

WHAT AND WHERE WAS THIS BUILDING?



VBAL P0528

This was Stone's Store. It opened at Balnarring Beach in 1916.

Ern and Annie Stone and their family moved to Balnarring in 1908 where Ern took over the general store.

Ever since the road had been put through and the bridge built over the creek towards the end of the 19th century, Balnarring Beach, or Tulum, had become increasingly popular with campers, holiday makers, day-trippers and picnickers. The Stones bought a block of land in the coastal subdivision. Here they erected a second store which was open during the summer months to cater for the holiday crowds. The store, which was run mainly by Annie, sold soft drinks, lollies, light snacks and basic items.

The unmade road to the beach followed two routes once across the bridge. One went straight ahead, while the second, and more frequented track, ran south-west through the foreshore to join what is now Library Road, in front of Stone's Store. The store, with its wide verandah became a meeting place where, Christmas dinner and afternoon teas were served and where impromptu concerts were frequently held. A piano stood on the verandah and the audience brought along chairs and rugs and sat on the roadway in front of the store.

Custom decreased after the Strains built 'Cheero Tea Rooms' in 1923 along the road in direct line with the bridge, the site of the present Tulum Store. It was the first building visitors saw when they arrived at Tulum. At first it sold morning and afternoons teas but later both the business and the premises were expanded. The café section served hot meals and a store section sold general items and newspapers. Behind the store the Strains erected four cabins that they leased as holiday cabins. When Gwen Neville (later Mrs Butt) bought out the Strains in the late 1930s she built up the catering side of the business, especially during the years of World War 2. The café was very popular with the many service men stationed in the area.

The Stones were unable to compete and circa 1950 they sold their store to Gwen Butt who had it demolished and on the site built a guest house, 'Tulum Lodge'.

- *Ilma Hackett*
(*Balnarring & District Historical Society*)

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