



The fairy tree

Clem Wilson brings the fairies to Araluen

After I'd done up my grandparents' graves I decided I wanted to build a little memorial for them. I thought about the fairy tree. For the littlies, you know. So Tony Nixon, the stone mason and myself went down to Bundanoon to get the sandstone down there. They said no, they weren't cutting anymore and we'd have to get it from Queensland. So we got it from Rockhampton. They delivered it to as far down as they could, to Mittagong, and then a friend in

Araluen, Peter Hemler from Deua River Fruits picked it up in his big truck. There was over eight ton of it.

Tony and I did most of the work. The artist, Emma Lipscomb, is the granddaughter of the minister that used to be here in Braidwood, the Reverend Ian Lipscomb. She and her mother have quite a large property this side of Goulburn, around four thousand acres. Her mother's also a very good artist. That must be where it comes from, you know.

MAKE A WISH



Originally I just had it painted white inside and was going to put a few little animals around it. But then my good friends Helen and Paul Goleby introduced me to Emma Lipscomb and her mother Margie.

And I'd never met the Lipscombs, but I had met Emma's grandfather in Braidwood because of my mother who was in the hospital here for fifteen years. He was a good man. Even though we're Catholics and he was Church of England, I remember Mum saying, "He can convert me anytime he likes". He was a lovely man — and a big man. He would have made the most perfect Santa Claus because of his mop of white hair and a big natural white beard. He was loved by everyone.

I had heard that Emma was a good artist and that she wanted to do the work for me. When Emma agreed to do the work for me, she was planning to drive down nine miles to stay in Helen Goleby's place on the Deua River. I thought that was too far so I talked her into staying with me. It took her three weeks to do the work. She's a beautiful kid and a lovely artist with it.

We were just terrified at first that somebody would get in there with spray paint or something. Vandalise it, but ... touch wood, so far it's been so good.

Helen and Paul Goleby have done so much to encourage me and I thank them for that. I wasn't going to go on with the artwork, I thought it was enough as it was. But they said no, once you see it, you'll appreciate it. They put the lights in and so it's an ongoing thing. We've got plans now for outside work, all around it. The new toilets too are going to be such a bonus. So it's all good.



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