

## THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Myralee was situated 10 miles north of Parkes on rolling fertile hills where the blue bumberry hills lined the distant eastern sky line. The first 6 years of my life I lived in small four-room weatherboard cottage with a corrugated iron roof. A small-corrugated water tank supplied water for the little house. Our little house was adequate for our small family. There was an outhouse[thunder box , long box, dunnie,you know what I mean ] was out the back. and a small laundry shed on the front side of the house. Incorporated inside the laundry shed a copper with a wood fire heater, to heat water, a cement tub, a hand wringer for laundry. On the floor there was a row of batteries, a Jap motor with a 24 volt generator to supply lighting for a few nights between charges. When the lights go out the old hurricane and Tilley lanterns would come out to supply lighting for us. The kitchen contained a wood stove not sure about a fire place, kero refrigerator, small cupboard, table and chairs.The wood stove would keep the little house warm during the winter months. I remembered Saturday nights were bath night. Water was heated on the stove the tin galvanized tub was pulled out and placed in front of the stove. I was first then Brian , Rose, and Milton, Graham was the baby so he was bathed separately. Myralee was surrounded with pepper trees excellent shade for the house and protected play area from the hot sun.

East of the house were sheds, machinery, work shop, and grain storage. The work shop had a bench and a vice and a lot of tools sprawled out on top with an earthen floor. Brian and I being young tigers would reach up and try to grab some of the tools wham !!! we would get a shock. Years later we found out that Dad had a magneto rigged up to shock us. He didn't want his tools lost in the dust on the earthen floor. I think dad got the biggest charge out of it.

My aunt y Merle dads sister lived a mile or so to the south in a little house. The place was called Fox low. Aunt y Merle would come over almost once or twice a week and help out mum bring eggs, milk, something from the garden. Hair cutting day she would line us up cut our hair with hand clippers. I'll tell you what if aunt y Merle slipped without cutting, man it would pull. One day Merle came over with another horse. Mum wanted me to ride it , I threw a tantrum because the strups were enclosed and didn't look like adults stirrups. They put me on the horse and I bawled my eye out. In time I learned to ride.

Aunt y Merle would ride to town with a horse and sulky. There would be Norman , Merle and I. I would sit at there feet in front of them and keep my head down be hind a partition to protect me from the lather sweat coming from the horse. I think that occasion we were going to church. Remembering the stain glass windows at the Presbyterian Church that left an impression on me.

Alectown to Parkes was about fifteen miles.Our house was ten miles on a gravel bumpy road. There was no school bus so dad offered his international army truck with a canvas cover top on the back to carry kids to school. then came a small Leland diesel bus. I think the bus drivers name was Donaldson. He would wake us up when it was our stop to get off. Going to the bus from the house was a chore walking across a plowed paddock especially when it is wet. One occasion middle of winter it rained, the ground soggy, just about dark, Brian and I were walking from the bus Brian's foot went into the mud and came out with no shoe. I said " Brian lets get home it's getting dark" Well

Mum lights the lantern and takes Brian and went back looking for the shoe. Night had fallen, scared and in a hurry to get home is why I didn't stop.

Nelly was a neighbor a friend of the family who would visit mum occasionally. She had this large black car with wire spoke wheels. While she was inside talking I was chocking the front and back wheels. I wanted to see if this car was any good. The car had a lot of show but did it have any go. Well mum came out of the house and made me move them. What a let down.

Snake were prevalent during the summer months. Mum said a large black snake slivered into the kitchen then to the hall and into my bed room. Eventually the snake slid out to the front door. I was asleep at the time in the room. Mum would place water or milk in a bowl out side to detour the snake from coming into the house.

My cousin Bobby and his family came from town for an afternoon. Bobby and I went down to dam which was about 2000 yds front the house. We had go through the gate to get there to play. We almost arrived at the dam when a large black snake raised up ready to strike. Bobby turned and shot back to the house like a bullet scampering over the gate on the way. Well my little legs were running like pistons trying to catch up. Fear thinking that snake was on my heels ready to bite.

Aunt y Merle who lived a short distant away had my sister Rose stay with her. One day she picked up a snake and called out to aunt y Merle " look aunt y Merle I found a big worm" Well you can imagine auntly Merle went hysterical.

Snakes try to find a cool dry place to nest. Sometimes in a hay shed under a building or under a wood pile. At foxlow I remember Uncle Norman pouring boiling water over a wood pile to flush out a snake, felt it was to close to the house.

Uncle Norman and I were driving over to " the gums" it was about 2 miles east of our home. The Gums is the name of grandpa's farm. Grandpa planted hundreds of sugar gums around dams and buildings for shade. Well on the way across I had to open the Iron Gate to let uncle Norman drive through then close it. I just about to jump into the 1939 Chevy Ute, there in front of the Ute was a big brown snake. Uncle Norman pulled out the crank handle, muttered something and with one mighty throw nailed the snake on the head and killed it. I was impressed with the throw . One throw one hit , that's all it took. Uncle Norman was a giant of a man someone you would not mess with.

Talking about snakes The Osborne family came out to visit dad and mum. Eric & dad worked at a caterpillar dealer in town. Rex their eldest boy pulled on a 6 foot snake by the tail as it was going down a hole. Suddenly between his legs the snake's head pop out of another hole. Rex quickly let go, at the same time his dad said , " that will teach you".

Are you getting tired of snake stories? Dad was telling me a neighbor sitting on a combine sowing wheat when a snake went up one leg of his baggy pants and out the other . The poor guy froze and didn't speak for awhile. Wouldn't you?

On almost every farm there is a seed grain shed to store grain for the next season. The shed floor is raised up so trucks would load and unload at the same level. This farmer had a townie { that's a person who lives in town with no experience of farm life} They stopped for a morning tea break when a large carpet snake came from behind him. With a loud scream he jumped and ran out the door forgetting the loading dock was four feet from the ground. He landed shaken and bruised.

Australia has many venomous snakes. Yellow belly, black snake, brown snake, death adder, and there are others. The carpet snake is non venomous. With a prehistoric look which would scare you to death. A lesson I was told if you go for a hike or walk through tall grass take a stick with you and make a noise.

Mom and Dad were shy people, more so in a crowd. They were very hard workers and cared very much about the family. I never heard Dad sing a note but mom I heard many times. Singing putting cloths on the line, or in the laundry shed or in the kitchen peeling potatoes at the sink. Tunes like “when Johnny comes marching home”, “Jesus loves me”, “Pack up your troubles”, “What a friend we have in Jesus”, “One horn one eye flying purple people eater”, “Around the world I search for you”, That’s just a few as there were many more songs if you knew Mom you would understand. Mom played the button accordion, steel guitar, and harmonica. She came from a musical family where they played other instruments.

Grandpa’s farm was nine hundred and twenty six acre He had cleared the land in the pioneering days by horses. He had horse stables made with split logs for walls, hay thatched roof, high wooden fenced yard in front. Blacksmith shop, wagon shed, shearing shed with yards for sorting and drafting sheep. The house was built of cement blocks lined with tongue & groove cedar boards. Inside the house had depth of character of something made well. I remember the front room was furnished with fine glass ware and books on the shelf. What caught my eye was a pump organ with two key boards, and little shelves to put pictures and other things on. I had a blast pumping the pedals pulling the stops in and out making a noise and trying to sing. The room was never used because it was as the front of the house as the main entrance and activity was at the back of the house. The front of the house was a trellis with lots of flowers all over it. I remember the floral aroma from the bushes and flowers in the front garden. The other side of the house was an orchard, wattle trees and gum trees surrounded the outer house yard. As mentioned before gum trees surrounded machinery, stable, workshop buildings and also shaded the dams. Lovers lane was a stretch of road about a quarter a mile long. Lined on each side were wattle, gum and some other trees. I remembered walking and riding the bike late in the cool of the afternoon.

The farm had a chaff cutter for making fodder for the Clydesdale draft horses a sawmill where he made lumber for himself and his brothers who lived on neighboring farms. The farm raised sheep, cattle, pigs, and poultry with a large garden kept the family supported. They would do repairs on their machinery and some of the neighbors also. Make lumber, build dams, clean silt out of dams, and built buildings for hay. There was one particular building housed the pride of grandpa’s design. A wagon almost newly painted with scroll artwork, large wheels on the back and smaller wheels on the front. The design allowed the wagon to turn a smaller circle. I guess the manufacturer refused to make it for Grandpa, so he came back with an order for three wagons. Mr. Westcott went ahead and made them. They were named starlight, moonlight, and sunlight. The same design was made also for other customers. Grandpa’s wagon is in the Sydney historical museum.

As a young boy I would have a blast going to the farm to play and discover something new around the farm. Shearing time was exciting, penning the sheep for shearing. Sorting the bellies taking the dags off the wool, sweeping the floor, pressing the wool into the bails and watching the Shearer compete for the count for the day.

Sowing was a fun time, smelling the fresh turned soil, sitting on the LA30 case tractor with uncle Keith watching him plow the field. At break time aunt y Vera would come down to us with fresh cut sandwiches, scones and a hot cup of tea. We would sit under a shaded tree and enjoyed. They would sow wheat, oats, and barley during May after the rain.

Harvest time was around Christmas. The general goal was to finish before Christmas, relax for the holidays. The freshly harvest grain had a nice appeal to scoop up a hand full to eat. Hay is cut first stood up to dry out then loaded on a truck or wagon then stored hay sheds for feed. Then harvest, oats, barley, then wheat.

As the Marilee family grew the little house was getting smaller. There was Phillip, Brian, Rose, Milton, and Graham was the baby. Dad purchased eight acres of land with a little house on the out skirt of town. He added three rooms and a closed in veranda to house for the growing family. The land had hundreds of box thorn briars which took many years to eradicate. The property had a solitary olive tree down the back. It's still there today. We planted apple, peach, almond, and apricot trees. Later we added other trees. The front verandah was not finished. Dad would nose his Austin ute in for shelter. Our new home was close to school. We caught the same Alectown bus as we did at Marilee. The bus was loaded and there was only standing room. Stand and hang on was the order of the day. Just down the road were two shops. A corner store owned by Mrs. Hall and in Webb St, Mr. Crab. He was an old grouchy man very short with you but his wife was real nice.

We found out later she ran the Webb St Sunday school. After awhile we attended. The hall was just down from the shop. It had no electricity, no plumbing, and two half finished out houses with no roofs. The seating was old rejected theater seats, and a small old pump organ. Mrs. Crabb made that organ rocking back and forth singing out of the redemption hymn book. She would have us marching up and down the rows of seats singing "rally around the banner". We had working bees cleaning the dust and tidying the place up. There was a Russian family lived opposite the hall. Their children Lydia and Tony. Tony was about seven or so years older than me, he accomplished in all types of sports. He had recognition strips of what sport and year printed full on both front sides school blazer. He would organize the clean up day. Tony Dalalinko was my Sunday school teacher. Many years later I found that Tony went to war, was killed overseas. There is a street named after Tony today. I don't remember much about Sunday school but the people I do. Tony, Jack Scoble [ would speak at the anniversary] and other people who went there left an impression on me.

Dad started out in business working in a twelve by twelve foot building. He had a blacksmith shop set up, with forge and anvil. Another business similar to his in town said "Earl you will go broke" Well eight kids later he made it and we didn't starve. Off cause dad built a 36 by 20 building then added another section and increased with a 12 by 36. I think the building finished up at 36 by 46 in size. For many years dad worked with earthen floors doing farm machine repairs and forging. Repairing ripper tines, plow shears, crow bars, picks, and leaf springs trucks and cars. Later he cemented the floors made it much easier to work on and not loose tools. Some of the tools and machinery were lathe, milling, 100 ton press, 2 six hundred amp welders, power hacksaw, bar cropper, power cut off machine, folding machine, forge, threading machine, mechanical hammer, gullet saw machine, drilling, portable welder, 5 ton crane, and a host of small

tools. He was recognized for a hundred miles around for his mechanical skills. The saying went around "If you can't fix it take it to Earl he can repair anything". I have seen dad take something impossible and make it possible. Farmers would come and ask could he design a machine to do a task. On one occasion farmers had trouble with rabbits. They contracted a disease called missematoses. {SP} The rabbits got pink eye, hair would fall out and the govt. was on the farmers back to eradicate before the disease transferred to domestic animals. Dad would make a carrot chopper to cut up the carrots, also a special plow to feed the carrots into furrows mixed with a 1080 poison.

Other equipment he made was, buildings for machinery, hay, grain, bulk storage for truck as farmers were going from bags to bulk delivery. I have seen conversions of single wheel to dual wheel tractors, repair bent and twisted augers. Convert rotary hoe engines, restore awning at meaghers store, hydraulics and trays on tipping trucks make ripper assembly crawler tractor. Dad would get up at 6.00 am work till 8.00 am have breakfast, work all day then after tea work till 10. or 11 pm at night. He would say "I would get a lot more done at night where no one could bother me". Many nights I would see the flashing lights of the welder through my bedroom window, or the ringing of the anvil or the pounding of the mechanical hammer.

A common phrase dad would say was, "I've got to keep the wolf from the door". Meaning I've got to keep going working to put food on the table. Or "I've got hungry mouths to feed". I remember dad would say "If your still hungry there's bread & jam to eat"

As I said before we had eight acres of land. His business, the house and area with scrap iron. Dad also subdivided lots for four houses he move and work on after tea at night. He would add rooms make it livable for renters. It supplied a small income as well as the machinery repair shop. All in all Dad and mum had six houses four on the 8 acres and 2 in town he rented out. The family grew and in turn some had opportunity the purchase a house on time payment. One house he sold outright. The early construction of the houses the town council would make a noise about the unsightly houses on the Peak Hill Rd and of cause they wouldn't come and see us. The only way we found out was in the news paper. Dad went for election for the town council several times but didn't get in.

Later he established a museum. Using his crane and large trailer he gathered machinery and antique parts to start a machinery museum. He spent many Saturdays and Sundays going many places getting machinery. With the help of other retired farmers he moved a church, a school house, built blacksmith shop, and housed tractors, steam engines, plows, harvester, in storage sheds. Today {2007} there's a copy of Henry Parkes cottage from England being built where the original workshop was. The land is owned by the museum now. Dad moved his complete shop next to the house for his retiring years. He scaled down the amount of equipment and used the shop as a retirement hobby, and to supplement income. He said "I can work at my own pace and when it gets done it gets done".

In Parkes the rest of the family came a long. There was Ian, Leslie, and Joy, made up in all eight children. Mum was very busy keeping a lid on everything. We had our chores cutting wood, gathering eggs, clean out the chicken pen, clean the grease trap on the septic system, dig burs, clean out dad's shed, and sometimes milk the cow. I remember Brian was good at baking. He made ginger bread men, sponge cake, and his favorite was lamingtons. Some other jobs were clean our bedrooms, plant a garden, take

turns setting the table and washing the dishes. I remember many mornings getting up early making breakfast for the whole family. This in tails lighting the stove, making porridge cooking toast, boiling the kettle for tea. We would have spaghetti on toast or bake beans on toast. My favorite was brawn on toast. Brawn rendered down beef bones, place it in a press then cool it in the refrigerator. Humm that was good. Rose spent many years going down town purchasing the groceries and had them delivered to home.

Dad would allow us to tinker around in the work shop. Sometimes we would help clean out from under the lathe and the cut off machines. Other times we practice welding. Dad said “ there's old rusty scrap steel and some old welding rods, see if you can weld with that”. You talk about old welding rods, flux would flack off as you strike the arc, the rod would stick to the metal and it would flash unexpectedly temporarily blinding me. Dad was right if you can weld with that you'll make a good welder. We would also break down old aluminum pistons, melt them down on the forge and pour the melting aluminium in a bean can. When metal was cooled down we would cut the metal can off and machine it on the lathe. We machined different shapes, vee pulleys etc. Later we cut down an English Ford Prefect. A little 8 hp 4 cylinder side valve engine powered our little run about. We machined down the rim wheel center and put 12” rims on the front and 13” on the back. This would keep it low to the ground and not roll over. The unit had a tray to carry out scrap from the work shop. Well that was the plan dad had in mind. Dad wanted a second gear box placed behind the original and locked in second gear. The seconded gear box was fitted in but never was locked in gear. I tell you what we had a lot of fun with that machine. To teach the younger members of the family we would use the low gears in the second gear box and show them how to change gears without going at a great speed. For a real low speed try reverse reverse gave you a real low forward speed. We also had a blast racing around the eight acres. Previously we graded race track around the perimeter of the property and bank it at the bottom corner. It would rain and fill up with water. Can you imagine hitting that water and spaying mud and water up. One day we got in trouble from dad. The police came and visited dad a said a lady complained that we were racing vehicles in the back. On that occasion we raced a hillman car and our prefect machine hitting that water pool. The idea started years before when Ray Tanswell had a little tractor made from old chevy parts. Top speed was four miles an hour, narrow wheel tracking, metal plow seat, a separater reduction gear and a small jap motor. The family had a blast running around the paddock after school home work was completed and chores were done. Carolyn and David from next door, Rose's friend Leonie came and play also. Next came a go cart that was also supplied by Ray Tanswell. The motor was claped out ( no good) so we converted motor bike engines to it. I don't know how many engines we went through but that go cart really went fast. Our race track was a little rough so it was a little hard on to back side. Milton and David Woods started repairing a motor bike. I'm not sure if it was a Indian or an Ariel (sp) 550 or 660 hp. They over all the motor with new gaskets and cleaned it up. They wanted to take it to Ben Bullen where uncle Jack live to hunt for rabbits. So they asked me to take them and the bike down one hundred and forty miles. We arrived there, unloaded the bike and tested the bike out by going to the main gate and back. David got to the gate and smoke belched out from the motor and quit. The boys had used heavy oil joint paper for a head gasket and it burnt out. Here we were with no parts and out in the boonies. The boys were bumb out. As we were looking down kicking the dirt we found an old twisted piece of a copper

container green in color from corrosion. We lit up the forge annealed the copper, smoothed it out with a hammer on the anvil. Using a hand drill and an old heavy duty sissors we cut a gasket out placed it on the bike and away we went. One thing the family taught me was to improvise. Watching dad take types of steel and make something out of it was a feat in it's self. He took a truck differential and made a post hole borer that fits behind a tractor. A crown wheel and pinion and make a cement mixer. When dad got those creative juices going things happened. Joy encourage me to be creative and think outside the box. This has helped me out of a jam on many occasions and am sure it's helped others in the family also.

Christmas time was a time of excitement especially christmas morning. Our gifts were laid out in the front room. There was no tree (it was too dry) crape paper streamers,paper mesh balls and creape paper trees. Dad would say to our uncles and aunts give them socks, T shirts, undies, and clothing of some sort. I remembered mum saving all she had to purchase toys and some really neat stuff. Uncle Tony mum's brother passed away, he had a really nice Melvin Star bike with lights and bell on it. Mum gave it to me for christmas. That was big stuff I was very pleased. From then on I would ride to school instead of going on the bus. Dad and mum did a lot for us over the years and gave of themselves many times to give us a start in life. We didn't get much like expensive gifts, or go to movies, or holiday in a hotel, or have the fashions of the day. But we had each other and we created our own fun with what we had. Dad would say “ food on the table and a roof over our head'.

Mom was involved with the far west children network . Betty M.... chook [sp], ran the program for many year on the local radio station 2PK. For two hours appealing for ladies to sow, bake, donate , what ever they could to support children who have no parents and are less fortunate. Mum helped out by taking a girl from the far west children. Her name was Janet Marie Parrie [sp]. I often wonder where Janet is today? She was so much part of out lives for the time she was with us.I felt bad she didn't get a chance to live in a good home until she turned 18 years.I will always have a soft spot for Janet.

Several times we spend school holiday time at aunty Merle, or at the Gums. Sometimes we ride our bikes 10 miles to grand pa's farm or 2 miles to anty merle's place On some occasions the family and friends would go at night to the Gums. One particular night we played hid and seek. The girls hid down the field behind trees and along the fence. One of the guys picked up a stick and hit the fence real hard sending a sound down the fence line into the dark. A short moment later we heard the girls screaming. We found them. Another time we made bows and arrow and shot at each other. Grace Woods was working at the Gums and was playing with us. I think Brian shot an arrow and hit her in the forehead

When Brian and I were about 13 years old we joined the Parkes Town Band. We had no idea about playing instruments but they taught us for free. Band practice was twice a week and personal tuition was at a different time. When we got proficient the Band Master would train us for composition call solo and party composition.Brian and I would get medals for 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> position.

Being in the Band dad and mum would help on the committee level raising money for instruments and uniforms. We would have fair in the square down town Parkes.

Raffle wheel, sales of cakes, crafts, etc. The big attraction was the big wheel. Tooth brush and the wheel had numbers, tickets were sold, big turkeys was the prize.

Dad was the instigator in organizing a band hall for practice and storage for our stands and music. The RSL club was expanding and the old buildings had to go. Dad arranged for the building to be moved to another site. The building had hall, stage kitchen and music room. We held dances, social gathering, housey housey, to raise money and a place for band practice. I remembered one night some wild gang of boys threw rocks on the roof while we were practicing. We heard the ruckus immediately stopped playing got up and raced out side. Some of the band members were football player for the local team. John Hodge, Tony Cook, and also Dale Carroll, Bob Wheeler (boggy) Rob Smith, Arthur Smith, David O'Brien, off cause others I can't recall. Brian and I ran also. We were only 13, 14 years old and what a fat lot we could do. I remembered we chased them down the back lane. We didn't catch them that time and had no trouble since. Dad would drop us off at band practice. After practice 9:00pm we would walk home a mile and a half. Sometimes Dale would walk with us teaching us songs and give us good company part of the way home. One song he taught us was "my girls a corker shes a New Yorker" we would walk and sing carrying our brass instruments.

My parents befriended Harry and Pat White maybe it was the other way around, well I'm not sure. Anyway they met at the band functions as the beginning of a life lasting friendship. Harry played tenor horn next to Brian and later played bass. It was Harry who encouraged Dad to go on holidays. Dad worked for twelve years with out a decent break. Dad made 2 6x4 ft trailers to carry our camping equipment and boat. I remembered traveling to Sydney with Harry and family to purchase a plywood boat, a Scott 3.5 motor, tents for both families beds sleeping bags and camp tables. Away we went Dad closed the business for three weeks and off to the south coast we went. Harry taught us a lot from fishing at sea, making lobster traps, catching abalone. How do you cook abalone? To cook it you would flog it with a hammer for 15 mins boil it for 15 mins, then fried it. We would go after oysters to eat, catch crabs, pipi shell, sand worms, cunje for bait. Dad and my brothers would melt the lead out of old batteries and make sinkers of different sizes to fish at sea. I remembered Harry Dad and I were out fishing when I caught a large eel. Harry said "If you bring that in the boat I'm jumping out" That eel had rows and rows of teeth in it's mouth and very much alive. I cut the line and let it go. Another time Harry Brian and I were coming into the beach in the boat. Waiting for the right wave to ride in. Harry called to Brian in the bow of the boat to jump and steady the boat when we get close to shore. Well Brian only heard jump out and steady the boat. Brian jumped into ten or so feet of water and disappeared leaving his red terry towel hat floating on the water. Boy did Harry laugh. Finally we managed getting to shore without tipping the boat. Talking about tipping boats. The 3 families went to Batemans Bay for picnic and fish in the bay. Harry and few of us took the boat out and got dumped on by a wave and rolled the boat over. We got completely drenched but didn't loose the boat. The woman on shore laughed thought it was funny. After drying off a large launch with a small boat towed behind anchored right in front of us. Two nuns and a man got in the boat and rowed to shore. We waited for the inevitable to happen, well it didn't happen. They turned the boat around and backed it in to shore. The nuns got out on dry land. Of cause the woman rib us again and gave us heaps. We would have our



tents, dad and mum and the younger kids, boys in there tent and the girls in there. Sometimes we would have other families join us. The Allertons (sp) Jim and his son Rex I don't remember the others of the family, the Anderson's and there neighbor Buckey Tasker. Mr Tasker lost his teeth in the surf. He offered us kids some money if we could find them. To no avail we didn't find them I guess the fish are wearing them now. We met other families like the Browns. Wally Brown met up with Carolyn Woods and married years later. Stonyer's (sp) who came down from Sydney to camp also. He had a lawn mower repair business in Sydney. They had 3 children our age which hung around with us.

There was our family of 8 kids plus we would take Carolyn and David Woods from next door 3 White children the 3 Anderson so there was a tribe of us and what fun we had. Elvis was the pop star singer at that time and made several movies. A little place up the coast I don't remember the name, I think it had "Junction" in the name. I had my drivers license a car load consisting of Carol, Rose, Marion, Brian, David and myself. The picture theater consist of a walled building with no roof and canvas strapped across wooden poles. Some nights it got cold in there. A low maintenance theater, crude but good. The guys endured while the girls enjoyed, actually we enjoyed it also.

On some occasions traveling to Kiola Beach on the south coast we would stop at Majors Creek. This small village consists of a post office a baker and a few houses.

Hundred or so years before gold was discovered in the creek and surrounding hills so we camped next to the creek and gave it a go panning for gold. We would look for the black sand in clay pockets. Black sand being heavy and at the bottom where specks of gold are found in most cases. We worked panning for gold in that creek for two to three days and finished up with a vile (small bottle) half full of specks of gold. The adventure experience was invaluable. I remember the fresh baked tin loafs of bread baked at the baker. Those tall loafs of bread were 12 to 13 ins tall. Actually the height of the bread was longer than the length.

After five to six years of traveling south we decided to try the north coast. Well the year they decided was a record heat wave for that year. That year uncle Norman passed away so we took aunty Merle (dad sister) and son Eric with us. Dad made a station wagon out of a Chevy car and installed a truck engine in it. Away we went loaded to the hill, rack on top full, trailer chock a block and off we went. The new engine threw a big end and made a hammer sound on metal. So here we are stuck in a camp area at Coonabaraban over Christmas Holidays. Dad called Sydney 300 miles away to get a part. A week delay if there's one available. The owner of the park used to white metal small engines bearings but still has some equipment left in the shed. Dad molded the bearing and started machining it out on the lathe. Unfortunately the lathe didn't have an electric motor so each one of us kids cranked to keep the lathe spinning. Dad finally machined it out and scraped the bearing to fit the right oil clearance. After repairing the motor we were on our way. As I said earlier it was very hot, cars stopped on the side of the road with bonnets (hood) up cooling the engine down and placing more water in. After traveling that day they decided drive into the night. We hit the Moomby ranges and started to climb. Motor pulling in second gear climbing a steep grade the motor was hot vaporized the petrol and quit. Dad slammed the breaks on, tried to start it but wildfire up. Dad said chock the back wheel and crank the motor while I hit the starter. Finally It started. I pulled the crank out and placed it under the seat and went back pulled the tree

branch out while the car rolled forward. I had to run up hill as Dad was gaining speed and jump in. We got to the top of the mountain then the rain came down in buckets. The old Chevy car ( wagon) had vacuum wipers not worth a hill of beans. We finished up off the road on front of a petrol station. The whole area was in a black out couldn't see a thing and we lost Harry and Pat in the ordeal.

The next day we snaked our way down the side of the blue mountains to the coast. On the top of the mountains I remembered we fueled up at a hand pumped petrol station. On top of the bowser was glass measurer where one would pump the amount of petrol and gravity fill your tank. Finally we made it to Coff Harbor a subtropical area on the coast. Dad purchased a whole branch of bananas and lugged it the tent. There must have been over a hundred bananas on it. We moved down the coast to Port Macquarie then Foster. The sand on the beaches was so hot we wore shoes to get to the water. Sunburn backs was the order of the day. Hot canvas tent, sand in your bed and burnt backs with lotions grease on burnt backs. We would swim in the ocean and body surfing riding the waves. Planes would give joy flights from down the coast and cut the engine. This was a warning to get out of the water because there was sharks near by.

I remembered at Port Macquarie a pop singer was in town singing at a club. Rose and Marion heard about it wanted me to go with them to the hotel so they can get his autograph. The singer was Jimmy Little. The two families agreed not to travel north again for holidays.

Easter break one particular year the Stonyers, the Whites, and the Symonds' traveled north inland to the outback to lighting ridge. Lighting Ridge was an opal mining village. The three families camped in the camp area with a lot of other families including a 100 or so scout girl guides. They took over the boys bathrooms the laundry room. The elder Stonyer boy I can't recall his name and I went across to the water filling hydrant and had a shower. The area around the ridge was completely covered with mine shaft. The mine shafts went down a 100 ft with tunnels going out in all directions. Harry and I went down a 100ft mine shaft. Harry went first then I mistakenly put the rope on the wrong way. It's called the crutch method where you sit in the loop of the rope and work the rope in front of you. Well I had the rope behind and couldn't control it. There I was hanging spread out unable to get a footing on the side and unable to controls the ropes. What a scare, dad was above couldn't do a thing and Harry 100ft down the mine shaft. While Harry and I were down there we found small chips of opals in the clay pods. Some of brothers and others went down mine caves lite paper fires so they could see. While they were play they heard noises coming from one of the tunnels. It scared the life out of them. You should have seen them come out of that shaft like ants out of a ant nest. We had alright adventures thanks to Harry's give it a go out look on life. It was the adventures with hope Harry can. ( based on one the radio series Hop Harrygan). Ah!

During our teenage years the family started moving out. Brian moved to Sydney to train with telecom for 4 to 5 years as a technician with the phone company Graham and Ian followed years later. All came back to Parkes and married girls in the local area. Rose worked with Jack Birch and Smeation Bakery then she moved to the south coast just below Sydney training as a nurses ade. She had friends down there, Leonie Priestley, and Laurie Viv Wallace. Later she met John Rowe, married and had two boys Shane and Mark. Milton and leslie stayed in Parkes completed there apprenticeship at the Ford Garage. Later they became Shop Forman for many years. Both married local girls with

the name Christine. Actually three of my brothers married girls with the name Christine and two with the second name the same. Later Joy moved to Sydney and acquired her BA Sc. She married and moved to the north coast and had three children. All the family was married except me. I was the oldest and last one married. I would jokingly say “ I'm making sure all are married before I go down the isle.”ah!

There was a time when we r enervate the homes we purchased from dad. We would share tools help each other out on different projects. Anything related to steel there was also Dad's work shop to manufacture parts in. The four rental properties on the eight acres were purchased by us and Graham purchased a rental house in town. For a time the area was called Symonds Vil. including mum and dad's home just up the the road from us.

I would actually joke about my brothers and sisters all getting married before I did . Being the eldest and last married was a little odd but I didn't mind because God was in control of the timing in my life. My life was in His hands Psa 37: 1-7.