

# The story of my Granny: Bev Geddes



*Catchment Champion*

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Isabelle Cottrell, Jessica Ward, Lachlan  
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Holbrook Public School



## *Creative Catchment Kids*

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Murray Catchment Management Authority and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to natural resource management issues. [www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html](http://www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html)

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## *Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre*

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. [www.wirraminna.org](http://www.wirraminna.org)

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## *Murray Darling Association*

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. [www.mda.asn.au](http://www.mda.asn.au)

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Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area. [www.envirostories.com.au](http://www.envirostories.com.au)

# The story of my Granny: Bev Geddes

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Lachlan Bulle and Ryan Carman

Teacher: Adam Preston

School: Holbrook Public School

## *Catchment Champions*

In 2013, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about 'Catchment Champions', people who have made important contributions to managing natural resources in their local community. The program was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee catchment management authorities.

The Catchment Champions books are part of the Enviro-Stories Education Program.



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This story has been told through the experienced eyes of Tony Geddes. Tony is the grandson of Beverly Geddes. There are four generations of the Geddes family still living in and around Holbrook. The Geddes family have been farming in the Holbrook region for over 60 years.

The Geddes family are well known and respected in the Holbrook community.

## *Birth*

Granny was born in Melbourne. She was born Beverly Allen. That year there was an influenza epidemic that reached Melbourne and families were advised to move away, to more isolated areas so their babies didn't catch the disease. Our family decided to move to Macedon during this time. The 1918-1919 flu epidemic killed more people than World War 1.







### *Growing up*

She grew up in Melbourne in Toorak, which was then hobby blocks, horse paddocks and dairy farms. This is where she enjoyed riding horses.

I recall Granny telling me that she went to finishing school in Switzerland. She then lived in London with friends.

## *Marriage and Family*

Whilst in London, Granny met my Granddad, Ian Geddes, who was a scout. He asked her to marry him during the outbreak of World War II. They lived in London, during the war.



I recall a story Granny told about a lemon that came from Australia. The lemon sat on the table for weeks as there was no fresh fruit at the time and they didn't know what to do with it. To this day, Granny cannot remember what happened to the lemon.





### *Moving to Australia*

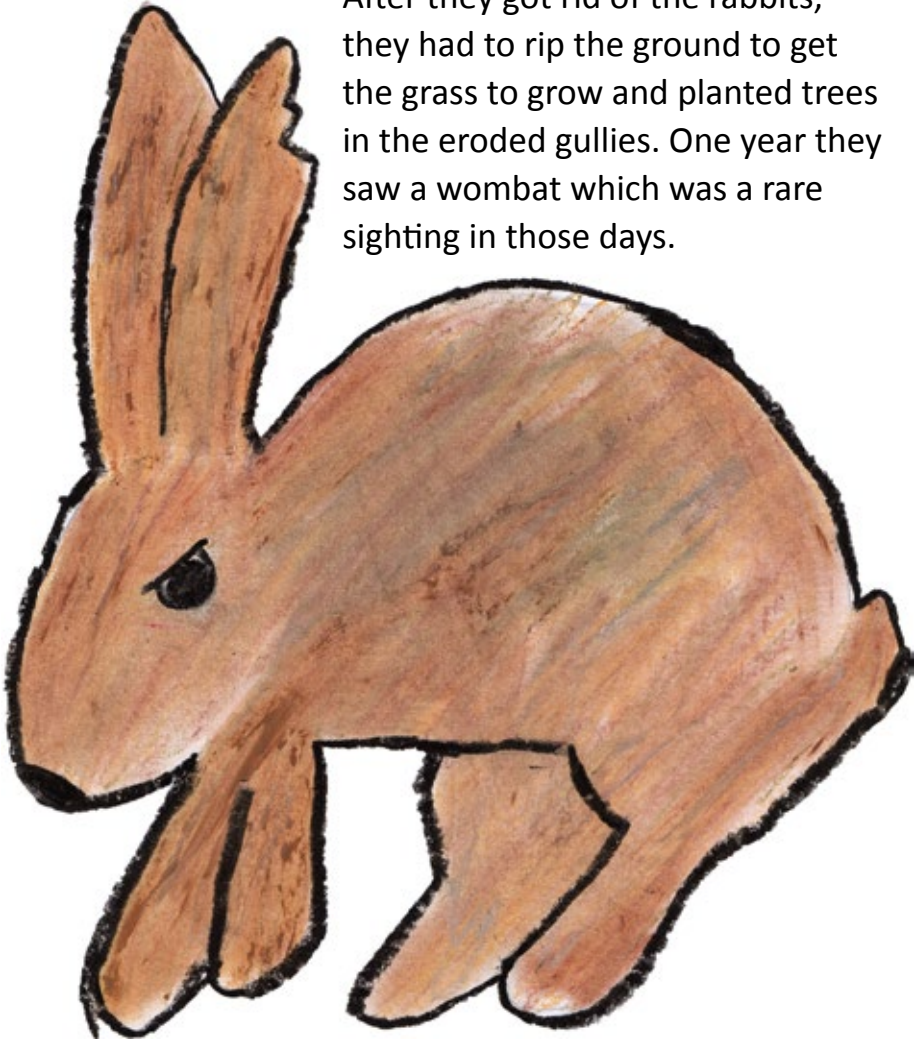
In 1947, when the second World War was over, Granny and Granddad decide to move to Australia. They went to Melbourne for a year and a half as they didn't know where else to live. Their passions for a rural life led them to buy a farm in Holbrook called Yallock in 1948. Granddad went off jackarooing to learn more about farm life.



## *Rabbit Infestation*

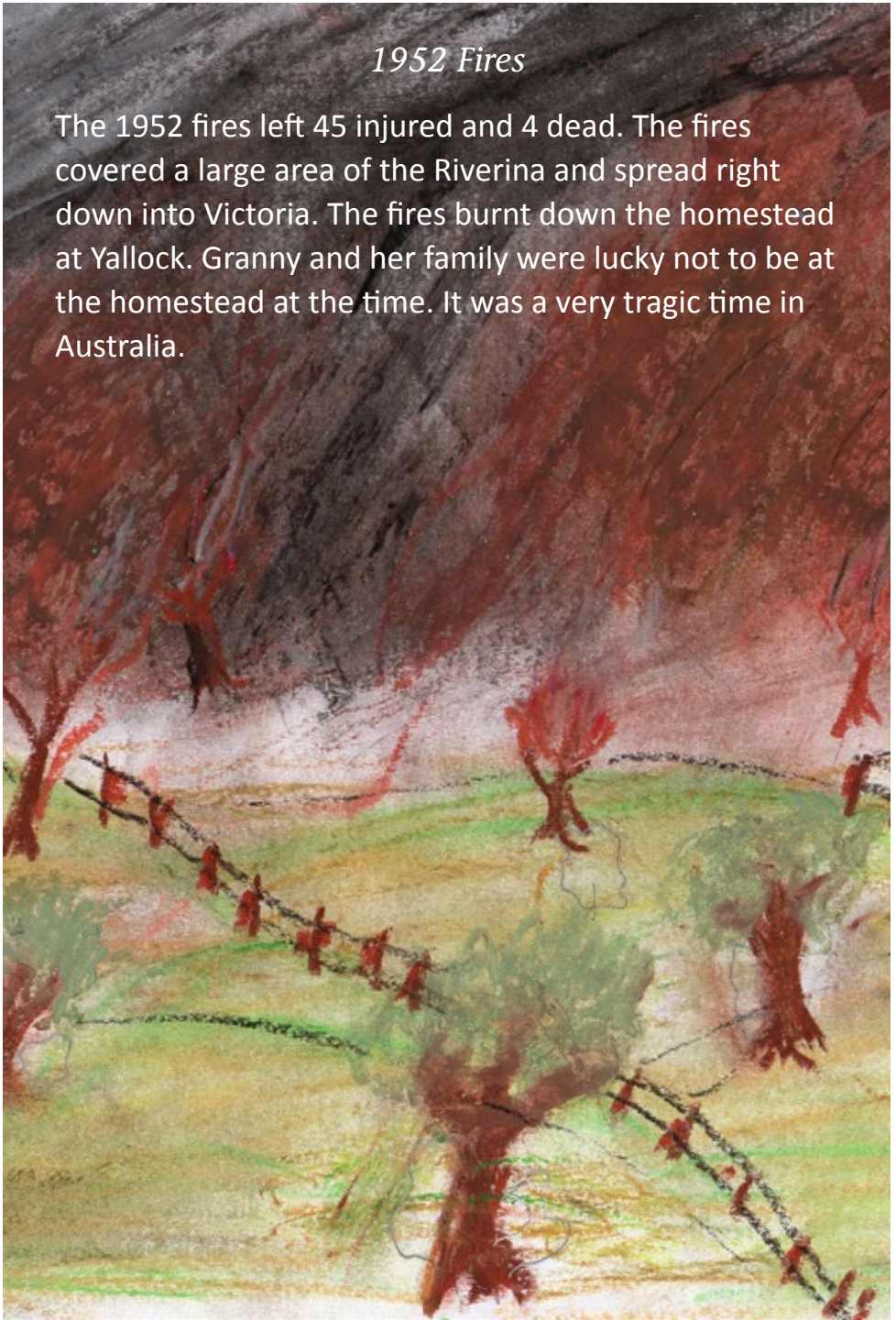
In the early years at Yallock there was a massive rabbit infestation. The rabbits compacted the ground and ringbarked the trees. To get rid of the rabbits, they fenced Yallock with rabbit proof fencing. They estimate that they disposed of 20-30 thousand rabbits.

After they got rid of the rabbits, they had to rip the ground to get the grass to grow and planted trees in the eroded gullies. One year they saw a wombat which was a rare sighting in those days.



## *1952 Fires*

The 1952 fires left 45 injured and 4 dead. The fires covered a large area of the Riverina and spread right down into Victoria. The fires burnt down the homestead at Yallock. Granny and her family were lucky not to be at the homestead at the time. It was a very tragic time in Australia.





## *Manoora Reserve*

Some years on, the family moved to Manoora, north of Holbrook, which the family still owns today.

Unfortunately, Granddad died in 1978 of a heart attack.

Granny continued to live alone on the farm and loved the bush setting. Granny was a member of 'Land for Wildlife', which she was very interested in.





### *Manoora Reserve*

Granny made pouches for motherless joeys. The house was full of these pouches which hung off the back of chairs. Granny also had two resident sugar gliders, some wombats who visited and a menagerie of native birds.

There was never a shortage of native animals at Manoora. In 1996, Landcare gave some money to Manoora so they could make a fox proof fence.







### *Bush Walk*

Before granddad past away, he joined the local council. He purchased a piece of land in Holbrook and founded the bush walk, which he later donated to the council. The bush walk still exists in Holbrook. The community uses the bushwalk frequently. Native animals also use it as a refuge, especially native birds.



## *Thank You*

On behalf of the Holbrook Creative Catchment Kids we thank Tony Geddes for telling us the story about the wonderful life of his granny, Beverly Geddes. Her passion for animals and native plants has given us the knowledge to continue to care for our environment for years to come.







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2013 Year 6, Holbrook Public School

The 2012 and 2013 Creative  
 Catchment Kids writing  
 program was showcased  
 at the Seventh World  
 Environmental Education  
 Congress, held in Morocco  
 during June 2013.



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