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Gallery and gift shop specializing  
in beautiful art and great design.



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**William Verdon  
Jeweller**



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Smokey quartz and howlite necklace.



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Various rings, chrysoprase bangle, diamond set gold hooks at William Verdon's.

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- watch batteries
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- we can do all manner of things!

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**108b Wallace St., Braidwood  
4842 2882**



A POSED PHOTO FOR THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER IN 1943. MOTHER FAITH, BUT ALWAYS KNOWN AS DUTCHY, POURS TEA FOR JO AND JEREMY.

## Childhood

Jo Gordon remembers

My childhood, if I can call it my childhood, went a bit longer than most. It went from birth until fifteen years. Into adolescence you would say? Yes, but this was in postwar England, a very different world, and for us there were no girlie magazines, no television sets and no thought of a self-indulgent world for us to prance about in, calling ourselves ‘adolescents’.

My childhood of course began well before me, at least nine months. But in actual fact the bones of my life were pre-determined by my parents’ lives. My father had what wasn’t such an unusual life in his times, but would to us seem brutal. He was born in 1906 in India, and at the age of two was sent back to a Dame School and the care of aunts, Aunt Rose and Aunt Violet, in England. In case you don’t know, a Dame School was traditionally where children of families in the service of the British Colonial Office sent their small children in case they caught smallpox, or whooping cough or just got in the way out in the wilds of one of Britain’s colonies. My father John was visited by his parents when he was five. They took him for a beach holiday to Bembridge, a lovely thing to do but it was here that his father told him he must bury his beloved gollywog, Samuel, in the sand. He was told he was too old for dolls. Poignantly

Samuel had new clothes just for his parents’ visit. One can see how this childhood influenced my father to want a happy family above all else. Something which maybe wasn’t always to my advantage.

My mother was one of four sisters, Patience, Faith, Hope and Honour — sadly, no Love or Charity. It seems that there was a lot of competition between them, particularly between my mother Faith and Hope. One that lasted all their lives and made enjoying our cousins impossible. I wondered too if it was this competition between them all that made my mother an island to herself, suspicious of other females and not a cuddly person. I may be wrong but this is what it felt like. On the other hand I was born into a family of entomologists which meant my parents loved being in the country whether in England or in Australia. At weekends we would often go off on an ‘expedition’, perhaps to an ancient castle or my favourite Birnham Beeches where in autumn I could shuffle in the fallen leaves.

My first memories of life were from where I was born in Hobart in 1939 in Sandy Bay under the shadow of Mt Wellington and where I lived the first four years of my life. I have very faint recollections of this time. I seem to block out the everyday memories and remember only the unusual. Most

recollections come from photos and conversations. There is one other experience though which shows that memory may not be actual but may come from deeper down. I say this because quite recently we were in Hobart and I said, “let’s go and see where I lived”. We left the city and drove along the Bay. I knew we would turn to the right and had shut my eyes. Even before we arrived at the turn-off I knew when we were there as I became quite shaky and emotional. The same happened as we drove up Lipscombe Avenue without looking I knew when we reached our house.

So though I feel I have few memories of where I lived for the first years of my life it seems my subconscious knows more than the conscious mind. This period was probably the happiest time of my mother’s life and certainly idyllic for me. It was a small friendly community with many couples also having young families. The old stone house, which they renovated, had huge trees going down to a gully and I imagine my love affair with horsechestnut trees and always having a marmalade cat began here. Our resident marmalade cat, ‘Cooper’, was large and loving and beautiful. If he wasn’t enough to begin my love affair the ‘Orlando’ books certainly were.

The large format Orlando books and small Beatrix Potter books both became daily reading and began a tradition of sitting on my father’s knee and being read to.

My brother Jeremy was my main companion and being twenty-one months older than me was still young enough to enjoy going to birthday parties and making up games in the garden. Our main companions were a gollywog and Wiffy. Wiffy was inherited from Dutchy (as we call our mother) and was quite a large hard cat — still white, or rather grey, but without any hair. I found it hard to love him. He was just too hard and bald. Jeremy had a battered looking three-wheeler trike which I also didn’t like for a very different reason — I wasn’t allowed to ride it.

But what I know I did like was the beach at Sandy Bay which we could walk down to from Lipscombe Avenue. We spent hours there making castles, filling the bucket with water, collecting