



TENT CITIES.

Harrison, was a slave who jumped ship. Apparently, he was a fine long distance runner and an excellent boxer. He was a very well-respected man in Araluen, a hard worker and a gentleman.

The gold rush was just starting when Harrisons first arrived in the Valley there were probably only a dozen or more families here then but that changed abruptly in 1851 when Alexander Waddell discovered gold. By 1854 there were 10,000 or more people in Araluen, including a lot of Chinese — the famous Quong Tart was a prominent Chinese local. He was a pretty good mediator and interpreter and kept the peace on the goldfields. In those days the boxing tent used to visit Araluen. The miners would go to the boxing tent and sort out their indifferences and get back out to work the next day — apparently that's the way it worked. There's a paddock called the Fighting Ground out on the Benmanang Range, many disputes were settled there.

I would have loved to have been there then. It would have been amazing being in Araluen in the goldfields. Such an incredible amount of people and action. You can still see where the dredges were situated, remnants of the past era are scattered all over the valley.

My dad always said you knew when

the dredges weren't working because they were the loudest things you've ever heard. He said that there was still one going in 1950 but that was the last dredge ever in Araluen.

Henry Harrison held two large claims in the valley with the hope of finding that mother lode. He bought a place up at Deep Creek at the top of the valley where he started growing beans and other crops. The family used to cart their beans, vegies and whatever they had produced down to Araluen to sell them. My grandfather Peter, (Dad's father), was pretty good at hawking stuff. Peter started experimenting with peaches around 1920 with only a few different varieties and found that, hey, this was going to work, that peaches loved Araluen's hot summers. So he started with an orchard in Deep Creek, which is right up near the bottom of the Bells Creek Falls.

With much hard work and determination they eventually got an orchard going and started selling peaches.

My grandfather would
load up an old cart and
he'd do a big run.
It would take him two
or three days.

From Araluen he'd go up to Majors Creek, then onto Braidwood, Bungendore and Goulburn. He took it all in his cart and he never returned with any fruit — ever.

Harrison's fruit was a highly sought after product in Sydney, and still is to this day. They sold to an agent up there when the markets were still situated at Ultimo. The Department of

Agriculture was very impressed with the Harrison's fruit, they couldn't believe how they could grow such good fruit and they used to send people down to Araluen to check it out. It just got bigger and bigger from there. Back in the early days my family used to make good money off their fruit. Dad said it covered everything. Three families lived off the income from the farm.

My brother David and cousin Ken are both still in the fruit business but also run fine beef cattle, sheep and fodder production. My father Charlie is the only one left from that generation with the passing of his brother Keith not so long back.

The Bridge connection

My maternal great-grandfather was Mr John Gilmore. He was the manager of the Moruya Quarry which supplied the granite to construct the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. John and wife Mary along with their six children travelled to Australia aboard the SS Ascanius in 1924 - Mary had applied for the job on John's behalf after seeing the position advertised on newspaper that was wrapped around meat she had purchased from the local butcher. Dorman, Long & Company had secured the tender to supply the granite. John was a granite specialist having worked in the industry for many years in Scotland. Creating memorials, bridges, buildings and curling stones all with expertise.

The family settled on the opposite side of the river at the grand homestead of 'Tuff Wood'; it was just a short, but sometimes rough punt ride across the river. John soon got to work with his workforce of two hundred craftsmen and prepared the granite blocks to perfection at the North Heads quarry, Moruya.

Most of the workers lived in Garland Town a small settlement built specifically for the quarry workers.

Once cut and shaped the huge granite blocks were loaded onto a steamer and transported up the coast to Sydney Harbour. John's favourite piece of work was the cenotaph in Sydney; the late Nellie Grieg (my grandmother) used to tell me that he was so proud of his work.

Some years back a journalist from the Canberra Times made a careless quote referring to the pylons as "meaningless masses of masonry", My grandmother was quick to set him straight. If only he knew.

The Araluen cenotaph is also Moruya granite and was donated to the community by my great grandfather. ■

First thing to remember is to park safely — don't take on the traffic on the Kings Highway. Then get the animal off the road to reduce the danger for everybody. If it's definitely deceased, and you usually can tell, flip it over on its back and check for two really obvious things.

A boy wombat is going to look quite different to a girl wombat. The dead giveaway is a pair of testicles between their back legs — they're pretty unmistakable, the size of small eggs. If that's the case, then he's not going to have anybody onboard, and if he's passed away, get him off the road to avoid carrion animals then getting killed. Eagles, magpies, crows and others will often come try and eat road kill. We don't want them hit by another vehicle.

If it's a female, about where the belly button would be, there is a pouch. People talk about the backward facing pouch, but in effect, when you put your hand inside the pouch of a wombat, you've got to go 360 degrees all the way around. There's a pouch that goes all the way up towards the rib cage, but there's also a pouch around the side and down towards the groin. The baby wombat could be anywhere in around there.

Baby wombats can be tiny, the size of your thumbnail, just born, right through to three or four kilos — the size of a small football. To check for a baby, you've got to get your hand in to the pouch and feel around. If it's a bigger baby wombat, you won't get it out.

In that case bring the whole thing to us. If you're unable to do that, you need really sharp scissors or a really, really sharp knife to cut the pouch. You might find the baby has the mother's teat clamped in its mouth. Then you'll need to cut the teat close to the mother.

If it's the size of a short, fat sausage or bigger it is quite saveable. Smaller than that, like a little cocktail sausage,



Wombattle

Bill Waterhouse wants us to stop and check

we'll just see to it that it dies comfortably rather than freezes to death or gets eaten by a fox or something out in the wilderness. You can bring anything to us.

If you are going to take just the baby, it's got to be kept warm and the best way you can do this is just put it down between your breasts — or for men it's just sort of on the top of their tummy. Get it skin to skin.

Sometimes people will put the baby in

a pouch or a beanie but you are actually isolating it from the warmth. It really needs to be skin to skin or with something that's warm, warm, warm. You need to warm its environment up straight away. It might take a couple of hours and it feels like a piece of wet cement on your chest.

Then they start to scratch and it can be really uncomfortable but you are saving something's life. So it's really quite sweet.

