residence or as a holiday resort and had a lady run the residence and property. John Wheat walked off the land and left it during or just at the beginning of WW2.

The property was very run down, and the bullock teams had ruined the gardens when the families of Wheatley's and Wills's bought the property. In 1947/8 when the families bought Tabourie House for approx £2000 ($4000.00), for the money they could have bought all of the Mollymook Estate or Sylvania Estate in Sydney so one can assume the property was overpriced at the time of purchase

The Wills had a sawmill at Termeil (Helen's Uncle was a Shoebridge). Helen Rouse (nee Wheatley) aunty married a Wills and they were in partnership for 5 or 6 years and lived in the first house past the bridge. The Wills property was in the Brandaree up Brandaree Road, now called Lemon Tree Creek Road

Fred Wheatley 's original house was beside the large Coral tree on Weymouth Road and was later moved to the site of the Tuckerbox and was used as the residence for the business and still is back section of the buildings there today. The house had only dirt floor in the kitchen, which was outside the bedroom areas.

Tabourie House had out buildings and there was a generator to provide electricity lighting to the buildings but was prone to breaking down such as a branch falling on the wires, and overload of appliances.

There were only a few houses on the lakes edge near the highway and Helen can remember one such house as she described as "like a dolls house" just to the north of Tabourie House in 1950s. There was a "Humby" on the other side and a man called Harry lived there when Helen was a young girl. The telephone was there in 1944 and power lines in late 50's early 60's with work on the telegraph from about 1933 to provide work during the "Depression"

Jim Rouse used to camp at the camping ground and his father Alan "Silver" Rouse and had a 1953/54 Bedford "S" model painted red and one year the stage burnt down so he had the talent quest on the back of the truck.

1968 was a big Pine Forest Fire and was driving the bulldozer and had to back up to the lakes edge to avoid the fires.

The bullock team that cleaned the timber from Wheatley's property was Sid Rixon's and took the timber to the sawmill were Alan Baxter's house is now.

Seaplane landed on Tabourie for joy flights during 1950's.

The Men's and Ladies Toilets were built in wind flow in location near cabins and windstorms filled in before being abandoned.

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Jack Nicolson first built a tiny weekender in 1956, still standing then later built a larger fibro house and lived in it permanently, later he built the house next door to the museum and later built museum

There were two different 12 volt generators on concrete slab at caretaker's cottage, and another had been installed under Tabourie House.

There was a spring at the side of palm tree on the top of the hill and Helen dad dug a shaft for a windmill on the weekends over a period of time between 1950 –53, the shaft being 30 foot (9metres) deep x 4ft x 4ft with a staggered shaft with timber platforms to gain access and still has drinking water in well today.

Wherever there was a spring on the property there was a big tree, with one coral tree and pine trees in a row. Harry Gregory would find water on properties in the area with dividing rods or the forked branch, as well as wandering through the bush and hills looking for minerals, gold, silver and lead and set up a mining company with locals such as Wards, Fitch's and other townsfolk.

The cottage on the property was a typical Australian home with corrugated iron roof and walls as per sketch and looking west towards Brandaree overlooking the farm.

The Donovan 's rented the home from Mrs Wheatley, and next tenant was Billy Beadman. Helen's dad was Fred Wheatley, worked in the saw-milling and trucks in the timber industry.

Convicts built the roads around the lake and parts of road remain today and there used to be a road marker peg (similar to one in museum foyer) but it disappeared in the 1960's.

The proposal to build a camping ground, more cabins and tennis and bowling on the southern sand hills were strongly opposed by residence Billy Bales and Dave Gillies.