

OUR PLACE, CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF GUBBA WOODS



Kaitlin Cunningham, Telesa Cooper, Demi Ellis,
Daniel Hagley, Lily Huggins, Rhys Lees, Lily Masters,
Sarah Towler and Renee Wall



Hay Public School

Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

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

Enviro-Stories

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

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Authors: Kaitlin Cunningham, Telesa Cooper, Demi Ellis, Daniel Hagley,
Lily Huggins, Rhys Lees, Lily Masters, Sarah Towler and Renee Wall

Teacher: Fleur Cullenward

School: Hay Public School

Our Culture

In 2016, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about Aboriginal culture in their local communities. The program was generously funded by Riverina Local Land Services.

Creative Catchment Kids - Our Community is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.





Gubba and his family lived on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River near the New South Wales town of Hay. They lived there with other Aboriginal families and shared their food and lifestyle with one another.

Gubba's dad was an Aboriginal Drover and his mum was English. Gubba loved his home and life as a child, through sad and good times. He often comes back with his wife and children to his place on the river where he truly feels at home.

Gubba and his family lived in a hut made from wood, tin and wire. The hut was attached to a caravan. The floor of the hut was dirt, although it felt and looked like concrete because several times a day it was sprinkled with water and then swept thoroughly. An open fire place and chimney was on one end of the hut where all the cooking was done. They always had goats, horses, cows and chooks. The roof of the hut was sloped facing towards the rain.





Gubba remembers many nights where the adults would play their instruments and squeeze box; and the kids would light little fires not far from the adults. Eventually the fires would burn out and the kids would run back to the adults, as they were scared of the dark.

Schooling for Gubba was difficult, but his mum and his Auntie would make sure they made the walk along the road into town to school each day.

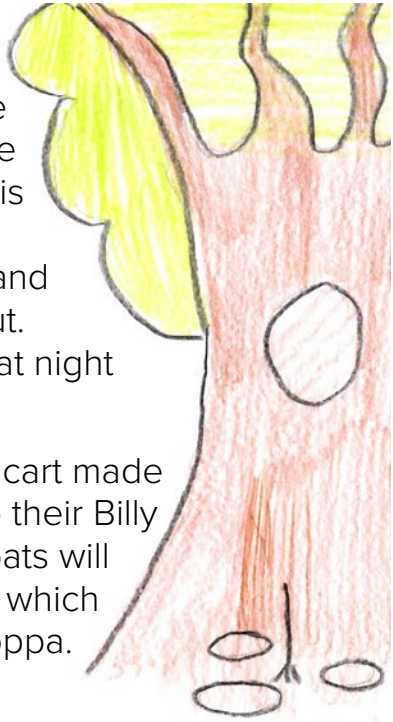


Gubba and his friends played at a big tree they called the 'Games tree'. On its trunk was a dartboard and a hookey board. At the base of the tree was a stick where they threw quoits. You can still see the marks they made when they took turns to throw a tomahawk axe at the tree to see who could get the best throw.

Gubba and the other kids also loved sliding down the river bank on a car bonnet which was attached to a piece of wire.

Boppa (Gubba's brother) was slipping and sliding ('gammin' - joking) around in the mud in the river bank. He felt pain in his toe but kept playing. All the while his toe had somehow been cut off! The mud had covered the toe and kept the blood from seeping out. When his mum cleaned it up that night he screamed.

Boppa also had a wild ride in a cart made out of a tomato box attached to their Billy Goat. As most people know, goats will climb trees, especially in panic, which is exactly what happened to Boppa.





Next to their hut was the killing tree. Pigs, sheep and goats would be killed then hung in the tree to set. In hot weather the meat was hung only at night and during the day was placed in a ground fridge.

A two feet deep by three feet wide hole was dug in the ground. A wet hessian bag was put in the bottom of the hole. The meat was wrapped in a sheet and placed on top of the hessian. A sheet of tin covered the food and then the ground fridge was covered with dirt.

Gubba's mum had a favourite fishing hole where she would use a handline and worms to catch yellowbelly, catfish and cod. When Gubba was young, the river was crystal clear and the reeds used to grow out of the bank. This was where the catfish would make their nests.

Further along the river, a sandbar was where they used to shine a silicone light to attract the yabbies and crayfish. Gubba and his friends could see their red eyes and would spear them with a three pronged spear. They only ever took what they needed to eat.





One night Gubba was in his tent with the other boys his age. Gubba convinced the others to go down to the river to splash their faces because it was hot. He hopped into the knee-deep water and leant down.

Suddenly, a body came out of the water moaning loudly. They all screamed and ran back to the tent, sobbing quietly, so the adults couldn't hear. They all thought it was the 'Gooliga' - bunyip. He was sure the parents hadn't noticed them leaving their tent.

Gubba would help his dad break-in horses for themselves and other people. It was Gubba's job to ride the wild horses in the river because they wouldn't buck in the water. That was the way they broke them in.

Gubba's family had at times twelve horses for mustering. He remembers mustering as a young kid in the lignum with his dad on Torrey Plains and riding racehorses for local owners.





Today, Gubba and his extended family, including his cousin Splinter, live in Hay with their own families. Although Gubba disliked school he recognises the importance of a good education. Gubba went to Monash University when he was 36.

He and Splinter (both descendants of the Wiradjuri people) strive to impart the knowledge of their people and their connection to their land. Gubba takes many children on tours and shows them tools and weapons such as grinding stones, boomerangs, spearheads, coolamons and hammer stones.



Gubba's place is for everyone. His special memories of his family, and particularly his mum, are strong for him in his riverbend. He feels a connection with the land and he and Splinter ask that others listen to the country around them and take time to hear what their elders say.

They both believe that the river is the heart of the country and spending time near the river, listening, looking and hearing will allow your troubles to flow away downstream. They are proud of their Aboriginal spiritual heritage.



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2016 Year 6, Hay Public School

Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.

