

Nellie Isabel Pearce

(nee Harper)

22 March 1907-

4 December 1999

June 1993

In this my 87th year, I am recording some facts and memories of my long life.

I was born in Macedon, Victoria on 22nd March 1907, the first child of my parents John Andrew (Jack) and Ellen Christina (Nell) Hammond. They were married in St George Church of England Trentham on 4th June 1906 and were residents of Blackwood and Trentham.

At that time, Dad with partner Mick Monett had a sawmill at Macedon. On the 16th of July 1908 my brother Charles Andrew Hammond was born at Macedon and at the end of the following year dad branched out on his own and move to Wandong.

Wandong had big sawmills operating at the end of the last century, Comet and Planet mills.

Dads first mill site was three miles east of the village and he was able to utilise some of the old tram track sites. On the 19th November 1910 my sister Maggie Mavis (Peg) Was born followed on 22nd of August 1915 by Eileen Alys.

Wandong was only a small village in those days and most of the men we're engaged in the timber industry. Dad's sawmill what's for building timber and firewood for Melbourne as men cleared their land for grazing east of the village was all forest.

Today it is called Mount disappointment forest. The name was given to the area by the explorers Hume and Hovell who had hoped to see the sea from the highest point but were disappointed.

One busy place in Wandong in those days was the railway station and lin, as it was the main Melbourne to Sydney line all goods and produce were carried by rail, trains were constantly coming and going. There were three men, stationmaster and two assistants and a lad Porter manning the station. Wandong had a general store and post office a hotel the TravellersRest and a bakery two churches, a Church of England and a Roman Catholic, a school where I started in 1913 and a public hall which was much used. Also a Baker and a butcher from Wallan home delivered around the Township. Mr Wharton also had a poultry farm and vegetable garden with veggies for sale.

Most families had a house cow and everyone seemed to have plum and apple trees in abundance. Citrus fruits were not so common I remember when Harold Clapp, as chief commissioner of railways started an advertising campaign to promote oranges- "children yes and grownups too orange juice is good for you". this probably had something to do with the development of the irrigation areas in the North especially Mildura after the World War 1914-18 when the soldier settlers took up land there and planted citrus and grapes.

For a small place, Wandong folk played a lot of sport. tennis was played on an earthen court just below the bridge over the railway line later on and asphalt court in the sportsground now called the LB Davern reserve, (I don't know why it was changed). We played against Wallen, Beveridge and Darraweit in a competition and played social games around the district.

Our cricket team was very strong playing in a similar area to tennis plus Kilmore. Football was also popular. all sport was played just for the love of the game in rather primitive competitions, but all had a lot of fun and many happy memories. Peg scored for the cricket team for many years. When I started school in 1913 we had 50 pupils and three teachers in one big room. somehow or other we all learn to read and write in contrast to today's problems. Of course, in those days there was strong discipline and teachers word was law. School went to grade 8 merit certificate and I can truthfully say I enjoyed school.

In those days there were few opportunities for children to receive higher education especially in the country. Boys left school after Merrit and straightaway started work many boys joined the railways.

It was a time of development in Australia, jobs for girls were not very plentiful school teaching was opening up also nursing but many went into domestic service. after I finish school, I went to Kilmore convent for bookkeeping and typing twice a week and Peg also went there for music lesson, piano and mandolin, she was quite a good musician. The nuns there were very gifted women.

Over the years until 1929 when dad died suddenly from pneumonia and heart failure the mill was shifted three times and once we were burned out. Can't remember exactly the year early 1920s but I will never forget the site of all the hills in the east ablaze.

After the fire dad managed to get into a small site of virgin forest Mountain Ash on the north side of Mount Disappointment after the fire had gone through it but if the trees can be harvested in a certain time the timber isn't damaged so that was what happened. Dad cut some beautiful timber there until just prior to his death when he moved to Sunday Creek Clonbinane and was planning to move to Erica.

In my long life I have seen many changes for better or worse. Dad bought his first motor car a T Model Ford about 1923 and we were proud as Peacocks. Later he bought another newer model and later on a Dodge. As he had the only car in the village, he generously helped out his neighbours taking people to the doctor in Kilmore as an example. After his death Peg and I bought a car, an A Model Ford and later on a Ford V8 and we continued to help out the neighbours, counting back recently I took women to hospital to have babies on 13 occasions usually at night and luckily always got them there in time.

Motoring in those days was really hazardous, the roads were terrible, even for horse drawn vehicles. long distance travelling was by train.

We quite often went to Melbourne for the day mum always took us to a pantomime in the summer, also she would go shopping in Smith St Collingwood or Chapel St Prahran. city shopping was just beginning, Sidney Myer really opened it up for country people. Paynes at the top of Burke St was considered the best place for Manchester goods like sheets and towels etc.

I can remember 3 shillings and four pence return tickets to Melbourne. Two morning trains down to back in the evening, even trains up and down on the Sunday and one train went through Wandong about 6:15 PM each day. we called it the milk train as it carried large cans of milk to Melbourne each evening, there were no milk tankers in those days.

The early Melbourne I remember had cable trams with an open dummy front where the driver operated the controls and a closed the carriage behind. The notice on the open part said, "hang on around the corner", fares were two pennies for city sections, Spencer St to Spring St, Flinders to Latrobe St or parts thereof.

Another treat of my childhood was a once a year trip to the seaside, usually to Saint Kilda. Wandong, Kilmore East and Broadford schools combined, a special train was chartered and everyone went, dad gave his men a day off.

Great cooking and sandwich making beforehand, and everyone took a picnic no fast foods and we kids had ice creams an absolute treat. Strangely the sea smell seemed much stronger in those days I don't think it is my imagination just modern day pollution.

Another big day for Wandong was the New Year's Day sports meeting. Woodchopping was the main attraction, foot running and novelty events and highland dancing. Dad was the chief organiser the wood chops his pet interest. He supplied the logs was head cutter and starter.

In the early 1920s he and a Mr. Robinson who had a shop in Lonsdale St and supplied axes, saws etc to millers had started up an axe men's union to control the sport. The young ones loved the Scottish and Irish dancing, Peg eventually learned some of the dances.

For the 20 years that dad operated the sawmills in the forest the only way to get to them was to walk ride a horse or go up on the timber truck. Dad had a white horse named Kitty and Kitty had a foal he named Sheila. Charles had a pony named Billy but not one of the girls learn to ride and believe mum was a good horse woman in her single days.

The timber truck went up to the mill each day pulled by four horses if one ventured on a trip the seating was bags of chaff going up for the horses and bullocks used on the mill. 12 to 14 men were employed on the mill and they camped in the hill on the job. Those who had homes and families in Wandong

came home at weekends. It certainly was a hard life. 48 hour weeks, later reduced to 44 a lonely life for both men and their wives. Timber prices were 20 shillings for 100 super feet. Later they rose to 22 and six. I kept the books for dad after I left school and found the 20 shillings easier to workout. Each day we sent away one 16 tonne truck of timber, plus the occasional 11 tonne truck and supplied the local demands. pickets and droppers for fences were always in demand.

Each night I walked to the station to post the invoice for the days timber to our customers, usually lighting the way with a hurricane lantern. The railways functioned so well in those days the truck would usually reach its destination the next day.

Dads timber was always good quality, when I see some of the framing timber nowadays I wonder.

Dad also had 1/3 share in a sawmill between Mansfield and Tatong. The timber was trucked from Tatong. They traded as McCashney Bros and Harper and after dad died, Charles took over up there, closed down Wandong and eventually bought out the McCashneys.

Dad always had some of his relatives working for him, in particular uncles Syd and Ralph. Others came and went including two brothers in-law. Bill Patton worked on the timber trucks for the 20 years the mills functioned, he was married to my mum's sister Alice.

Ever since Harper's arrived in Australia in 1841 they lived and worked around sawmills, they must have had sawdust in their blood. Sometime in the 1890s grandfather Harper went off to West Australia to work in the sawmills there around Denmark Pemberton. He took dad, uncles Henry and Allan with him.

It was booming there, Henry stayed on for many years married and had a family of three there before returning to Victoria and establishing a guest house at Belgrave in the Dandenong's, A popular holiday area, he named the house "HeatherMont".

Allan spent the rest of his life in WA married and had one son. At one time he had a sawmill at Marbellup near Albany cutting she-oak staves for beer barrels. another Uncle Sam went to NZ and worked in sawmills near Rotorua he married and had two sons.

Uncle Miles joined the railways and ended his working life as a conductor on interstate trains, he married and had two sons and a daughter. Uncle Bill joined the police force and became a plainclothes constable. he retired and went into the hotel business. This seemed the customary thing for policeman to do.

As I mentioned before Syd and Ralph worked for dad and Ralph took me to dances at Wallan and Upper Plenty in my early teen years. Travelling by horse and jinker dances were always advertised as concert and dancing with

supper and always on the notice "moonlight". A Miss Annie Patullo usually played for the dancers later her younger sisters took over.

We all started dancing quite young it's seemed part of growing up, lances quadrilles etc were popular and vigorous circular waltzes, barn dances Valletta. I can remember when the Maxina first started and of course later the Charleston. A Mrs Barnes on the piano and Mr Jack Ryan who worked on the railways played the accordion they were noted for the perfect time they kept.

During the war years 1914 to 18 we had lots of farewells to soldiers and afterwards welcome homes. We had lots of musical evenings in our homes songs around the piano. I remember dad singing "Memories" his favourite. Card games were very popular both in our homes and euchre parties in the supper room at the hall. We all learn to play cards even poker for pennies.

Another highlight of my childhood school days was the annual concert. All the practise that went into it the maypole dance ribbon dance all the songs and recitations we loved it all and the parents were so proud.

Mum and dad were hospitable and welcomed visitors. regulars were young friends Stan and Russell Knight, and our Donnellan cousins. Mrs Donnellan, (Aunt Maggie) what's my dad's cousin. Their mothers were sisters and Marge became my best girlfriend I often visited them at their home in Thornbury and always on the Friday night we went to the pictures a big treat for a country girl.

As we grew older Marge and I became keen theatregoers, rarely missed a show, Melbourne had many live theatres in those days. Musical comedy, drama, opera, music hall at the Tivoli we saw them all usually from the pit very back stalls two shillings at a matinee. Marge worked at the Myer emporiums in various offices there and was there over 30 years.

In March every year Marge and I holidayed together at various resorts Marysville, Healesville, Phillip Island, Lakes Entrance, Stawell and the Grampians. We also visited Marges grandmother at Wallace near Ballarat and my grandparents at Trentham. One year we went to Adelaide by train, sat up all night second class and holidayed with Kath and Clarrie Shoppee Marge had been their bridesmaid.

Looking back on my young life I have seen remarkable changes I can remember when I first heard a gramophone. Harry Laundry on a cylindrical record. Later on, the flat 75's then the long-playing ones. I was the proud owner of a Decca, a machine in a carrying case and we had great pleasure with that.

In the 1920s wireless was being broadcast the receiver crystal set with a cats whisker and heard through earphones. The broadcasting of wrestling was the favourite with the men also Test cricket from England. Later on we acquired a battery set we could all sit around and listen, it was wonderful how the

announcer really conveyed the scenes to you. They all had lovely speaking voices; television was not even thought of in those days.

We also had the phone installed in the mid 20s, Wandong 3, operating from 9 to 6 each weekday closed from noon Saturday over Sunday unless there was an emergency when you could call a switchboard which was at the post office store.

We always bought the Age each day, the Leader or Weekly times weekly, And also the Kilmore advertiser an Kyneton guardian. Later on when I was older 60 years ago the woman's weekly came into our lives I can also remember the Australian journal a monthly 6 shillings a copy. Dad also bought an occasional Smiths Weekly, I have always enjoyed reading which probably stems from my childhood opportunities to read.

In my teenage years aeroplanes were beginning to operate more widely and always when you heard one about you rushed outside to watch it come and go. I saw my first aeroplane while at school and later on one was forced to land in a paddock on the West side of the village the whole town went to have a look.

As I mentioned before the roads were terrible when the first motor cars arrived. Dust in the summer, mud in the winter and terribly rough, nevertheless we usually went for a Sunday drive, Yan Yean reservoir and Kinglake were favourite spots.

Dad became a Kilmore Shire councillor in about 1921 or 1922, he was president in 1924 when the watchtower from the old Kilmore gaol was re erected on monument hill to the east of the town, a big day for Kilmore the governor Tony Stradbroke attended. Peg had the honour of presenting flowers. Dad was also appointed president in August 1929 just over a month before his sudden death he was only 57. At the time of dad's death the 1930s depression was just starting and sadly it continued until the end of that decade.

As we lived a country simple life no frills no debts the depression did not affect us greatly but we saw the effects by the number of hawkers calling jumping the trains and trying to sell small items.

Also in the forest we had men on sustenance (as it was called) doing Bush clearing, no dole in those days hard work for a pittance.

In Melbourne susso workers built the Yarra Blvd, Also the great ocean road was started with that labour force. Overall it must have been a time of great hardship for many and didn't improve until the 1935 to 45 war was started when many of the unemployed joined the forces especially the army. this at least meant three good meals a day, warm clothes in warm beds, even if there wasn't much money. The big army camp at Puckapunyal near Seymour was built at this time.

One of my community services at Wandong was a secretary to the public hall committee and for many years Peg and I supervised the small library we had there.

Two other efforts organised by the locals were a minstrel show and a mouth organ band, both created a lot of interest and fun. Country people especially in small communities had to make their own entertainment.

In 1929 Peg and I started to play golf, a good friend Les Hall was our tutor and we joined the Kilmore Golf Club. nine holes and over the years became 12 then the full 18, send scrapes at the beginning. much of the work on the course was done by volunteer labour of the members. today to look at the beautiful course, grass greens, a lovely clubhouse, I think of those who started it off. both was always a great pleasure, at club level tournaments and Pennant and we make many friends.

When young we were all great walkers, ramble through the Bush for miles and in the spring the countryside was lovely. wattles all along the Creek Heath red pink and watch on the partly cleared land and many varieties of the smaller wild flowers.

Charlie and his mate Bill (Ducky) Marshall were great rabbiters as were most of the boys. Every Saturday off they would go with ferrets in their boxes bags of nets and mattocks. Some days lucky others not so good, now and then for a treat Charles would allow me to accompany them, of course you had to pull your weight and carry some of the gear.

Rabbit skins made some pocket money for the boys and a rabbit made a tasty meal in various guises. fox skins were not so plentiful, but I had a skin given to me had it died in a Cocoa colour and very proudly wore it for ages.

After Peg and I aquired a car in the 1930s we did a lot of motoring many trips to Trentham and to see our grandparents, rain hail or shine even snow. one funny thing I remember about T model Ford cars, the petrol was gravity fed to the tank so if the tank was getting low one had to back up hills, I can remember that happening on the Lancefield gap.

We also visited Charles mill above Mansfield on several occasions. luck if we arrived without getting bogged on the way about once a fortnight, we had a trip to Melbourne did some shopping went to the pictures and came home at all hours. we didn't know how to change a wheel, otherwise no mechanical knowledge but somehow, we always got through.

I think the old cars were foolproof. In 1934 Peg and I had a trip to WA to visit uncle Allan and Aunt Evelyn and said at Albany. we travelled over by ship, "Katoomba" cold at Adelaide and had a day there then three more days to Albany our first sea voyage. in those days there was a regular coastal ship service all around Australia for both goods and passengers which was very well patronised.

Uncle Allan had not seen any members of his family for over 20 years and we received a great welcome. He reminded us of our father we had a very enjoyable month in Albany did all the usual tourist things and played some golf and tennis. then we motored up to Perth had about a fortnight there and came back home by train. local train to Kalgoorlie, transcontinental to a little place called Terowie, then change again at Port Augusta for Adelaide. The immensity of Australia and the emptiness was very impressive. had a week or so in Adelaide then on the over land as far as Stawell, well we spent a few days then back to Melbourne after eight weeks away, a lovely holiday.

One thing I noticed today is the growth of tourism and travel generally. people rush all over our country and all over the world and so much is done by air, wouldn't have dreamt of it when I was young!

In 1935, Peg, Eileen and I spent three weeks in Tasmania. we had a very rough trip across Bass Strait. the strike is considered a very rough sea, but strangely on the way back it was like a millpond. We travelled by the most of Tasmania and had a lovely holiday.

Early in 1836, Peg, Eileen, Adan Routledge who married Charles later on and I had a holiday in Sydney. We motored up, called at Canberra on the way and then spend a few days with friends at Bowral- a delightful area. A little point when you crossed the border at NSW at Albury you reported to the police station and received a permit to travel there.

We had a fortnight in and around Sydney staying at a private hotel in Kings Cross. We had old family friends at Woollahra and they help us to have a great time. We travelled home on the coast road, stayed overnight at Milton Genoa and at Lakes Entrance. Looking back for the times we were quite adventurous. Women travelling alone and not knowing a thing about the innards of a car but all the travelling we did was always enjoyable and we met some very nice people. The Ford Model A was just as reliable as the old T model.

I recently came across some old notebooks I kept on our travels. Hotel accommodation (no motels in those days), 7/6 to 10/-, dinner bed breakfast other meals 2/6 5/- . to Sydney and back 1428 miles. Petrol, oil, grease and clean £7.00. As the writing is in pencil it isn't very easy to read, but over prices £5.00 went a long way in those days.

There is a small railway station one mile south of Wandong, right on the top of the Great Dividing Range, as is Pretty Sally Hill on the old Sydney Road. early on it was called Kilmore Junction, later changed to Heathcote Junction by which name the area is still known. Originally a branch line left the mainline there for Kilmore Heathcote and Bendigo. It has been closed down and dismantled for many years now. Most branch country lines have gone as the roads improved. Motor trucks have largely taken over the general cartage. A book by Patsy Adam Smith "Hear the train blow" is a splendid record of branch lines small rural communities and their way of life.

Another memory I have is about stamps I don't remember penny postage but can recall when the price was two pence (tuppence). Telegrams too I remember, 14 words for one shilling. Telegrams were much used before telephones became so common.

Water had always been a problem in country Australia, but Wandong had a reticulated water supply part of the Kilmore Water Trust. Nevertheless nobody wasted water on fancy gardens fruit trees and vegetables. Weekly or twice weekly baths were the norm. Hot water carried from the copper or a four gallon kero drum on the stove - no hot water services. I remember when we acquired a lovely new bath cream enamel on cast iron it must have weighed a tonne plus a chip heater, Little Hero, what's the brand name and it was most efficient. all the cooking and baking was done on a wood stove. I can still recall coming home from school to a kitchen full of lovely aromas mum provided splendid meals.

Another aspect of modern life is the frequency of children's, and grownups visits to the doctors. the four of us battled through all the usual childhood illnesses, measles chickenpox whooping cough mumps plus the usual coughs and colds without once seeing a doctor. Mum had a huge book about home diagnosis and treatments. Can't remember the name but its advice must have been effective. Everyone in the township relied on Mrs Harper's doctors book and all survived, antibiotics had not been discovered.

I mentioned the Kilmore Water Trust the water from two small creeks rising on Mount Disappointment was harnessed. first Greenshields Creek and Hazel Creek, later one named after dad - Harpers Creek (there is also a road up there named Harpers track). The first reservoir was called Escretts then a much larger one the Hollowback. Broadford took their water from Sunday Creek and in drought times water was a big headache for both towns. Some years ago, 1982, Kilmore and Broadford combined and built a large reservoir on Sunday Creek. The construction cost blew out and there have been problems with its safety but so far all is well. Wallan has come into this water district and as all the townships plus Heathcote Junction are rapidly developing the demand for water has grown enormously. People are very wasteful with water the supply is far from unlimited so I can see problems in the future.

In the years dad ran the sawmill at Wandong £6 per week was the highest wage he ever paid and that was above the basic wage. Nowadays the wages and salaries quoted are mind boggling. One has to think in thousands and millions where once it was pounds and parts thereof.

On £6 Per week, men were able to acquire a house and provide for a family until the children were able to join the workforce. No cars radios televisions

microwaves refrigerators washing machines or dishwashers. Such luxury's nowadays are regarded as necessities.

Life should be much easier, but the acquisition of these articles seems to bring their own problems. The necessity of mothers to go back or stay in the workforce with children in childcare. It really is to maintain what they see as their standard of living not just to provide life's necessities and it becomes a hectic rushed lifestyle, "No time to smell the roses" as a poet once said.

It has become a very materialistic age. Our Wandong home "Blackwood", On the curve in dry Creek Crescent still seems to be in excellent condition. Large windows have been put in, otherwise it looks much the same. it was always quite a spacious home. it was built of seasoned hardwood before our time Wandong had a seasoning works and it must be 100 years old.

After our mother died in 1953, we sold the house and shedding including stables for eight or nine horses plus land on which nine or so new homes have lately been built for the sum of £1000, one thousand pounds.

Wandong was then in the doldrums, now it is a flourishing village with most residents commuting to Melbourne to work and a brand-new school with a couple of 100 pupils. The new Hume freeway passes just west of the town. Another interesting point the forest is now intersected with roads no sawmilling is allowed and it is quite popular with tourists. they're probably doing more damage than the workers did.

The Harper Family in Australia

I am one of the third generation of Harpers born in Australia descendants of Andrew Ann Maria Harper who came to this country. Port Phillip district as it was known then on the 30th of November 1841 and they were from County Antrim, Northern Scotland and sailed from Greenock Scotland on the Marquis of Bute on 11th of August 1841.

They were accompanied by three small sons, Paul (age 6), James (aged 4), and Henry (aged 9 months). they were bounty migrants brought to this country by Robert Howe of Sydney. Andrew was 29 and his wife 27. Voyages to Australia must have been a big adventure in those times, such small ships long journeys into the unknown the early settlers showed great courage.

Andrew and Maria had a further five children, Australian born including my Grandfather, John Phillip was born on 15th July 1847 supposedly at Geelong. according to research by a cousin, Sydney Harper of Albany WA, Maria was burnt to death on 25th July 1940 and was buried at Creswick. Andrew also had a sad end dying of asphyxia at the Carriers Arms Hotel Doveton St Ballarat on 1st of June 1882 and is also buried at Creswick.

On the 150th anniversary of their arrival in Australia we, the descendants of John Phillip, marked the site of their resting place in Creswick cemetery with a suitable memorial.

Sadly, over the years we have lost track of any Harper relatives except our immediate family. We should have written down and talked more in the time of my father's generation. I do remember when young, meeting some of his cousins a family at North Melbourne. I think the father was Samuel, also a cousin at Woodend a Mrs Gabriel. I think her father was William. Also Mrs Harbour whose mother was a sister to John Phillip that is about the limit of my knowledge.

My Harper grandmother was also Irish, Maria or Mary Hedigan of county Clare Ireland. She and a sister Bridget came to this country in their early teens as servants to a migrating family. As neither could read or write they never again had any contact with their homeland. The Harpers could read and write according to a ship's log but I think they to last contact with their families.

That is one of the saddest things about pioneering days. The women especially must have been terribly lonely their lives comprise nothing but hard work and childbearing.

Grandma gave birth to fifteen children, my father her eldest son, born 26th December 1871 at Gordon Vic, a daughter Mary Jane was older than he. The whole family was:

Mary Jane (Saunders) Thomas - 4 children

John Andrew married Ellen Hammons - 4 children

Henry Thomas married Eliza Preston - 3 children

Annie Maria (White) Thomas - 3 children

Samuel Phillip married Martha - 2 children

Margaret (Cann) Arthur 1 Child

Myles Robert married Tilly Carson - 8 children

William Herbert

Ralph Edmund married Hannah Brazel - 4 children

Eileen Alys Cleghorn (Clark) David. - 1 child

Three children died in infancy.

32 grandchildren produced 80 great grandchildren those families are now producing great great grandchildren and even greater for instance my sister has two great grandchildren.

My parents were married in Ballarat and their married life was spent in and around some sawmilling areas. Mainly in the Wombat Forest area as it is now known in the Ballarat, Daylesford, Blackwood region. Bolwarrah was one place dad spoke of, records show that Harpers attended the Simmons Reef school near Blackwood.

Harpers also had a long association with sawmilling in WA Grandfather went over there in the 1890s accompanied by dad, Uncles Henry and Allan they worked in mills near Denmark and Pemberton.

Grandma wouldn't go some family members were already married and settled here, they didn't stay long but Uncle Hen married and settled there for many years. Allan stayed in the West for the rest of his life and Grandfather only returned a couple of years before his death he died in the Austin hospital had cancer so probably buried in the old Warringle cemetery, sadly his long absence made him almost a stranger to his Victorian family.

Grandma relied a lot on her family especially on dad, "My son John" as she always called him. Uncle Ralph too was wonderful to her. She believed the family should support her. Her life when she was having her family must have been very hard, life on sawmills was very primitive no luxuries or conveniences in those days. dad bought her a piano of which she was very proud a real status symbol of the times. grandma probably gave birth to the whole 15 children with only the help and support of a midwife, nary a doctor and at Wandong she performed the same service herself to many women.

For all her hard life grandma was always a perfect lady, always dressed in black a gold brooch at her neck loved a silk dress. I have the brooch that dad gave her when he returned from WA and she passed it on to me when I was 16. she is buried in the Kilmore Catholic Cemetery. She died on the 12th of July 1932, my father died before her on the 18th of September 1929 to her great sorrow a first break in the family.

The Harper family has always been very close, even now I tried to keep in touch with the various branches. My son Geoffrey calls it mum's ancient history. So many of my generations have passed on, my only brother Charlie was drowned in the Eildon Wier on the 17th of October 1960 a great sorrow to his wife and four children two daughters and two sons he was only 52.

When dad spoke of his early life it was about Bolwarrah and Blackwood districts not very far apart. I think they went to Blackwood in the 1880s. He also spoke of Korweinguboora in the Wombat forest and of working at Cobaw between Lancefield and Kyneton. Bullengarook is another area he mentioned and I can remember him saying his first job after leaving school was with Mr Harry McCashney at North Blackwood in a sawmill of course.

All the places mentioned are not really far apart by modern standards with good roads and motor transport a very different story in those days. in later years dad was in partnership with two sons of McCashney in a sawmill

“Toombullup Sawmills” Archerton via Tatong, trading as McCashney Bros and Harper.

After dad's death in 1929 Charlie followed on and eventually bought out the McCashneys. That mill had a few more moves as the timber cut out then moved over the range to the Mansfield area, Buttercup Creek near Merrijig then to Barjarg where the Harpers finally finished sawmilling in 1972 after five generations being involved in the trade.

Generally speaking our forests are very much depleted no milling allowed so perhaps in 100 years they will have returned to their former glory.

At some time in their lives all the male descendants of John Phillip have worked on sawmills plus brothers in-law Saunders and White in that generation. Some of the next generation followed on but now family members are in many and varied trades and professions even a couple of farmers, my son Geoffrey who is at Glenaroua, and Charlie's son John at Wyman NSW. Charlie's other son Graham is a stock and station agent at Lockhart NSW. I have three interesting books on sawmilling in the various districts “tall timber and tramways”, “timber and gold”, and “Mansfield sawmills”, Harpers worked in all the districts mentioned.

Dads first venture into sawmill ownership was with a partner Mick Monett at Macedon where he and mum settled after their marriage on 4th of June 1906. Charlie and I were born there. At the end of 1909 the partnership was ended, dad went to Wandong where big mills had operated also a seasoning works in the 1880s and later Monett went to Powelltown.

In dads sawmilling days he always used horses and bullocks to bring the logs to the mill and transport the sawn timber to Wandong station on a wooden tramway.

The Hammond Family

My mother's parents were Charles Andrew (Andy) Hammond and Isabella nee Atkinson. they spent all their married life at Trentham they were both Australian born and are buried in the Trentham cemetery.

Andy worked at the Trentham railway station loading and unloading various goods in those days the rail wasted all the cottage state-wide, Trentham was a renowned potato district also many sawmills around.

Mum was the first child born 25th December 1880, Ellen Christina followed by Alice Isabella then Charles Alfred. Grandma also had twins a son and daughter who died in their early years. an interesting item aunt Alice Patton gave birth to premature triplets at Wandong with the assistance of grandma Harper but they did not survive.

Grandfather was a real old woman never drank or smoked and an ardent Rechabite also very involved in Free Masonry and went through all the lodges.

As a child I usually spent Christmas holidays at Trentham, and I have many happy memories of the place. Grandfather always had a lovely vegetable garden and gooseberries. Currents red and black always remind me of Trentham.

Grandfather had a brother Jim at Trentham and I remember learning of another brother Alfred at Mathoura and a sister Anne Mrs Henderson at Shepperton. Grandma had two sisters Lizzie Mrs Brady at Derby and Ellen Mrs Fullerton at Elmore. we knew the families and kept in touch when I was young but as the older folk passed away contact has been lost, I guess this happens in most families.

My three Hammond cousins children of Charles have all died and are buried at Trentham. Alice is only child Nancy is still alive, we didn't have many relatives on the immediate maternal side.

Some More Recollections.

I grew up in the days of lamps and candles a daily chore was to fill the lamps with kerosene and cleaning the glasses if you did venture out at night you lit the way with the hurricane lamp.

Washing day was a big effort boil the whites in the copper then rinse in cool water then into the blue water. many of the items were then starched pillowcases tablecloths etc. dirty clothes were scrubbed on a washboard.

ironing was done with flat irons heated on top of the wood stove a hot job in the summer.

Most of our floors were linoleum covered and always polished with an occasional carpet mat. In the 1930s we bought our first carpet square almost covering the big living room floor.

The refrigeration in those days was the Coolgardie safe, a wooden frame with hessian sides a tray of water on the top with strips of material hanging down it the flannel or tailing always moist. It was surprisingly effective especially placed in a sheltered airy spot.

I have seen remarkable changes in motoring and road construction. When we acquired our first car in 1922 or 1923 a T model Ford after called the Tin Lizzy the roads were terrible. Dust in summer mud in winter and all potholes, motoring was an adventure and we did have some funny experiences like being stuck in a Creek Ford with water in the carburettor.

One experience I had quite unbelievable nowadays I was driving home from Melbourne in my own in the model A when in Royal parade just up from the Haymarket about opposite where the Royal Melbourne Hospital is now a mob of cattle were being driven across the road probably from Newmarket to the city abattoir. One broke away crashed onto the bonnet of my car and broke the windscreen otherwise no damage. The early cars were tough the drivers also, I think that modern cars are too lightly constructed for the speed they can achieve they just crumple up in an accident.

Our first refrigerator was bought in 1941 a kerosene type it was very effective. A "Silent Knight" was the brand name, I made ice cream regularly. the silent knight refrigerator was invented by a Mr Hellstrom in Sydney he made a lot of money from his inventions and became a great public benefactor.

Another man who made a fortune in Victoria mainly from chocolates, old gold brand MacPherson Robertson in later life was knighted. Melbourne has many notable institutions due to his generosity, Jesse McPherson hospital, Emily McPherson domestic college I bridge over the Yarra the factory he founded in Smith St Collingwood. I well remember when a young man took you to the theatre he always presented you with a box of chocolates- happy memories.

An interesting Story of days Gone by.

In January 1930 after our father died, we had closed the Wandong mill mainly because the timber was almost cut it out and Charlie took over his Toombullop up interests. Uncles Syd Sam and Ralph went up there to work but the families of Syd and Ralph stayed in Wandong they had their homes there.

Charlie took the family car a Dodge up there but after a while realised his horse would be very useful so commissioned his cousin Jack son of Syd to ride it up to him Jack was only about 16 or 17 and away he went it really was quite an epic ride more than 100 miles he camped along the way in farmers sheds and arrived there safe and sound.

Sadly at the time we all just accepted the right as nothing out of the ordinary and really even for those times it was a mighty effort for both lad and horse I don't remember how long it took an unfortunately Jack died a couple of years ago so I can't discuss it with him.

Jack stayed on to work at Toombullop and other sites in company with his father until uncle retired then Jack went into another branch of working with timber in a furniture factory in Melbourne.

Uncle Sam stayed on working for Charlie until 1937 when he and family went back to New Zealand he had lived there for many years and Aunt was a New Zealander they had two sons Syd and Bill.

Uncle Ralph didn't stay up there very long he came back to Wandong and worked for the Forest Commission until he retired and lived there until he died. The Syd Harper family moved to Bendigo about 1938. There weren't any job opportunities in Wandong for the children there aren't any Harpers in Wandong nowadays.

January 1994

I recently had a drive around wonder so many changes in so many memories the wandering I grew up with from 1909 to 1953 when mum died and we sold up there even until 1970 when Uncle Ralph died has nearly vanished.

There are still a few of the original homes there the hotel was burnt down many years ago and the old store has gone. A new school, the second since my school days has been built. The public hall is still there and there is a new all purpose hall at the sports reserve the big change is in the housing new homes everywhere.

McDonald's paddock, (Where Peg and I practised our golf), is almost completely built up joining Heathcote Junction to Wandong. There is a caravan park motel and restaurant the Australiana, on the West of the freeway in what was a grazing paddock belonging to the Faulks family.

It seems to be a very popular spot a new hotel is being constructed near the old hotel site and the new store seems to sell everything still the post office store. Another very big change is in the roads both in general alignment and construction only about 10 minutes from Kilmore now and having the Hume freeway on the West side it is a quick trip to Melbourne Wandong is largely a commuter town.

The two churches are still there the Anglican served from Whittlesea and Roman Catholic from Kilmore. another big change the railways, I don't think there is even one stationmaster there now. the standard gauge railway goes a long where our timber siding used to be. It's hard to imagine the thousands of tonnes of timber and firewood the station handled in my young life.

I don't think that people nowadays can visualise life as it was in my young days and sadly most do not try the changes have been so many and so varied they're just accepted the changes in this the 20th century are really mindboggling all the new inventions changes in our social thinking and moral expectations changes in our eating and drinking habits the way people dash all over the world etc for all the material gains I don't think we are a very happy country.

Life on a Sawmill

Although as a family we did not live at the mill we occasionally made a trip up there. Our various mill sites at Wandong were not as isolated as in most forest areas and the majority of workers had their homes in the village although they did camp at the site over the week.

The Huts produced were built of untreated sawn timber usually one room with a huge fireplace at the end galvanised iron with stones inside. The men all batched they were able to get food supplies on the trucks which came from Wandong each day to bring down the timber.

Life at the Toombullop Mill was different, more isolated many miles from both Mansfield and Tatong from where the timber was railed. the roads in either direction were terrible in those days parts of the forest area there had been thrown open for settlement early this century named Archeton. For the farmers it must have been a struggle small acreage and harsh conditions. My father said the nicest potatoes and turnips he ever tasted were grown in that area.

After the mill opened many of the young men went to work there eventually the partnership McCashney and Harper built a schoolhouse to serve the district. at the mill the cottages were larger than Wandong, real homes with flower and vegetable gardens. A Hotel was built there and they often had dances people came from far and wide. I remember we went up there on a couple of occasions a long way from Wandong. One worker's wife ran a boarding house for the men. After our father died in 1929 my brother Charlie took over his interest there married a local girl in 1937 and as the timber cut out the mill was shifted to Bakers Creek on the slopes of Mount Buller. They reared a family of four two girls two boys. There the children attended Merrijig school until they moved to Mansfield in the early 1950s Charlie sadly was drowned in Eildon weir in 1960 he was a keen fisherman the mill had been shifted to Barjarj.

Charlie had bought out McCashneys and Ada his widow and elder son John ran the mill until 1972, I don't think there are many mills operating in the forest these days with better roads and motor vehicles the logs are bought out two more accessible sites.

The farms in the Archeton district have been reclaimed and treated as water catchment for the creeks up there that supplied Benalla with their water. Tthis year 1993 I visited the Tatong district the roads are excellent now and a real scenic drive over the mountains to Mansfield.

The area the forest area around Wandong is now known as Mount Disappointment forest and is a National Park.

October 1993

My Married Life 1936-1984

On 12th December 1936 I married Thomas Walter Peerce at Saint James Old Cathedral followed by a small party at the Federal Hotel Collins Street the depression was still on so money wasn't wasted on frivolities.

I was in my 30th year of age and Tom was 42 but we were lucky to have nearly 40 eight years of married life before Tom died on 4th July 1984 at 90 years of age.

The Pearce family had a property at from Kilmore on the McIvor Rd High Camp, now the northern highway. Quite a large property known as Craiglea with a very nice brick home on the Kilmore end. Tom and I set up home in a house we altered at the other end of the property, "Argyle", Glenaroua. Actually Craiglea comprised from original farms, Argyle, Glenfeldy, Glenbrae, and Craiglea. Argyle and Glenfeldy were originally part of the big Glenaroua run which was thrown open for selection around 1860 and members of the Kerr family Scottish migrants selected them. Since then Kerr's and Pearce's have been the only owners of the properties.

Descendants of other original settlers, Mcleans and Flemings are still residents in the district. McKenzie's, Chapmans and Figgins were others who settled there in the early days Greenshields also. The Grimwade family owns the original bluestone homestead Glenaroua and surrounding land.

Phillip came to the district in 1936 and after his death his nephew Fred inherited Fred had a family of three and his son Martin runs the place now Fred was a member of parliament for many years MLC.

There was over 6000 acres altogether running sheep for wool and fat lambs. The Pearce family originally came from Campbells Bridge near Stawell where my in-laws settled when they married in 1892. The first Pearce Walter had settled at nearby Doctors Creek "Prince Barnes" he named the farm nowadays it is known as "Old Coongee" cropping was the main activity plus some sheep.

They reared a family of six there before moving north to Kellalac near Warracknabeal where Shirley the youngest child was born in 1914.

Tom joined the army, the 4th light horse in 1916 and went overseas to the Middle East he took part in the "Charge of Beersheba" and was shot through the shoulder.

In the early 1920s they left the Wimmera and came South to Flowerdale Strath Creek. they were never very happy there not accustomed to hilly country and the Murchison hill was a horror to them especially to gran. Mr Pearce started to acquire the Glenaroua and High Camp land built the house on Craiglea and moved over there at the end of the 1920s Mr Pearce always had a team of horses in training did most of the work himself spent a lot of time in stables in Flemington so Tom ran the farm some of his horses were very good especially Ortolon and Finch.

Life on a farm was a big change for me especially as I couldn't see my neighbours homes but I soon settled down and got to know all the neighbours. In those early days Glenaroua was a small community with a school, a hall and Presbyterian Church a tennis court and a homemade 9 hole golf course. all have gone now victims of the motor car.

Tom and I reared a family of three at Argyle, Helen Isabel born 28th September 1938, Jennifer Margaret born 14th October 1940, and Geoffrey Thomas born 13th of August 1946.

Farming is a very unpredictable business so dependent on the weather and never being sure what price you will get for what you produce.

Tom's father died in 1938 just before Helen was born and in 1945 gran and Toms three unmarried sisters, Florrie, Amy and Evelyn decided to move to Melbourne so the Craiglea and GlenBrae parts of the property were put on the market.

Mr Norman Trescowthick bought it and he and Tom became very good friends. after a few years it was sold again to Ian and Joy Mien who were there about 20 years. since then it has been sold several times and various parts sold off.

We retained Argyle and part of Glenfeldy and nowadays Geoffrey has the property, he runs about 4000 sheep 100 or so head of cattle and does some cropping.

Our first years of married life would rather worrying years the world wide depression of the 30s plus very dry drought conditions and low prices.

Then the Second World War started in 1939 and in a strange way that ended the economic depression. There was increase demand for wool which the government acquired at a fixed price and great demand for all foodstuffs meat, wheat, butter etc as many of the young men in listed in the various forces the older men had to run the farms with the help of the women.

In the country we lived very quiet lives largely in our own area petrol was rationed coupons for so many gallons per month for all purposes then later on we also had coupons 40 sugar butter and clothing we all seem to manage compared to what Britain suffered all the shortages plus the terrible bombings we didn't fare too badly.

The 1939 to 45 war was a terrible one no one was safe anywhere it was a war against civilians I had several cousins in the service thankfully all returned safely but we did lose several friends.

A strange thing about the aftermath of the war is that the conquered countries Germany and Japan are now the stronger countries economically rather ironic.

The War Two made a big difference to the thinking of women they didn't want to lose the freedom and independence they had during the war years. So women in the workforce became commonplace not just in the traditional fields of teaching nursing and office workers nowadays women are everywhere.

Modern weapons of war are terrible things the guns the aeroplanes the bombs but the very worst was the discovery of nuclear energy the awful atom bomb the world has the capacity to destroy itself and all in it.

Back to more mundane things- Helen started school at Glenaroua in 1944 followed by Jennifer in 1946 but in 1948 our small school was closed and the children had to go to Seymour by bus, 17 miles each way. Seymour had educational facilities up to matriculation so in one way it was an advantage but it was very tiring for the smallfolk especially as the roads were dusty bush roads most of the way.

Geoffrey started school in 1952 and in all their school years I was always involved with the mothers clubs both primary and high school always attended sports days and speech notes something I know children appreciate.

None of the family went onto matriculation standard they did not have academic aspirations. Helen eventually did a nursing aide course at Fairfield hospital and has extensive nursing experience in many hospitals both local and in WA, Perth, Bunbury and Derby plus 11 years at Saint Andrews Melbourne until it closed down in her younger years she was very involved in the young farmer movement.

Jennifer started her working life in stock and station work with Dennis Lescelles she worked in New Zealand and New Guinea and then in hotels for many years she now works for financial developers office work.

Geoffrey has always worked on the farm and now owns it. in 1971 he married Annette Fullard a district girl. Her father owned "Mollison Park" at Pyalong and they have three sons Richard Thomas born 27 May 1973 Andrew Glenn born 8th February 1976 and Laurence Graham born 26 August 1978 Richard is now studying engineering at Bendigo and the other two are still at high school in Seymour.

Our country and most of the world are suffering a severe economic depression and the future for the young is very uncertain they all stay on at school much longer and spend years training for various jobs and professions an often can't get started in a job.

Highways in modern technology have caused many jobs to disappear machines can take over people are becoming redundant I doubt if full employment as I knew it will ever return.

When Geoffrey married Tom and I retired to Kilmore- 3 Chapel Street after 35 years at Argyle. when we first married Tom spent a lot of his working time at the Craiglea end of the property the working parts of the place where there was the shearing shed dip etc after 1945 these facilities had to be erected at Argyle. in the beginning we bred a lot a fat lambs the whole district likewise and many thousands of lambs were trucked by rail to Newmarket saleyards from High Camp railway station. The station was on a branch line from Heathcote Junction to Heathcote, originally it went to Bendigo but alas it no longer functions.

Road transport has taken over I think Australia as a whole has made a big mistake by becoming so dependent on road transport petrol or diesel driven for so much of our movements of all goods etc and people aeroplanes take their share to our rail services are very rundown.

Another Glenaruoa Story

A granddaughter of the original Chapman at Keeyuga, Robert Chapman a daughter of Keith has written a history of their involvement in the district and the family history her name was Heather Khoury and she is buried in Kilmore cemetery her book is called "A golden threaded tapestry".

Billy's Story

A little item of interest-

I reared one particular pet lamb, Billy a ewe and talk about a pet. It followed the children everywhere and would come inside if permitted it followed them

on their walks even if they went to Greenshields their schoolmates when I went around in the car to bring them home Billy would have to go in the back seat 2 she had one lamb then twins was expecting again Ann had problems when I found a crow had picked out one I the lamb had vanished and she was near death talk about a tragedy a real death in the family many tears were shed.

Our Golfing Days

The Kilmore Golf Club has decided to hold a nostalgia night on 21st of May 1994 members of the club past and present are invited as I first became a member of the club peg also in 1929 the idea brought back many memories.

Our good friend Les hall taught us the rudiments of the game and we practise around the paddocks at Wandong paddocks now covered with houses as wondering has grown.

Our first golf sticks (the usual name for clubs in those days) were a number two wood, a mid iron, a mashie and a putter. A mid-iron iron was a No 2 and a Mashie was a number 5 in modern terms the bag was canvas with leather strips and of course carried golf balls cost less than two shillings each.

The first course we played on was only nine holes pretty rough sand scrapes plenty of trees and fences to negotiate and of course the stiles.

There were seven of them in the nine holes and we always seem to be hitting them. the first clubhouse was a very primitive building two small rooms 1A kitchen with an open area between the wall on the East side open in the West except for the roof the toilets were out the back separate.

Later on the course was extended to 12 holes and later still to eighteen. members did nearly all the work I think the land was crown land the Golf Club having a long tenure. the old clubhouse was extended making the work for the ladies at tournaments etc so much easier.

Over the years grass greens were established a large reservoir was constructed to water the course so that now golf can be played all the year not only in winter as formerly. in more recent times the layout of the course has been changed making it more compact land acquired South of the course and a lovely new clubhouse erected in the early 70s with large additions in the early 90s.

The majority of the club members now are from the city and most are very enthusiastic members no one carries clubs nowadays all have golf buggies and oh so many clubs. Original golf sticks had wooden shafts Hickory a timber also much used for axe handles.

26 May 1994.

I attended the nostalgia night at the Golf Club I was the oldest member there 1929. Bunny Harrington was next 1932. quite a number of old members were there and several recalled various happenings of years gone by. Joy Mien, Floris Dickinson and I had a few words to say. the newer members were interested in the old stories especially the amount of work done by the voluntary labour George Hudson's efforts were much praised.

Let nothing disturb thee
Let nothing afflict thee
All things are passing
God alone is changeless
Patience obtaineth all things
Who has God wanteth nothing.
God alone sufficeth.

The rocking horse days of my childhood
have slipped and slithered away
and although I lived well in the half light
I welcomed the coming of day.