Glimpses into the family heritage of Kevin and Sylvia Penny





Glimpses into the family heritage of Kevin and Sylvia Penny



Compiled by Lorraine Penny McLoughlin in consultation with Jennifer Penny Iredale



Dedicated to Sarah Iredale and Penny McAvaney and their families

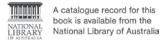


Copyright © Lorraine Penny McLoughlin, 2022 www.fitzmcl.com +61 408 400 010

Edited by: Peter Fitzgerald Designed by: Alison Fort Printed by: Douglas Press

Photography from various sources.

ISBN: 978-0-6454229-1-7



By the same author:

Barbara Robertson: An Australian artist's life (2009) George Tetlow and Mark and Jill Pearse: Lives in art (2015)

Thinking on paper (2020)

 ${\it Elaine\ Haxton: A\ colourful\ artist\ and\ life\ (2021)}$

This book covers a few years and begins in Comaum, a landscape very special to the Pinejunga people, the traditional owners over thousands of years.

Foreword

I offer this celebration of our parents Kevin and Sylvia Penny, to provide glimpses into their backgrounds and times, and to save these memories from being lost.

I remember a lunch in a village in land-locked and isolated Bhutan. The squares of yak butter drew a comment that perhaps the producers added salt which made it stick together or preserved it. My mind flashed to memories of my mother churning milk on a remote Australian farm in the 1950s. Did she add salt to make butter keep? I assume so but I cannot ask her now. I can travel to exotic countries and experience their rich cultures but there is no chance to ask my mother about her world.

Many older people can relate to it being too late to ask questions about their youth. I want to leave some stories for Kevin and Sylvia's extended family of children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews, in case there comes a time when they too want to know the legacy of stories that have sustained our family. While it contains family trees and photographs, it is not an exhaustive family history book.

Rather than rigorous research into details, it is a medley of memories, assorted old pictures, and random snippets and stories.

Compiling it with other family members, particularly my sister Jenny, but cousins too, and reminiscing about other times have brought tears, laughter and joy. We have added stories and recollections written over the years as the lore of family is part of our psyche and culture, some of the glue that makes us stick together, that preserves our memories.

I have tried to ascertain the veracity of facts, but intervening years will have distorted some memories or made them imprecise. Sometimes insignificant memories crowd my mind while larger ones seem to have flown. Truth however lies in the warmth and fondness of remembering family.

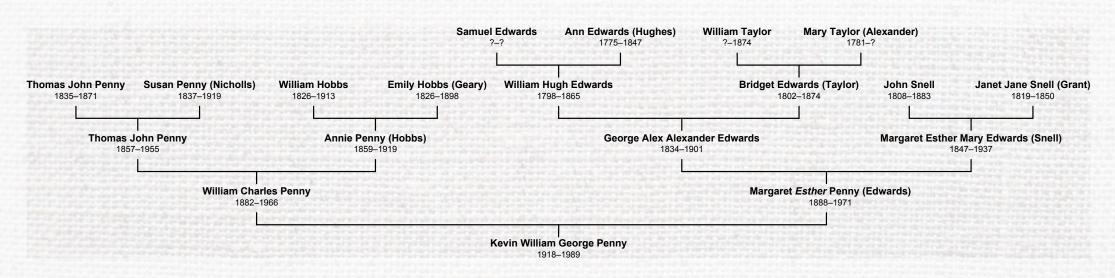
May 2022

Contents

| Kevin and Sylvia's story | 4 |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| The days at Comaum | 5 |
| Retirement days in Victor Harbor | 40 |
| The story of Kevin's family | 55 |
| Kevin's forebears | 57 |
| Kevin's siblings and their families | 65 |
| The story of Sylvia's family | 79 |
| Sylvia's forebears | 81 |
| Sylvia's siblings and their families | 92 |
| Kevin and Sylvia's legacy | 107 |
| Descendants | 109 |
| Lasting memories | 122 |
| Epilogue | 124 |

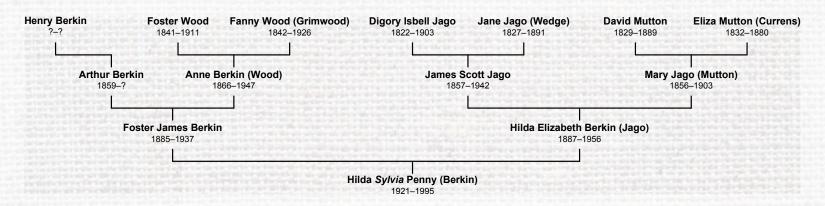
Ancestors of Kevin William George Penny





Ancestors of Hilda Sylvia Penny (born Berkin)







Kevin and Sylvia's story

Their deep love of family has created many memories to treasure



The days at Comaum*

A love story

Our parents Kevin Penny and Sylvia Berkin married on 17 September 1941.

The young couple met because their families owned farms close to each other in Comaum, although their earliest years had been spent in quite different places.

Kevin was born in Harrow in Western Victoria in 1918 where his father came from a large family on a farming property. In the 1920s, his parents William Charles (Bill) and Margaret Esther (Esther) Penny took their young family of three to South Australia to make a living market gardening in the Adelaide Hills, before taking on a general store in Colonel Light Gardens.

In 1930, when Kevin was 12, his parents bought a farming property at Comaum in the South East, South Australia. Between Penola and Naracoorte, it backed onto the Victorian border and was the homestead property of *Nambour* station which had been divided up for selection.

School in the city was abandoned for the gamble of a hard and isolated life in the bush. Our grandparents and their two sons Graham and Kevin departed the suburbs as the depression was deepening, leaving older sister Lorna nursing in Adelaide.

Sylvia, the sixth of Hilda and Foster Berkin's seven children, was born in 1921 while they lived in Hynam on a small farming allotment north of Naracoorte. The property provided a scanty living for the family and after some setbacks, Foster sought better prospects by taking up land in Comaum in 1929. It also had been part of the old *Nambour* property and he named it *Locton Park*.

Although he began constructing a dwelling there, he and his sons would ride horses from Hynam to work and camp at the farm during the week.

It wasn't until a considerable time after Foster's early death in 1937 that his family shifted to Comaum. Our mother was 16 and some brothers were already leaving home to find work or marry, and her sister was nursing at Pt Pirie.

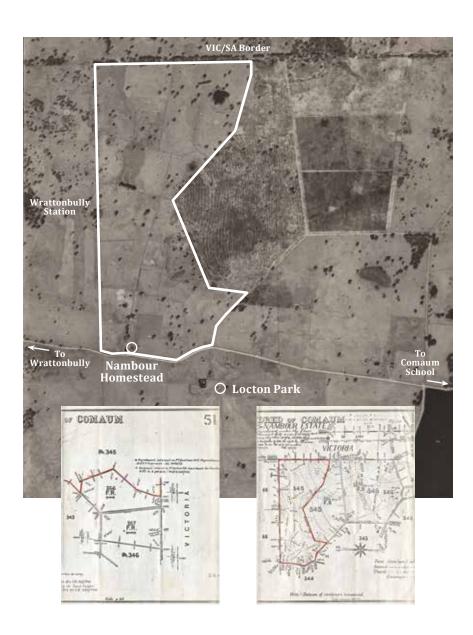
The Penny and Berkin farms were half a mile apart. With bunches of violets from his mother's garden, 20-year-old Kevin came a-courting the young Sylvia. Thus began a love story that never wavered.

The couple courted for three years with visits by the fireside, gymkhanas, extended family picnics and occasional outings with Sylvia's brothers in an old Essex car to pictures and dances in Naracoorte. The smitten couple married in Naracoorte Methodist Church in 1941 and signed up *for richer and poorer, until death us do part*.

The partnership blossomed. In spite of restrictions on building materials during the war years, they had their own modest house built on Nambour before they married. With shared values and goals, they worked hard to make the farm profitable, and to create a home and family.

I was born on 20 July 1946, their first child, and named Lorraine Sylvia. Three years later, Jennifer Kaye's birth on 22 August 1949, delighted our parents and the extended family. I have a clear memory of bringing my baby sister home from the Naracoorte hospital. Dad drove the Plymouth with its canvas window flaps, and I was regarded as big enough, at last, to sit by the door, as my parents cuddled together with their new bundle of joy in her hand-crocheted shawl.

^{*} A corruption of the Aboriginal word *kuman* – 'sheep washing place'.



Our Penny grandparents remained on the property in the nearby old house until retiring in 1950 to Portland in Victoria for a couple of years, then finally moving to Mt Gambier back in South Australia. Grandmother Berkin lived across the road until she died in 1956.

Kevin and Sylvia made a success of *Nambour*, dairy farming at first, grazing cattle and sheep, and growing oats and barley as feed for stock, and later diversifying into pasture crops such as rape and choumoellier which as small seeds, along with phalaris, were lucrative in providing extra income to extend the wool cheques. Wool prices were high in the years of the Korean war in the 1950s but slumped in parts of the 60s.

The farm became prosperous, and the family well established and involved in the community. We went to Comaum Primary School and attended the newly established Methodist Church at adjacent Wrattonbully.

Our parents loved each other, their two daughters and their shared lives on *Nambour*. After 33 years of partnership on the farm, they retired to Victor Harbor in 1974. They had given us many opportunities and we had gone away to boarding school, further study and careers. The couple from isolated farms across the road could branch out to another life with good health and gusto. They were still in their mid-50s. Their love for their daughters and their families did not recede as they embraced their new journey, just the two of them together in the beachside town where they soon found friends and welcoming neighbours.

Left, from top: Aerial view of Nambour; Some property sold off to pay their way in the lean years; Final size of property, 590 acres.





A small country school in various places and names served the Comaum district from 1880 to 1990

The community revolved around the local school where we spent our primary years, then called Durr School and only changing name in 1956 to Comaum. A Penny girl was there over a ten-year period; I started in 1952 and Jenny attended from 1955 until 1961. When I entered in grade one, aged 5½, without any preschool or kindergarten, I was taught by a solo teacher Bob Myer.

As the numbers had been growing due to the influx of students from the development of a soldiers settlement in adjacent Wrattonbully, all seven class levels were housed in a large new prefab building with the smaller old room used as a library. After two years the numbers had grown to need a second teacher. Students from years one to three remained in the large room while the older children in years four to seven took over the smaller room and the tiny library collection moved to the porch.

Most parents played a supportive role with a strong school committee made up of men, and the welfare club consisting of mothers. Both our parents took an active part, several times as secretary of their respective group. When Jenny started in 1955, a newly trained 19-year-old Anne Stephens was her teacher and boarded with us. Up until 1964 teachers were always billeted with families and it was normal for teachers to visit us for an occasional meal.

Our schooling in the 1950s must be hard for students in the 2020s to imagine. Rain or shine we waited outside at our front gate to catch the bus for a 20-minute meandering journey to school through both farm areas and government radiata pine plantations.





Above: The school bus route through the pines; Comaum Rural School.

A couple of students, not on our circuitous bus route, arrived on ponies, but if their mount was lame they walked the four miles. The bus would return most of us home before 4 pm, and our mother would welcome us with a cup of cocoa, and cake and biscuits she'd baked.

To start each school day, we stood in strict lines to salute the flag and chant our allegiance to Queen Elizabeth before marching to the beat of a drum to our class rooms. Our fixed desks, also in straight lines, faced a blackboard and teacher's desk at the front. Without electricity we had no cooling fans or air conditioners for the very hot South East summers, and a wood stove in the corner often smoked more than it warmed on freezing mornings. Often biting winter temperatures and frosts meant there was still ice on puddles as we waited for the bus and later in the day we could be sweltering or shivering while we ate our homemade lunches from brown paper bags in a big shelter shed open on one side.

Teachers smoked when not in class, we had toilets with a wide wooden seat over a deep long-drop hole and squares of newspaper served as toilet paper. Underneath the monkey bars and swings we played on, hard asphalt skinned our knees because then girls only wore dresses, sometimes tucked into our bloomers for modesty. We kicked footballs on uneven ground with no lawns or green ovals then of course. There were courts next to the school which were used for local tennis matches at weekends in the summer and our father was a member of the team. In the winter they served as netball courts which our mother played for a season. For a couple of years, parents taught netball lessons in the lunch hour.

When Trevor Rowe was my teacher in grades three and four, he'd sometimes deem a spring day should be enjoyed on a nature walk and out we'd go to a nearby patch of scrub. With no permission notes from parents, we'd just stop classes and race into the sunshine.

How did my mother already know when I got home after one of those rambles that I had stepped right over a snake. The school had no telephone, but the bush telegraph somehow spread the news of my big adventure. Trevor Rowe also arranged for us to learn to swim in Lake Wallace over the border at Edenhope. It was well before widespread *learn to swim campaigns* so without the blessing of the SA Education Department, Mr Rowe took on the insurance responsibility himself. A bold leader as well as an excellent teacher, he later returned to further study, had a serious career in the public sector and became the Adelaide director of a commonwealth government department.

Memories abound from our happy years in that brief time in the 1950s but a school in some form and place had served the area from 1888 until 1940, then it moved to its last site at the conjunction of Nambour and Glenroy Roads from 1941 until 1990.*

Its first teacher in the new location was intrepid Jean Siviour, still in her teens, who after a ten-hour train trip from Adelaide arrived at Glenroy railway siding in the dark. Met by the school committee's chairman and taken to board on a farm, the cityite's homesickness soon melted with the warmth of the country welcome from the community. It would be a long relationship with the school as after teaching she remained in the district when she married our uncle, Keith Berkin, and later her children and grandchildren attended Comaum school too.

It was a sad day when numbers fell to nine pupils bringing about the school's closure in 1990. A plaque on a large rock, unveiled by Jean Berkin (nee Siviour), marks the site above a time capsule to be opened in 2039, but the buildings have since been demolished. Across the state, the era of small schools was ending but those of us who experienced education this way still value the unique close contacts we and our families had with our teachers and other students.



Comaum School, 1888-1990

In 1850, 12 miles north east of Penola, Mr John Smith established a sheep station and called the site Comaum. By 1888, with the arrival of more families to the area, Comaum School was opened. Our premium Coonawarra vineyard is situated on the original school house site, and each year a special wine is released in its honour.

(Text taken from wine label.)

^{*} Comaum School History Book 1888–1990 records more of this story.



COMAUM SCHOOL 1958

Back row: Sandra Prikryl, Dorothy Verco, Lorraine Penny, Jill Ashton, Joanne Koch,
Suzanne Brodie, Ian Pannell, Peter Wicks, Alan Battye, Geoffrey Berkin, Terry Paech.
Third row: Mr Jiri Prikryl, Sharon McKinnon, Kathryn Mitchell, Pearl Looney, Pam Badman, Janet Lawrie, Ruth Battye,
Jennifer Penny, Sue Ashton, Susan Wicks, Glenda Freeman, Lynne Kelly, Marion Alcock, Susan Clayfield, Mrs Dorothea Prikryl.
Second row: Peter Koch, Douglas Redman, Terry Berkin, Trevor Lawrie, Geoffrey (Joe) Pannell, John Mitchell,
Dean Williamson, Bronte Brodie, Terry Freeman, Vincent Paech, Gregory McKinnon, Keith Kelly, Ronald Lister.
Front row: Trevor Horwood, Trevor Blackall, Phillip Verco, Graham Blackall, Leon Verco, Brian Ashton,
James Mitchell, Dawn Horwood, Wendy Lawrie, Margaret Alcock, Margaret Badman.

All roads lead to Comaum

Red and blue, red and blue, that's Comaum coming through, C-O-M-A-U-M Comaum

We clambered aboard the old yellow bus, maybe a Bedford but girls didn't notice brands of vehicles in the 1950s. Usually it picked up students from around the district with its destination Comaum Primary School, but this special day it was bound for an oval among radiata pines at Nangwarry, a timber milling town 40 miles away.

Clarry Roberts tried to quell the excitement but let us burst out with the war cry for a few miles, then demanded quiet when we left the potholed dirt for a bitumen road. Now and again, we bubbled over with chatter and raucous laughter, reined in by intermittent growls from the drivers' seat.

Soon we were among mobs of determined youngsters disgorged from buses from other country schools and ready to compete fiercely in the annual Pine Sports Day. Parents and younger siblings travelled close behind in lunch-laden cars and arrived in time to watch their earnest children breast the tapes for sprints, relays and hurdle races. There were team competitions too, tunnel ball and other games, and even egg and spoon and sack races, and all the while boisterous chanting: C-O-M-A-U-M Comaum. At some stage we stopped for the shared picnic spreads mothers had been planning and cooking for days. Our mother made the best pasties and chocolate cakes in the whole district, we thought. Well-fed, hoarse from bellowing war cries and exhausted by our exertions whether successful or not, we were much more subdued on the bus returning to Comaum.

No, not all roads did lead to Comaum. I am exaggerating, but it was a challenging road when, in 1930, my grandfather, Bill Penny, drove a wagon the long 250 miles from Adelaide to Comaum during the Depression. The family took the unmade and unknown roads to the isolated property called *Nambour*.

Although Bill and Esther and their sons Gray and Kevin relocated in uncertain financial times, their journey south paid off and the farming venture was a success. In time Gray would travel on roads away from Comaum to find income off the farm and marry, but Dad stayed to work the property with his father. When his parents retired they also took roads elsewhere though they regularly returned to stay with us and help out in busy times. In those precious return visits, the bonds with our grandparents deepened.

Over the years, the extended Penny family reconvened regularly at the Comaum farm. Gray and Gwen Penny with their daughters Margaret and Elizabeth travelled from Mt Schank, south of Mt Gambier, and Lorna, married to Lionel Hender, came from Adelaide with daughters Patricia and Janice. Relatives of Esther from the Lamey and Edwards tribes, and members of other branches of the Penny family, were also visitors over the years. In addition, Grandma Berkin lived half a mile away and we had regular contact with myriad Berkin cousins as our mother had five brothers either in Comaum or scattered in farming areas within fifty miles. While her older sister Eileen lived in Sydney after marrying Bob Lang, she and son Desmond would come for extended stays.

Our parents loved having visitors and Jenny and I would look eagerly down the metal road for sight of approaching cars, excited to have outside contact. We valued our encounters with cousins and other guests.

What joyous times we often had when for Christmas celebrations and family reunions, both sides of the family took roads leading back to Comaum.

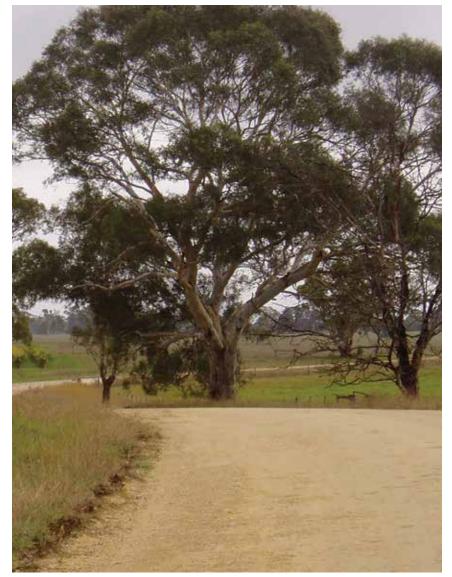




- 1 Pt McDonnell Summer holidays in a guest house shared with elderly grandparents involved beach walks, board games and cards, and sometimes teenage boredom and frustration.
- **Mt Gambier** Bill and Esther Penny retired to 17 Doughty Street, Mt Gambier; Gray Penny's family also lived there for some years. The Penny grandparents are buried in Mt Gambier cemetery.
- 3 Millicent Lorraine Penny's first teaching appointment was to Millicent High School.
- Penola In Penola, Kevin Penny banked, used stock agents and won a horse race.
- **Coonawarra** Kevin and Sylvia bought extra land at Maauope, 200 acres of black soil suited to strawberry clover for adjisting and fattening stock just a few miles from the red soils of the wine area of Coonawarra, and of Wrattonbully and Comaum.
- **6 Comaum** Nambour, the Penny family property from 1930 to 1974, was situated in Comaum, site also of Lorraine and Jenny's primary school.
- **Wrattonbully** Comaum lay adjacent to Wrattonbully which had a general store, tennis courts, hall and Methodist Church and provided a social hub for the community.
- 8 Hynam Childhood home of Sylvia Berkin.
- 9 Naracoorte Birth place of Sylvia Berkin, Lorraine and Jennifer Penny. This centre of banks, shops, garages, a swimming lake and picture theatre was an important part of the Penny's lives. Many Berkins are buried in Naracoorte cemetery.

- **Robe** Kevin and Sylvia sometimes took a caravan to Robe for a week in summer when harvesting commitments allowed. Lorraine and Jenny enjoyed walks on the beach and climbing among the shore rocks.
- Bordertown The Adelaide to Mt Gambier train, The Blue Bird, stopped for refreshments at Wolseley near Bordertown. Lorraine and Jenny travelled on this train with hordes of other students from city schools to and from boarding school in Adelaide. With only three terms in those days, it was a long time between holidays home on the farm.
- **Keith** Passed on the road between Adelaide and Melbourne, the journey from the farm to Adelaide by car then took at least six hours.
- **Dingley Dell** Our first taste of history came when visiting the home of poet Adam Lindsay Gordon.
- **Mt Schanck** Gray Penny and family lived on a farming property in this district named after the volcanic cone of Mt Schanck.





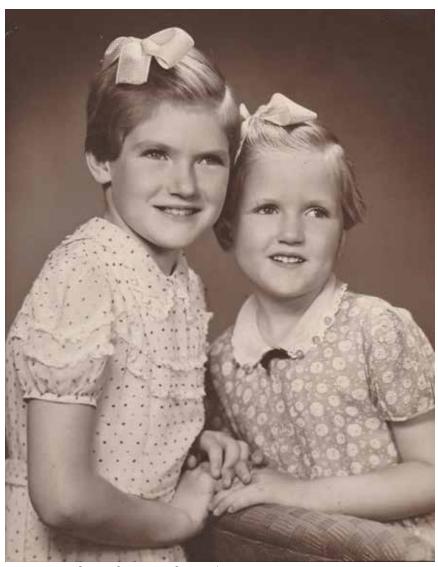
Raising little girls



Lorraine Sylvia Penny, b. 20 July 1946.



Jennifer Kaye Penny, b. 22 August 1949.



Lorraine and Jennifer, December 1954.

Lorraine as a little one





















Jenny as a little one





















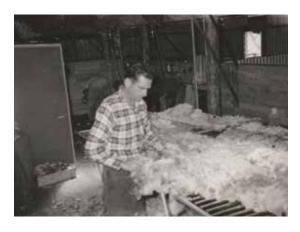




A farm called *Nambour*

























Horses

Horses were important to Kevin and his early years saw him riding in shows and gymkhanas as a recreation. To appease his quest for adventure, he became a fearless rider and renowned and respected horseman. On the farm, of course, draft horses were also kept for pulling ploughs and wagons through the 1930s and 40s until a tractor was purchased in the 50s.

But for Kev the love of horses continued as a hobby. *Starlet* was a favourite horse from which he bred two horses *Annadot* and *Trade In* for showing or racing. *Annadot* ripped a leg on a barbwire fence lessening her value as a show horse but in the mid 1950s he trained *Trade In* for local races at Casterton, Naracoorte, Penola and Mt Gambier, rising at 5 am to work his horse before starting a day's farm work.

Clockwise: Kevin (white shirt) made a reputation as a horseman from his teenage years; Draft horses were used to pull ploughs and wagons. (Berkin horses, c. 1935.); Kevin with Starlet; Kevin on Annadot and Garth and Stuart Lamey on Pepper; Kevin on Starlet.







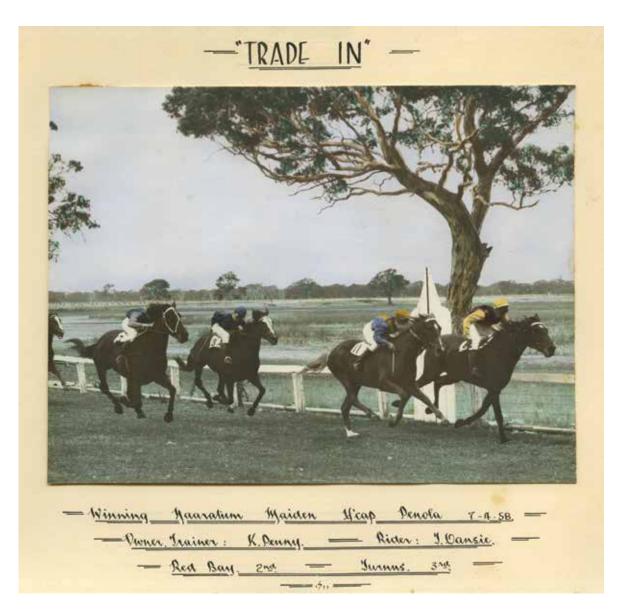




Penola Race Day April 1958







Lorraine and Jenny loved horses too, riding around paddocks just for the pleasure of a leisurely canter or flat out gallop. Often they rode to inspect stock, to muster or to drove sheep and cattle. Occasionally emus were chased back into nearby pine forests to stop them eating pastures intended for farm animals.

















Remembering farmer Kevin

Kevin Kevin was a modest, generous and kind man, well respected in the community as a competent and successful farmer, caring for the land, good with animals, and a decent fair employer. Hard work was his maxim with steady methodical ways and strong organisation. He spent long days handling sheep and cattle, fencing and fixing up machinery such as the harvester in extreme heat, and the drill or ploughing equipment in chilly winters. And always a windmill needed repair when we were about to go on holidays or to the local show or footy match.

A sound financial manager, he had an entrepreneurial streak and experimented with crops for the small seed market, an enterprising risk that returned well. Outside his own farm, he added to the budget by harvesting crops for other farmers as a seasonal contractor.

Known for his wicked sense of humour, he enjoyed the company of his workers, neighbours and family. His joking and teasing brought fun and laughter to both the farm and our home, and he enveloped us with love.

More memories

October shearing, shouting voices, bleating sheep, and noisy engines as cutters whined and sputtered on and off. Navy blue singlets and denim trousers before such cloth became fashion wear. Unmistakable smells: stench of manure, lanolin as fleeces were thrown on a table for classing, smoking engine grease, and thick oil squirted on hot shears. Time called regularly for smoko and lunch.

Canvas water bag slung over the truck's bumper bar providing a cool swig in summer.

In a heat wave, lucky ones lying reading in the bath or on the red concrete in the bathroom, a slightly cooler place in 112°F.

Our middays regularly marked by *Blue Hills* and the *ABC News*.

Trying to sleep in the backyard on a hot summer's night, prickly buffalo lawn preferred over a hot weatherboard house.

Wonder at the stars in our outsized sky. Peering with little patience and no success, looking for Russia's Sputnik to orbit overhead in 1957. Belief that it had done so, always trusting ABC reports.

Work stopping on first Tuesdays in November to listen to the call of the Melbourne Cup on a crackly wireless.

Fishing for redfin perch in the swamp dad had stocked, bright fins and grey scales flapping on the homemade bamboo rods, a haul of 60 on a Sunday afternoon.

Looking over horses in the saddling yard at country race meetings. Our high-pitched cheering for those we fancied. Standing by the rails as they thundered to the finishing line. Picking a few winners while knowing nothing of betting.

Dad creating magic on Guy Fawkes night, letting off crackers, catherine wheels and sparklers, an occasional rocket soaring into the quiet night.

Our mother's doubts about a round green washing machine, its newness in place of copper and scrubbing board.

At last, in 1961, buying our first new car, Australia's own, a Holden FB.

Farm kitchen centre stage

On wintry days, our mother turned to cooking. A wet day was never an opportunity for reading or self-indulgence; rather she seized the chance to restock biscuit tins, grate vegetables for soups or roll out her trademark pasties.

She was always strategic, prepared for vagaries of weather, a farm crisis, seasonal demands with extra workers to feed or the chance visitor. And when the sun shone again there would be other demands on her time: washing, at first using a copper then in later years a basic round machine with wringer; weeding vegetable beds or preparing soil for spring flowers; and all the while keeping a spotless house.

Cooking was central to life on a farm and Sylvia, as a 20-year-old bride in 1941, was already experienced in running a kitchen. As a teenager she, with her mother, had been cooking and washing for her five farming brothers. In her newly built house with few amenities due to war shortages, she found the work a labour of love. Starry-eyed, she contributed to the farm's success by milking cows, establishing a garden, and making a lovely home.

And in the kitchen she excelled. It took courage as she struggled with the splutters of a temperamental kerosene fridge, worse consequences if the fully laden fridge went out altogether. The nearest shops were a horse and buggy ride into Naracoorte. Although they had access to a car later, the trip still took more than half an hour until roads and cars improved. Life was frugal for everyone, and long hours were spent on household demands. Later, a general store opened just a mile's walk away, bringing the convenience of basic essentials, and fresh bread and mail three days a week.



Mum proved resilient and resourceful, her kitchen becoming the centre of family life with a warm welcome for visitors. Sometimes they came to use the phone, its grandness mounted on the wall in our back porch. The days were long and busy and managing time essential, fitting in entertaining and counselling neighbours and extended family, as well as feeding farm workers and her own husband and daughters.

Hearty and nourishing meals consisted of roasts, stews and casseroles, with meat in every dish. Mum was particular, instructing Dad to kill a sheep that was neither too young nor too old. The in-between hogget, she believed, had more flavour than lamb and was less tough than mutton. He'd place the carcass in a purpose made bag and let it hang under the pines for 24 hours before bringing inside for 'cutting up'.

The little kerosene fridge was soon bulging, and again thought was needed to store and use the meat without waste. Menu planning was a long-term exercise to get the most out of an animal. Restaurant chefs with a coldroom had solutions not available to Mum until she acquired a freezer in the 60s, but she was equal to the challenges, and by example trained her daughters to think ahead in planning meals and having an organised kitchen.

Shearing time schedules increased Mum's load, adding more mouths, and needing precision timing. With Mum an expert cook, shearers thought our shed a good gig. When hired help came to the farm, Mum cooked for them too. No one complained: it was a happy place where workers were well fed, and fairly and promptly paid.

All the while *The Green and Gold Cookery Book* provided answers when there was no one to ask, although women's conversations were often filled with recipe swapping. But for basic information without googling or texting, the well-thumbed book was a reliable resource. Started in South Australia in 1923, it became a bestselling phenomenon both interstate and beyond. Copies were often handed down to a succession of girls who would uphold domestic traditions. Our mother had no choice but to take on this lifestyle, in many ways limiting, but she always saw it as a great time to be alive and regarded herself as lucky. She was glad, however, for her daughters to have wider choices.



Seasonal demands meant bringing out the Vacola preserving equipment and urgent work in cutting fruit in the small window of opportunity when not too green and not overripe. Although room temperatures often rose above 100° F, such efforts would prove worthwhile, providing us with homegrown fruits all year round. Jam making too always came in hot weather, and apricots inconveniently ripened in the weeks before Christmas, to be dealt with alongside the pile of Christmas mail my mother always sent with her beautifully penned and thoughtful messages. This

yearly news exchange linked loved ones across the miles, important particularly in early days when outside contacts were limited.

Racing from the bus after school, I fear that, as untroubled kids of the 1950s, we took for granted that chocolate cake, Anzac biscuits or rockbuns would be waiting for us with a cup of milk or cocoa. We'd huddle around the green enamelled stove amid airing clothes from the day's wash. Filled with chatter and stories of school as we sat by the fireside, did we appreciate, I now wonder, the love those moments held?



Made in the Adelaide foundry of the Metters Company, the enclosed wood fire heated a hob above and an oven below. Entranced we'd watch our mother place her hand into the oven to test its temperature. It was easy to add wood to increase heat but if there was a need to reduce it, we held our breath as, red-faced, she carried live coals outside in a metal pan.

The trusted oven transformed the hand-mixed ingredients into light scones, fluffy sponges

and delicious desserts of bread and butter or roly-poly puddings. It also provided a warming place for plates and meals until our father returned from the paddocks. Vegetables, ready before the ubiquitous meat, could be kept warm on the bricks beside the hob.



From a row of Mrs Potts flat irons heating on the top of the stove, our mum would use a detachable handle to pick up and attach one and then tackle ironing a mountain of sheets, shirts and just about everything else, with no airconditioning whatever the day's temperature.

When a plumber installed waterpipes to pass through the enclosed wood fire in the

mid-50s, we had the luxury of running hot water and were relieved that the scary bathroom chip-heater was superseded.

Beside that fireside, we made toast, warmed ourselves on frosty mornings, and sat companionably into many an evening. It was a conversation hub as we shared news or recounted highlights after returning from a saleyard, shopping visit to Naracoorte, a birthday party or a dance.

While the tiny range served multiple purposes, the cooking it produced consistently had a big reputation. Our mother was renowned as a cook, and often people coincided their visits near morning or afternoon teatime, proof that other people shared our positive views of her culinary feats. They became legend in the family, as did her caring and love for others. She saw the best in everyone, a glass was always half full, and a rainy day an opportunity.

Kitchen shearing schedule

remembered by Jennifer Penny Iredale

- 6.30 Breakfast at the kitchen table: usually bacon and eggs, sausages, tomatoes and toast. The two shearers join the family.
- 7.30 The shearing shed action begins in the with two shearers, a shed hand and a roustabout or two and of course the 'boss' Kevin.
- 9.30 'Smoke-o' (morning tea) at the shed. Sylvia provides and delivers thermoses of tea, homemade scones, biscuits and cake.
- 12.30 The shearing team walks up to the house for lunch. A home-cooked meal awaits them and often includes mutton from the farm and vegetables from our garden, and always followed by dessert.
- 3.30 Afternoon 'smoke-o', a repeat of the morning tea.
- 5.30 The working day ends, and the local workers return to their homes.
- 6.30 The sleeping quarters for the shearers are adjacent to the garage and each night they join the family for dinner. It's another hearty meal of farm meat and home-grown vegetables. Dessert follows, maybe a pudding and custard cooked by Sylvia, and always delicious! Everyone employed on our farm is always appreciative of her care and cooking.
- ** All cooking is done on the top of our wood stove and in its oven.
- ** The water is heated in kettles on top of the stove.
- ** No oven dials show the oven temperature so Sylvia must open the oven and test it with her hand.

While Kevin organised the rounding up and shedding of sheep and led the men in the shearing shed, joking and overseeing, Sylvia was very much part of the team and the happy ambience the workers enjoyed.

Scolch Erispus (Veitter) 2 cups solled outs to cup S. R. Flower + pinch rall I cup Sugar. 1 tablespoon golden syrup (Fur more, 2) 2 cup butter I leaspoon carb socia 2 tablespoons boiling water Mass flows rolled oals I sugar Melt butter & add backing water in which the goda has been dissolved + warmed golden syrup. Add to dry ingredients a mex well Place on greated tray (in teaspoonful) 9 date in moderate over 15 minutes Allow ample room for spreading

Sylvia Penny (ne vertin) Butter Biseuts. 3 cup flows equal 1 10 Well 4 gs butter (5 cup) in source pan until light brown. Cool 4 add -4 gs rugar, 1 egg, lastly 5 gs S. R. Flow a vanilla Place in leaspoonful of small balls on greated tray & bake in moderate oven 12 - 15 minutes If desired place almost on top each before boby Dece plain Birecel (from her & Gold) 2 cups Flour, 2 traspoom cream larla 4 1 tappoor carl soda, 1 cup ougar Is la butter (2 cup) 2 eggs, en limon Method this flowr powder & sugar in basen, then sut in butter Beat eggs & mex well. I sall into small balls 4 pren with fork . (Flour hands " forth well) 12. 15 minutes mad over

Kevin and Sylvia and the girls The Nambour years



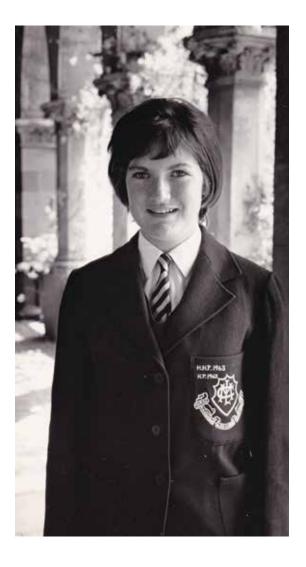








And the girls grew older

















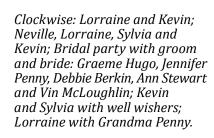


Lorraine marries Neville McLoughlin 11 January 1969













Another type of farm

by Jennifer Penny Iredale

I'd lived my life growing up on our farm at Comaum in a nuclear family with my mother, father and sister, embraced and nurtured in the traditional way of the times. My father 'tilled our land' with occasional workers to help with seasonal jobs.

How astonished I was to find out during a chance conversation in 1966 when I was 17, that not all the world's farming communities worked that way. Mostly I guess, but certainly not in the case of the newly formed state of Israel. I was talking to Ray Wicks, one of the Wrattonbully soldier settlers who had spent time in the Middle East during the Second World War.

I was fascinated when he started talking about the kibbutzim of Israel, a different type of 'farm' where the children didn't live with their parents but in a communal home where they were looked after separately enabling both parents to work long days developing these new agricultural enterprises.

I never forgot this amazing conversation and kept it in the back of my mind when I set off for Europe in 1973 on the Greek ship, *The Britanis*, to see the world.

Some months later, I left the United Kingdom and travelled to Turkey and Greece from where I took a flight to Tel Aviv. The emotional response on arriving 'home' at 'The Promised Land' by the predominantly Jewish passengers on the flight was obvious as we landed. My learning curve had taken a sharp jump upwards.

In Tel Aviv I made my way to the office which organised and placed volunteers like me from countries around the world to a kibbutz somewhere in Israel. My instructions were to catch the bus to kibbutz Parod in the north of the country, near Tzfat (Safed), and not far from the Lebanese border. And so I did! This kibbutz was founded in 1949 by Hungarian Jews just one year after the formal formation and recognition of the state of Israel. My kibbutz was the same age as me!

The seeds planted in my mind by Ray Wicks had brought me to Israel and life on the kibbutz for three months. My time there became one of the most interesting experiences of my life.



It wasn't as peaceful as the farm I had left behind, I arrived at the end of the Yom Kippur war and there was still a war of attrition going on while I was on the kibbutz. As we were in the north, fighter planes regularly flew low over our 'farm' and their sonic booms were frightening. It happened several times a day and it was one thing I didn't miss when I left. Israel was in a high state of alert and terrorism was not uncommon. But the land was similar to that of Nambour in being fertile and receiving good and reliable rainfall, nothing like the deserts and arid lands of the south.

Everyone on the kibbutz was working towards a shared and common goal, the agricultural development of Israel. To me, it was the embodiment of socialism, everyone sharing the tasks and all benefiting from the labour. The profits were used to upgrade the farm and to pay the members of the kibbutz equally. And yes, the children were living in separate quarters and looked after by kibbutzniks whose job it was to do so – but they did spend some time with their parents on the weekends.

People's jobs changed regularly as did those of the volunteers. In the few months I was there I had several jobs including washing the dishes (there was a communal kitchen and dining room), preparing avocados for the special dinner on Friday nights, the eve of Shabbat – and grading and sorting apples for sale.

My most unusual job and probably most memorable was waking up the kibbutzniks early in the morning. I would get up at 4.30 and go to the small houses they lived in, knock on the door and call out 'boker tov' (Hebrew for good morning).

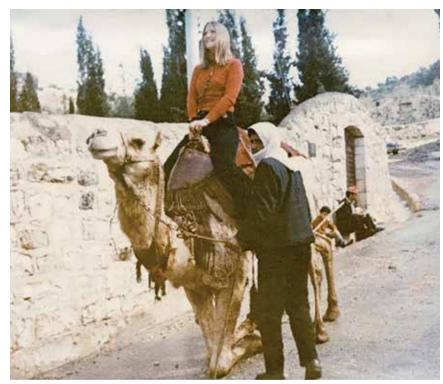
After I had done the rounds of the houses and eaten breakfast, I would clean the ablution blocks as, of course, there were no bathrooms in the houses, and everyone used the communal facilities. By that time the kibbutzniks had all begun their day's work. Boker tov is the only Hebrew word that I remember today. I had a lot of practice saying it!

This job allowed me to finish the day early and I remember using my afternoons to catch a bus to local places of interest including Mt Tabor and the mystical town of Tzfat, one of the four holy towns/cities of Judaism.

I shared a simple room with a young Jewish American woman from New York and we formed a strong friendship and travelled around Israel together for a month after our time on the kibbutz finished. The volunteers and kibbutzniks did not seem to mix outside of working hours but I remember the camaraderie of the volunteers and of especially enjoying the company of four Dutch people about my age who I visited later when travelling through The Netherlands.

There were lots of times sitting on our verandas sipping tea, sharing philosophies of life and stories of travel. There seemed to be enough spare time to socialise, visit nearby towns and to immerse oneself in reading. I have always regarded experiencing and reading about the history of Israel in situ as one of the most valuable learning experiences of my time away from Australia.

The kibbutzim of today have a very different economic approach and are no longer the socialist enterprises they once were. They are now not just agricultural but industrial as well and are based on the free market economy.



Jenny in Jerusalem, and thus began her extensive travels and her passion for overseas countries and languages. She taught Bahasa Indonesia for many years by distance education, completed language courses in Java Indonesia in 1992 and 2000, attended an Italian course in Montepulciano in Tuscany in 2005, and to this day continues studies in French and Italian.

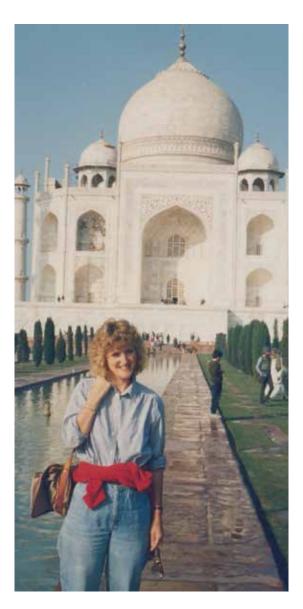
Present day Israel is a changed country from when I was there, the kibbutzim included. After reaching a peak in the 1970s, volunteers are now a very minor part of the workforce. I'm very glad I was there in 1974 to experience life on another type of farm; so very different from Nambour, Comaum.

Travels with Jenny have been both work and play. She has travelled extensively in Europe, Morocco, and Asia. Just a few snippets are pictured here.



Above: Jenny taught both teachers and students in Flores Indonesia on two separate secondments. Opposite page, left to right: Jenny in Nepal with Mairi Nicholson, 1978; In 1989, Jenny travelled in India with husband John Iredale, and they returned in 2018 and 2020.







Nambour house and garden











Sylvia and Kevin in front of their Nambour home early in 1974 although soon to retire to Victor Harbor







Retirement days in Victor Harbor



Sylvia and Kevin, January 1987.

Life by the seaside

Kevin and Sylvia moved to 3 Grantley Avenue, Victor Harbor in 1974. It was the beginning of a new adventure together of creating another garden, playing bowls, fishing, and being part of a larger community.

Family and friends were eager to pay visits to the seaside town. Connections did not waver, and my mother's letter writing continued to bind and nurture relationships over the years. The family traditions of heartfelt welcomes and generous hospitality still prevailed, as did Sylvia's renowned cooking. She hosted and catered for her own local visitors, friends from afar and family members. There was a bed for anyone between jobs, bereaved or needy, or just wanting the family warmth both of them exuded.



3 Grantley Avenue, Victor Harbor.



Victor Harbor Bowling team (Kevin, front row, end right).

In addition Sylvia warmly welcomed customers to the Uniting Church's coffee and bookshop in Victor where she volunteered for many years. As she had at Wrattonbully Methodist Church in the Comaum years, Sylvia took on the role of secretary of the local guild at Adare Uniting Church which both our parents attended.

Kevin was gregarious and relished more company than he'd experienced in the later years on the farm, as it became increasingly mechanised and required less outside help. He served as Assistant Greens Manager for Victor Harbor Bowling Club and enjoyed country carnivals and trips away to play bowls. Summer harvests at Comaum had disrupted many a chance for a bowls match but now he could play more regularly and continue to be a member of the Masonic Lodge.

Making friendships locally followed as they found like-minded people who shared common farming roots and country values and interests. Retired farmers from all over the state lived in their new town, and in their street, there were enough such folk to establish a Grantley Avenue bowling trophy.

Kev could also indulge his interest in fishing. A boat enabled him to get out to some prime fishing spots, but he kept secret the location points where he found large catches of gar fish and whiting. Jenny and I became the recipients of Mum and Dad's generosity, not only of fish, but also of their garden produce, vegetables and fruit, and of course received their ongoing love and interest in our lives.



Kevin took this photograph of Sylvia (centre) with Gwen and Gray Penny (right) and John and Margaret Gambell (left), who'd come to see them off on a trip to New Zealand.

Although travel had to be fitted between their community interests and family commitments, Kev and Sylv now had flexibility to plan holidays and excursions, no longer being affected by the vagaries of seasons and the limiting demands of caring for the farm. Trips to New Zealand, Western Australia, Darwin and Tasmania followed, some with Dave and Linda Bald, close friends from their street, and others with Kev's brother Gray and wife Gwen.

Our parents were involved in our young adult years as we established lives in Adelaide. Neville and I were already living in Lower Mitcham after coming back to South Australia in 1972 from two years in Canberra and two in Newcastle. I was teaching at MLC, our old school, when, in January 1974, our property *Nambour* was sold, but Neville was able to go to the South East and help my parents prepare for their clearing sale and assist in preparations to shift their furniture and possessions to their new home.

It must have been strange for Jenny, returning from extended overseas travels later in 1974, not to have *Nambour* as home. Not only had she spent her childhood years there until 1961, but after four years in boarding school, she took a year off before training to be a teacher. In what would now be called *a gap year*, she returned to Comaum and worked on the property in 1965, thereby deepening her connection with the farm, the local landscape and our parents.

Right: Kevin and Sylvia with Lorraine and Peter, May 1986. Opposite page, clockwise: Jenny and John; Kevin and Sylvia; Kevin, Lorraine, Jenny and Sylvia; Jenny and Lorraine; Jenny and John with John's sister Joy, mother Marj and niece Susie.



In November 1974, Jenny married John Iredale who had spent two months meeting up with her during her Europe sojourn, and they settled in Toorak Gardens in 1978.

Family contacts were now more frequent for all of us, aided by the convenience of only an hour's drive to Victor instead of the trek to and from the South East.

My divorce from Neville in 1983 saddened Kevin and Sylvia. It was with happiness, however, that they saw me in love again and marry Peter Fitzgerald in 1986, and they welcomed him and his two sons Ben and Daniel into our family.

Jenny and John Iredale's wedding day 16 November 1974











Baby Sarah, and then Penny





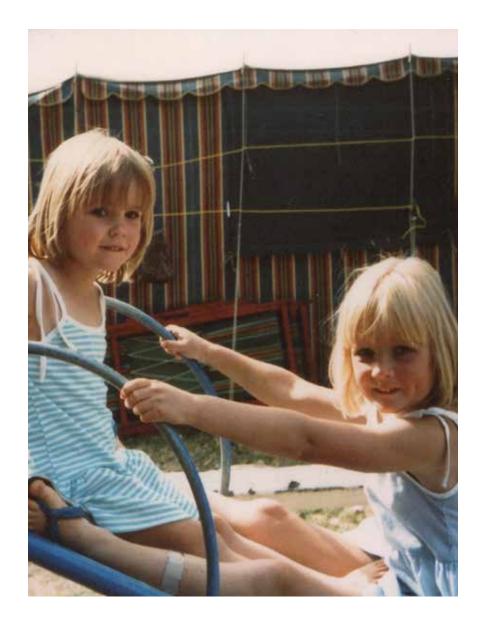


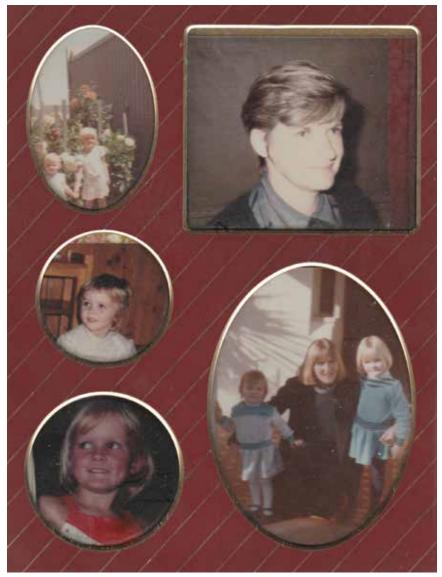
This page, clockwise: Jenny with her baby Sarah; Sarah with Lorraine; Jenny with baby Penny; A young Penny; A young Sarah, with cat; Sarah wih her parents, 1972. Opposite page: Penny and Sarah; Page from a photo album treaured by the Penny grandparents.





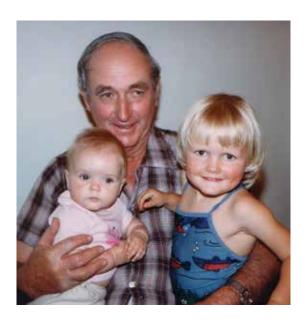




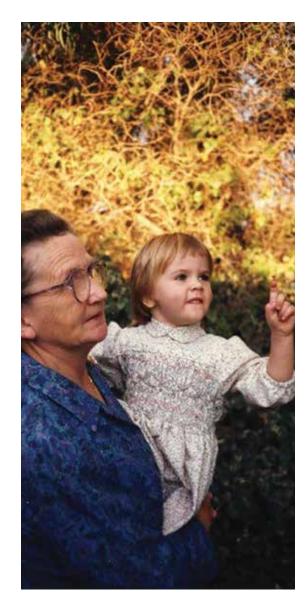


Sarah and Penny with Puppa and Grandma





















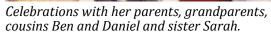
Penny is three















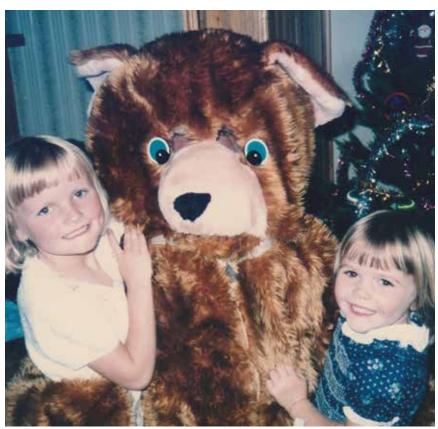




Christmas at Victor Harbor 1985







Peter's son Ben in a bear costume delighted his new cousins.

Lorraine and Peter marry 26 April 1986















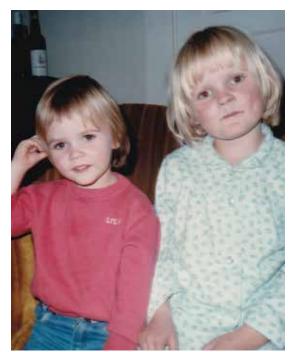








On a train trip with Auntie Lorraine through the Adelaide Hills, the girls assured her they were allowed a coke and pasty as special treats. The driver let them pull the horn as the train crossed roadways and they alighted in Murray Bridge to spend the night, a morning in the swimming pool and playground, then a sleepy bus ride home in the afternoon, c. 1986.



Sarah and Penny regularly stayed over at Peter and Lorraine's house at Dulwich.









Kevin turns 70 8 March 1988

The immediate family celebrated Kevin's 70th in Lorraine and Peter's garden at Dulwich. Jenny and John Iredale and their daughters came from nearby Toorak Gardens, Kevin's brother Gray from Geelong and sister Lorna from Lockleys.



Above: Kevin and Sylvia Penny. Top right: Kevin and Sylvia Penny, Gray and Gwen Penny and Lionel and Lorna Hender. Right: Grandparents with Penny and Sarah... and birthday cake.





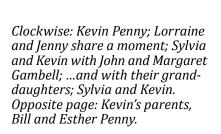










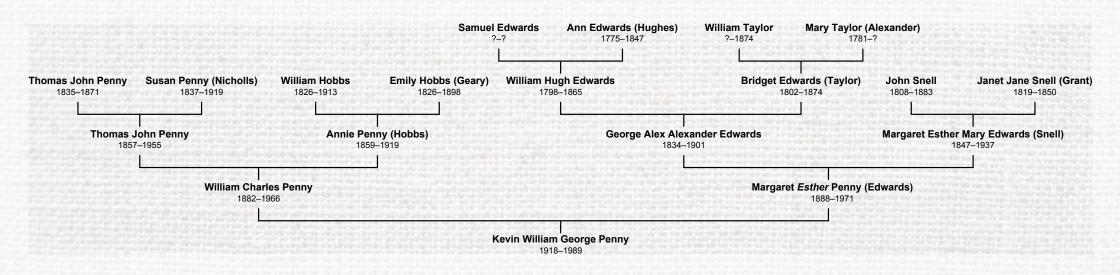


The story of Kevin's family



Ancestors of Kevin William George Penny





Kevin's forebears

Few stories remain of the early days of my father Kevin's childhood or his ancestors. I would love to add some, but my memories are fragmented. Even second-hand stories are incomplete, and now the key players are gone.

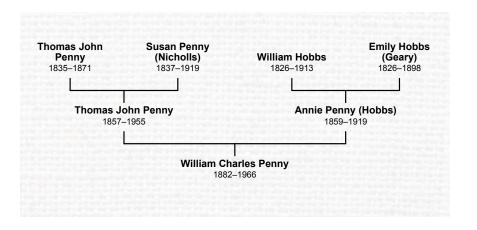
I can just recall Dad's grandfather, Thomas John Penny. I have a shadowy memory of a remote figure who lived in Portland, Victoria, with his second wife, the redoubtable Mater of whom I was quite scared. A legendary description often repeated by adults after great grandpa's death just short of 99, was that he still played lawn bowls and had his own teeth, apparently significant feats to the adults spreading this information.



barque **Trafalgar**, 718 tons, Captain George Richardson, from London / Plymouth 16th October 1848, arrived at Port Adelaide, South <u>Australia</u> 17th January 1849

The London Times Oct 7, 1848 shipping news

I know little of his real story, however, except basic facts gleaned from the Hobbs family book, compiled and published by Brian Hobbs and other Hobbs family members in January 1985. This points out that our great grandpa's own grandparents, Thomas and Caroline Penny, had sailed to Australia from Devonshire on the 'Trafalgar', arriving at Pt Adelaide with four children in 1849 (published 1989).



Thomas and Caroline's second child, Thomas John Penny, married Susan Nicholls in 1856. Susan was bearing his ninth child when he died in Mt Gambier 1871 of pneumonia. Our great grandfather, another Thomas John Penny, was the eldest of this large brood and at 14 took on a major role supporting his mother as they changed states from South Australia to Victoria in difficult pioneering circumstances. Assuming responsibility and working hard were taken for granted in this family.

Meanwhile William and Emily Hobbs with two children and another on the way had also emigrated to South Australia, arriving from Hertfordshire on the 'Ascendant' about ten months after the Pennys. William managed to gain employment in the Reedbeds area to the west of Adelaide (now Adelaide airport) but labouring brought in only a small income. To change their circumstances, he unsuccessfully spent some time in 1851/1852 on the goldfields.



Annie Penny (nee Hobbs) with her youngest child, Emily Dorothy Penny b. 12 April 1901.

Shipwrecked near Portland on the return sailing from Melbourne he must have thought he'd never win. He returned to better work in Reedbeds, then to settle in the Adelaide hills. Share farming didn't break the poverty cycle and provided little hope of getting any capital to support a growing family. Daughter Annie was the last born of eight children. In 1870 the Victorian government made land available for selection to be paid off on reasonable terms. The Hobbs family joined the rush interstate and after a bureaucratic saga William Hobbs secured his lease in January 1873 – and a chance to own land. Starting over with only basic tools and no machinery or capital made life a struggle. Setbacks would follow but they made it through, managing to keep up the payments and secured the lease as their own.

Close to the Hobbs's selection was the Penny family's similar lease where Thomas had brought his recently widowed mother Susan Penny a couple of years earlier.

In 1879, with his mother reasonably established, Thomas John Penny, at 22, married 19-year-old Annie Hobbs. Later her brother William Hobbs would marry her groom Thomas's sister Caroline Elizabeth Penny. Thus, the neighbouring Penny and Hobbs families were closely bound.

Annie and Thomas lived at Clear Lake, then Douglas, and had five sons and five daughters, among them our grandfather William Charles Penny (Bill). While the family did reasonably well, one property could not sustain them all as adults. Some scattered interstate while others stayed in western Victoria.

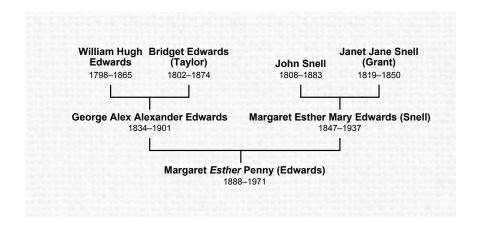
In 1932, aged 58, Bill's mother Annie Penny died of influenza and possibly one could surmise, of exhaustion after ten children. Her widower Thomas later retired to Portland and eventually remarried, to Annie Thomas (Mater).



Our great grandfather, Thomas John Penny, with seven of his ten children (left to right): Fred, our grandfather William (Bill), Violet, Carrie, Jane (?), Glen and Doug.

I treasure the photograph of great grandfather with his adult children, including my grandfather Bill. I knew slightly some of the interesting great aunts and uncles in the photo. Most living in Victoria, they seemed to have a mystique, as if they belonged to another era and class.

Distant members of the Edwards family of my grandmother, Esther Penny (nee Edwards), lived around Edenhope and we visited them too. Perhaps I was too young to take in their stories and connections as I can recall few now.



Her paternal grandparents came from England. Her grandfather William was born in London in 1798 and his wife Bridget (nee Taylor) in Lancashire in 1802 Lancashire. They were in Fremantle by the time of the birth of their son George.

Her maternal grandparents John Snell born in 1808 in Devon, UK and Jane Snell (nee Grant) born 1819 in Antrim, Ireland settled in NSW around Goulbourn area. Their daughter Margaret Esther would marry George Edwards and the couple lived in Edenhope and became the parents of our grandmother Nanna Penny, also christened Margaret Esther but called Esther.

I hope somewhere there is a book detailing this branch, but it is not the purpose of this publication to do an exhaustive family study. Perhaps someone else will follow the leads in more detail or advise where they are already recorded.



In this faded photo of my grandfather's football team in striped guernseys (with Bill possibly seated end of right front row), the youthful athletes look as if they are in a jail line up.

I don't know the story of how our grandparents met, although Edenhope was also in Western Victoria and not very far from Bill Penny's home in Douglas.

Bill, nearly 29, and Esther 22, were married on 14 September 1910. Their three children were all born around the Douglas area: Lorna in 1911 in Salt Lake, Gray in Edenhope (1913) and Kevin in Harrow (1918). The only record of a sibling, Roma, is her death in 1921, and burial in Harrow. Did they lose other children? Roma was never mentioned by our grandmother; and one assumes it was an infant death as if Roma had been born between the boys they would have remembered and spoken of it surely?

Sometime after that death, the family would leave the district to seek opportunities in South Australia.

Bill left behind the comradeship of a big family and the local friends and football mates of his youth. I wonder how this affected Esther and how much she missed family and support as, in the years I knew her, she didn't have many contacts beyond the family. Would she have made friends in the Adelaide years or was she too busy to socialise or be lonely?

As an interim job, I think, from a remembered story he told, that Bill manned a lift for the John Martin department store in Rundle Street, then grew apples and had a market garden in the village of Mylor in the Adelaide Hills. Agriculture, farming and vegetable growing would be lifelong pursuits but for a few years the couple ran a corner general store on Springbank Road in Colonel Light Gardens and catered for the workmen creating the new housing on the garden estate. They bought some suburban land, and sale of this probably enabled them to finance a selection of farming land.

Lured by the potential of fertile acres with reliable rainfall in the South East of the state, our grandparents William and Esther Penny won a tender to pay £3,993 for the homestead section of the larger Nambour station which had been subdivided for selection.

Thus, in 1930 they ended up in Comaum, a district rather than hamlet or town, halfway between the small towns of Penola and Naracoorte on a property with its boundary fence on the border between South Australia and Victoria.

Getting there by wagon from Adelaide took days and the move disrupted life as the family knew it. Their sons came with them, but daughter Lorna stayed in the city, grateful for a nursing job in the Depression.

For our father, considered by his teachers as a bright boy, it meant leaving school at 12 and foregoing a scholarship to attend the local St Therese Catholic School.

Establishing successful farming in such isolation was fraught with difficulties. Supplies and social life were 20 miles away. The store at nearby Wrattonbully wouldn't be established for another 20 years when in the 1950s the large Wrattonbully station adjacent to *Nambour* was broken up for a WWII soldier settlement project. Meanwhile, the Comaum post office in the private home of Bill Clayfield, another farmer, was three miles from *Nambour* and neighbours were few.

Clearing the land of scrub and bracken and eradicating rabbits was hard labour, and developing pastures and establishing flocks needed time and capital although little money was coming in. As the situation grew harder there was no cash even to employ the wandering itinerants looking for work. At most, the searchers could doss their swag for a night and get a feed before they had to move on but there was little to go around. And the regular lease payments had to be made.

Yet hard work paid off and the farm was prosperous. Graham and Kevin laboured as men alongside their father, all formal education abandoned for the practical lessons of hard work. Bonding as they acquired persistence and resilience, they both grew into respected and competent farmers.

Esther in particular must have missed Lorna, their daughter still in Adelaide, through the long and tiring days running the household, growing vegetables and fruit, and cooking and preserving on a wood stove. Storage in a meat safe cooled by wetted hessian bags was sometimes augmented by placing food in a nearby limestone cave.

There are plenty of gaps in this story of course, and now there's no one to ask, but one can be sure that my grandmother had no grief counselling nor anyone nearby to talk to about personal matters in the isolated years on a farm.

Soon Gray would take work off the property to earn income, particularly after he had a knee operation in the Naracoorte hospital and fell for a warmhearted nurse, Gwen Potter. Following love and wanting independence, he sought paid employment elsewhere, eventually managing a property at Mt Schank south of Mt Gambier.

Kevin stayed on the farm, where lack of wages through his teen years was compensated for by his love of the land and a passion for horses. Another passion entered the outstanding young horseman's life when the Berkin family came to live on a nearby property with an attractive 16-year-old daughter. Marriage to Sylvia Berkin followed in 1941, after they'd built a house on *Nambour*, and in 1946 and 1949 daughters Lorraine and Jennifer were born.

Esther was complex, resourceful and dominant within the home, yet restless and always looking to change the house with yet another wall put in or taken out. But she loved her family fiercely and heaped love on us as granddaughters. I recall the fun of visiting her warm kitchen and big dining table in the grandparents' house a hundred yards away from ours, and my feeling of disappointment when they retired to Portland.

My sister remembers her singing songs to her, and Nanna calling her by the pet-name, Jenny Wren. Her letters to us in boarding school were a thrill to receive, and sometimes contained a ten-shilling note which bought a lot from the tuckshop over the ensuing weeks. Now I wish I knew more of her story to do justice to the warmth she showered on us, to celebrate her with specifics rather than just vague emotions.

William Penny was a hardworking and honest deal maker, though cautious. Second cousin Garth Lamey spent nine months as a young teenager working on the farm and 60 years later told me Uncle Bill taught him how to work. Kevin was of the same ilk and developed an entrepreneurial flair later when running the farm himself.

I cling to my few early childhood memories of Grandpa Penny. They remain treasured. I recall a gentle person, a quiet man although he was sociable and enjoyed telling yarns and jokes. I have a strong memory of being on a wagon with him. It was laden with grain bags we were taking to the wool wash on the property and pulled by two enormous draft horses whose hind quarters towered over me as a four-year-old. Checking rabbit traps with him, probably when he came back for holidays in retirement, was a treat as we walked companionably across the paddocks in the early morning light.

We made intermittent conversation, or perhaps I just prattled since I had the reputation of being a chatterbox. He always had time to listen. He was an able horseman both astride in the saddle and when driving a buggy or wagon. Skilled with animals, whether working the dogs and stock on the farm, or coaxing a pet cockatoo to dance and sing, he was devoted to his cat once they left farming to live in a town.

And of course when they lived out nearly 20 years in retirement, we were growing up too and retain quite clear memories of them as older people in Mt Gambier during the 1950s and 60s. My sister Jenny and I spent many school holidays staying at their Mt Gambier home and the house at 17 Doughty Street still holds special memories. We were photographed on its big veranda and subsequently have taken modern photos of the exterior, thrilled to see it is still much loved with a well-tended garden. In our grandparents' day it abounded with fruit trees and vegetables, and chooks of course.

Memories of our grandparents

Jenny recalls:

Puppa's meticulous care in grafting several varieties of fruit onto one tree, his gentle attentiveness and kindness as he took care of me after my first bee sting when I placed my hand into the beautiful green of fresh lawn clippings he'd just thrown on the garden below the veranda; and the contented man sucking his pipe as he sat next to the wood stove.

Lorraine remembers:

Puppa's pulling from his pockets a pocket knife to peel an apple; a humbug lolly striped black and white with its mint flavour lasting hours; a black *quickeze* tablet for his self-diagnosed indigestion until replaced with a tablet under the tongue for angina. His ubiquitous felt hat, so often raised in greeting out walking. His great shot with a 303 rifle, felling a target on the farm from 100 metres even into his 80s

Jenny reminiscences about our grandmother too, in the face of any issue her solution lay in the mantra: *a Bex, a cup of tea and a good lie down*. I think that came as an advertisement during *When a girl marries*, the wireless soapie of the times which we listened to around the kitchen table. Quiz master, Bob Dyer and his wife Dolly on *Pick a Box* also had us spellbound to the Bakelite wireless.

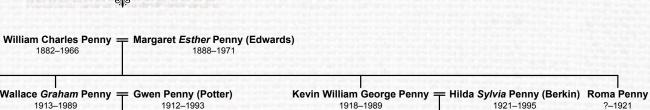


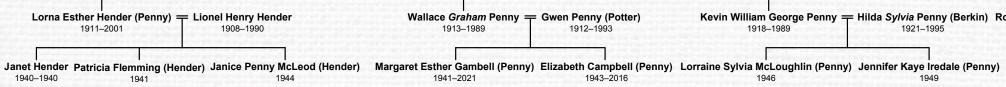
Above: Digging or pruning or just sitting pipe in hand in his garden, Grandpa Penny was a contented man. Top right: Lorraine and Jenny on the Doughty Street house's verandah, c. 1957. Right: Jenny returns to look in 2017, 60 years later.





Descendants of Willian Charles Penny and Margaret Esther Penny (Edwards)





Kevin's siblings and their families



Bill and Esther Penny.

Bill and Esther loved their extended family comprising a daughter and two sons and their spouses, and six treasured granddaughters.

Lorna, who had been a nurse, never lived on the farm and came only for holidays. Sometimes while there she'd be visited by suitor Lionel Hender who'd ride his bicycle down from Adelaide. Such efforts paid off, and marriage ensued. The Henders always resided in suburban Adelaide (Mile End and then Lockleys) where they raised their daughters Patricia (Trish) born in October 1941 and Janice (July 1944).

Gray married Gwen Potter from Broken Hill and their daughters Margaret and Elizbeth were raised on a property Gray managed, 12 miles south of Mt Gambier with the volcanic cone of Mt Schank a backdrop. Margaret was the first-born grandchild arriving in February 1941, and her sister Elizabeth followed in March 1943. Later the family moved to 4 Powell Street, Mt Gambier, when Gray took work in the rural side of Permewan Wrights Store.

The family gathers *c.* 1959







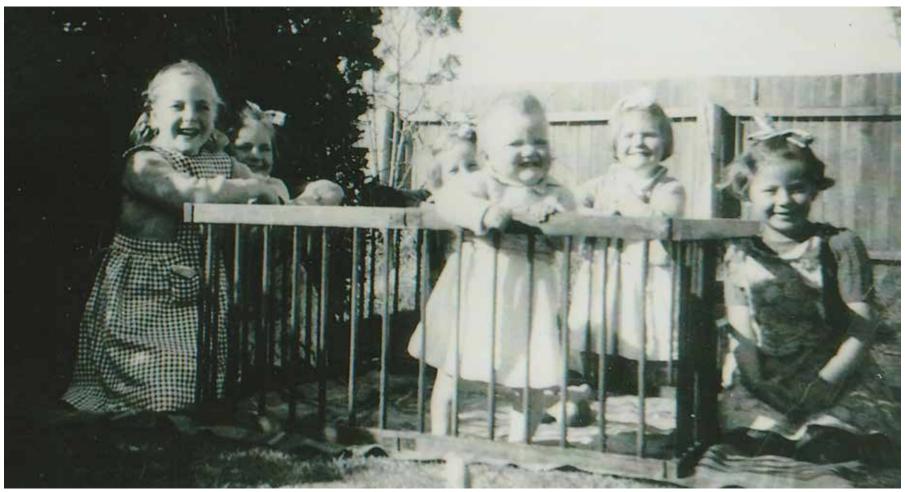
And of course, there were Jenny and I, and lots of love to go round the bevy of six girls from grandparents and aunts and uncles. Family was our most important social circle and we all loved each other. Family get-togethers and return visits to *Nambour* kept up the spirits of the ageing grandparents in their retirement. Sadly, grandparents don't last forever. On 20 July 1966, Bill Penny sat down for lunch saying, "They're the last roses I'll ever prune", and died of a heart attack. Esther died aged 83 in 1971.





Opposite page, from left: Back row: Lionel Hender, Bill Penny, Gray Penny; Middle row: Esther Penny, Sylvia Penny, Gwen Penny and Lorna Hender; Front row: Tricia Hender, Lorraine and Jennifer Penny, Elizabeth Penny, Janice Hender and Margaret Penny. Insert: Kevin who must have taken the big family photo. Top left: Bill Penny with sons Kevin and Gray, and son-in-law Lionel Hender. Left: Esther Penny with daughters-in-law Sylvia and Gwen, and daughter Lorna Hender. Above: Bill and Esther at Nambour, c. 1965/1966.

Six Penny cousins together: a special bond



At the farm at Comaum, c. 1950 (left to right): Margaret Penny, Tricia Hender, Elizabeth Penny (half hidden), Jennifer Penny (centre stage) Lorraine Penny and Janice Hender. Margaret and Elizabeth would argue over who could nurse the youngest and favourite cousin, Jenny.



At 17 Doughty Street, Mt Gambier, the grandparents' final home in retirement, c. 1959 (left to right): Lorraine, Margaret, Janice, Elizabeth, Tricia and Jennifer.





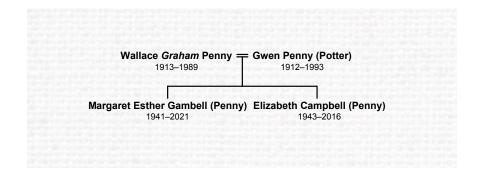






Left, clockwise: Elizabeth Campbell, Lorraine, Jenny, Peter Fitzgerald, Jan and Barry McLeod, John Iredale and John Gambell, c. 2007; Jenny, Margaret and Tricia in 1995; Elizabeth, Janice, Lorraine and Margaret in Yankalilla, c. 2011; Margaret, Janice, Elizabeth, Lorraine and Jenny. Above: Lorraine and Jenny in front of 17 Doughty Street, Mt Gambier in 2019.

Graham Penny's family





Elizabeth and Margaret Penny, c. 1945.



Clockwise: Margaret and Elizabeth Penny at Powell Street, Mt Gambier; Gray on horseback; Margaret and Elizabeth on horseback; Elizabeth with Grandma Penny and cat.









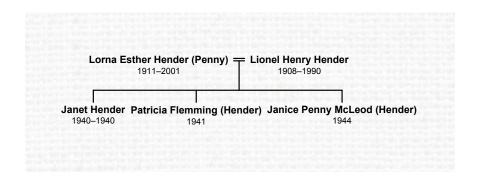




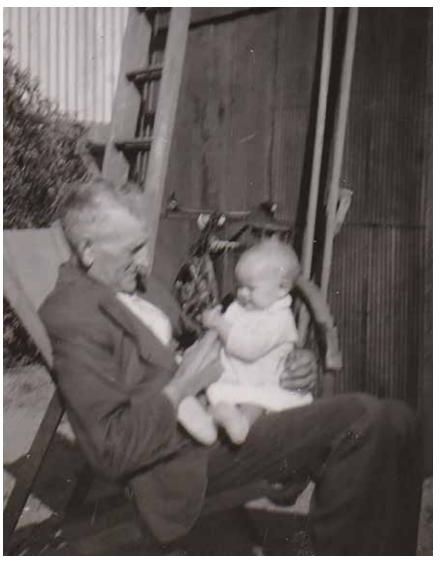


Clockwise: Elizabeth as debutante; Margaret and John Gambell with sons Matthew, Peter and David; Gwen Penny turns 80 with daughters Margaret and Elizabeth, Margaret's husband John Gambell and their son Peter; Margaret marries John Gambell, 1966.

Family of Lorna Hender (nee Penny)







Left: Tricia and Janice. Above: Tricia Hender with Grandpa Penny.



Above: Lorna Hender with Janice and Tricia. Right: Debutante Tricia. Opposite page, clockwise: Jan Hender with her father Lionel on church steps about to marry Barry McLeod, 1966, Lorraine Penny as bridesmaid; Jan and Barry McLeod.













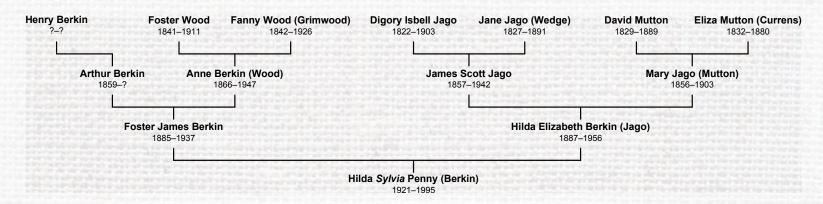
Left: Tricia with Jenny Penny Iredale, 1995. Above: Tricia Fleming (nee Hender), August 2009. Opposite page: Grandma Berkin/McInnes in 1936.

The story of Sylvia's family



Ancestors of Hilda Sylvia Penny (born Berkin)





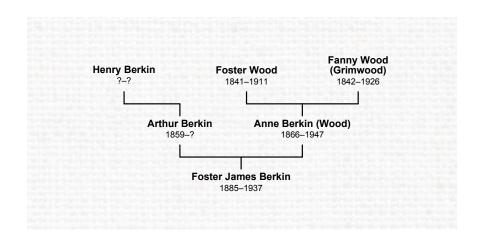
Sylvia's forebears

Some early stories and photographs about the Berkin family were collated in research done by Andrew Berkin* for a history of our grandfather Foster Berkin. While he checked archives, public documents, births-deaths-and-marriage records, newspapers and family stories, it is problematic to rely on all of his research as his work only reached draft stage before ill-health halted progress. His unchecked material remains unpublished except on a draft disc. He sheds considerable light on our family's background, however, particularly of the late 1800s and early 1900s, and for his giving a context to the early circumstances of my own mother, Sylvia Berkin, I am grateful.

Sylvia's father Foster was the eldest child of Arthur and Anne Berkin but there is little we know of his childhood or his father Henry. Arthur seemed to be of English heritage and must have migrated to Australia although there are no records of when. The first documented reference to him is in the notice of his marriage to Anne Wood published in the *South Australian Weekly Gazette*, but as he'd have supplied such details they may have been fabricated. When registering one of his children he claimed his own birthplace as Marseilles.

South Australian Weekly Gazette, Sat, 21 Mar 1885. Page 4

BERKIN—WOOD—On the 18th February, at the bride's residence, by the Rev. A. H. Bryant, Baptist minister, Arthur James, eldest son of the late Henry Berkin, Esq., of Fitzroy, Victoria, to Anne, eldest daughter of Mr. Foster Wood, Terowie, South Australia.



Arthur Berkin and Anne Wood married on her parents' property *Lockton Farm* near Terowie in the Mid North in South Australia in 1885. Her parents were both from England, her mother Fanny (nee Grimwood 1842–1926) from London and father Foster Wood (1841–1911) from the village of Lockton in Yorkshire.

It is unclear how Arthur from Melbourne's working-class suburbs met this girl from another state, who was born in Rapid Bay and whose parents later farmed nearly two hundred miles north of Adelaide. As he stated that he was 27 when he married he was probably born c. 1859.

*Disclaimer: Andrew has my own details incorrect attributing my step children Ben and Daniel Fitzgerald as my birth children. They are the children of my husband Peter Fitzgerald who was married to their mother Elizabeth Hockley. The correct fact is that I had no children of my own, one of only two cousins without issue.



Family photo of Anne and Arthur Berkin with Henry, Foster and Ruby in late 1891.

At first the newlyweds lived in Archer Street, North Adelaide where their first child, Foster, was born in late 1885. Later Arthur took his family back to the Victoria he knew, to various addresses in Melbourne where they stayed in squashed housing among toxic industries and unhealthy conditions. Sometimes Arthur gave his occupation as bootmaker, but it is more likely he worked on a factory floor than in his own business. Ruby was born in 1888 and a second son Henry in 1891 although he contracted gastroenteritis and died aged ten months when Foster was six.

Their youngest child Pearl was born in 1892 during the hard financial circumstances of the 1890s depression. By this time the family were living in the south west of Victoria at the coastal city of Warrnambool. While Mr Berkin appears on the Warrnambool Church roll in 1898, there are no further references. No death certificate or divorce papers exist, nor any rumours or information confirming what might have happened to him, although our mother told a story that her grandfather just rode off on a horse and was never seen again. But gone he was, and Foster, still in his teens would have had to step up as the man of the house.

By the new century, Anne Berkin with her three surviving children had shifted back to South Australia. Now geographically closer to her own relations in the Wood family, she proved a woman of mettle as she remade a life for herself and her family. She declared herself a widow and was operating a small boarding house on George Street in Solomontown on the edge of Pt Pirie. This was one of the few ways for a single woman with children and very little formal education to earn a living.

In 1905 she re-married, this time to Alex McInnes, born 1872 and six years her younger. With him she had two more daughters, Coral and Sylvie. Greatly loved by both families which she held together as a unit, she was a handsome and imposing woman who held her head high. In her second marriage Anne found she still needed to manage the household finances. Alex died in 1915, and thereafter she supported her families alone. Strong and respected, Anne Berkin-McInnes survived two improvident husbands, and died owning several properties in 1947 aged 81.



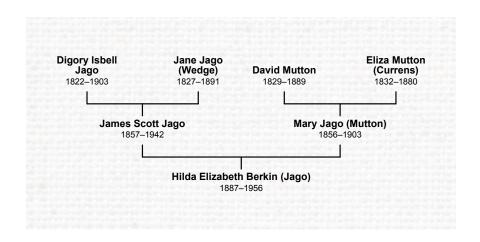
Anne McInnes with Coral and Sylvie, c. 1911.



Grandma McInnes, elderly, but a strong force in the family to the end.



Foster Berkin 1885–1937 married Hilda Jago of Terowie on 12 May 1909.



While living with his mother, Foster worked on farms near Pt Pirie, then in the Mid North around Jamestown and finally Terowie where he often visited the Wood family cousins.

Romance blossomed when he met local woman, Hilda Jago, who was the eldest surviving child of ten children born to James Scott Jago (1857–1942) and Mary Mutton (1856–1903). Hilda's elder sister died in her teens and four others before the age of five, and her beloved mother died when Hilda was 16. Little wonder that she was closely bonded to her younger siblings: brothers Fred and Stan Jago, and her sisters Lil (to become Mrs Charles Simmons) and Dotsy (to be Mrs Charles Reilly).

The wedding of Foster and Hilda took place in May 1909 as soon as the formalisation of Foster's successful bid for a selection on property in Hynam near Naracoorte in the south east of the state. Marrying Foster was a brave step for 20-year-old Hilda, taking her 350 miles away from her beloved family. Today it is over six hours drive between these points of South Australia, and certainly a longer more difficult trip in the early 1900s.

The onerous lease conditions required Foster pay regular rates and taxes, add annual improvements of at least £7/15/-, destroy rabbits, and in five years erect cattle proof boundary fencing. He was forbidden to fell trees unnecessarily or interfere with drainage. With a family to support, he also felt pressure to build a house and stables, fence paddocks and establish vegetable gardens.

Hilda bore her first son within nine months and in less than seven years there were five children, then a three-year gap to Sylvia born in 1921, and another five until the last child Vin was born in 1926. This can hardly have been the life she envisaged when she married a man, however urbane, who straight away took her from the familiarity of her own family into an onerous life of subsistence farming with little money and many babies.

The Hynam Closer Settlement project had led to a surrounding population of 150 when the Berkins came to live there, and soon 300 would attend community events. Both Hilda and Foster participated in these gatherings, according to *The Naracoorte Herald*. This local newspaper reported in detail on sports days, football matches, dances (on nights when it was moonlight so people could see to walk home), music evenings, and literary and debating events. Foster was a renowned public speaker and played the mouth organ. For Hilda, however, her isolated life backdropped by World War I must have been arduous and lonely, a far cry from the warm family she left in the Mid North, although she managed to return for some extended stays in the 1920s.

Nature dealt hard blows. Droughts, floods and outbreaks of bot flies as well as damage to crops and flocks by wild dogs, led many in the district to request hardship concessions on their land payments.





Foster too experienced setbacks and needed an extension to his lease although he worked his small property well and extended his income with off-farm labouring work, share-farming and building dams at which he was highly skilled and in great demand.

In May 1922, when our mother was nine months old, Foster had an accident swimming his work horses and five drowned or had to be destroyed. With each worth about £30, that approximated to $2\frac{1}{2}$ years of payments on the farm. He lost the ability to earn away from home without his working horses and could no longer effectively farm his own land. As a well-known horseman, he must also have felt it as a psychological blow.



Above left: Eileen, Cyril and Stan, with Cliff on Foster's knee. But Sylvia and some of her daughters and granddaughters are very like this seated child. Are we sure it is not Sylvia? Above and left: Cliff, Keith and sister Sylvia.

This last disaster forced Foster to negotiate for his lease to be taken over by a neighbour in August 1923, thereby removing the strain of regular lease payments and keeping his credit rating intact. The family was rehoused by that neighbour in an empty house, but it was basic housing with internal walls made from hessian which they plastered with newspapers. The children walked miles to school, often without shoes, and daily life was labour-intensive growing food, chopping wood, and tending farm animals as well as milking a cow, and keeping chooks for family consumption.

For the family to survive such circumstances it had to send the two oldest boys to live with two of Hilda's brothers hundreds of miles from Hynam. They were away for a year from the middle of 1923, Cyril with Fred and Ev Jago, Stan with Stan and May Jago. In 1924 Cliff, at eight, contracted polio which was treated at home for 12 months and left him with a permanent limp. Two years later he was billeted with Hilda's sister Dotsy (and husband Charlie Reilly) who ran a butcher's shop in Jamestown. Cliff stayed for several years and finished his limited schooling there.

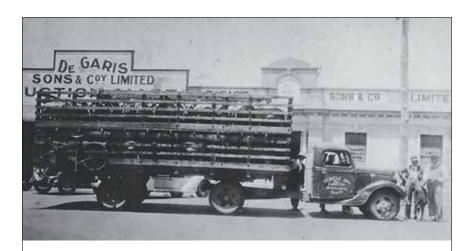
To support his family Foster was forced to labour for others away from his home and to share farm. If he were to find a way out of poverty, however, he needed to accrue some capital to attain reliable land and start again. He worked steadily towards this goal over the next six years. By 1929, he and his 20-year-old son Cyril were able to take up another holding on a more productive farm at Comaum, south east of Naracoorte, again on a lease with stringent requirements. The property was part of the breakup of the old *Nambour* estate, and they took up 700 acres and called it *Locton Park*.



Hynam Primary school students with Sylvia second from end on right, c. 1931/1932.

In those Depression years, making a living and meeting lease payments was still not easy. He and the older boys fenced and cleared saplings from the new block, established flocks of sheep and cattle, and began building a basic shack to camp in during the week. At weekends they went back to Hynam to stock up on food, plum pudding included, that Hilda and her daughter Sylvia had produced by working all day Saturday.

They must have had some success on the property as, by 1936, a newspaper article featured a remarkable sight. Instead of walking sheep to market or sending them on small trucks, Foster Berkin transported sheep from Comaum to market in Naracoorte in one large truck.



Naracoorte Herald, 4 Dec 1936

TRANSPORTING SHEEP TO MARKET BY MOTOR

Sheep are frequently handled in small motor trucks a few at a time but this is the first lot of any quantity to be seen in Naracoorte carted solely by road transport from farm to market. Last Friday [27th Nov] Messrs Gericke Bros the well-known Naracoorte carriers, conveyed the above sheep numbering 150 from Mr F.J. Berkins property at Comaum, 24 miles [39 km] distant, for sale at DeGaris Sons & Co Ltd.'s annual off shears sale. The sheep were loaded with a ramp into pens arranged in two tiers on the truck. Standing at the right of the picture is the manager of DeGaris next to Mr A.C. DeGaris (in shirtsleeves), with Mr Berkin to their left (in a dark suit).

They were dangerous and tough times. Foster and his sons worked hard but there was more hard luck in the form of accidents. Foster was crushed between railway trucks at Glenroy Station, and in another incident, injured by a bull. Dogged by ill health including cancer, he developed peritonitis from a ruptured and ulcerated stomach tumour and died in hospital in 1937 at 51. Hilda was just 50, the youngest of her seven children, Vin, was only ten and our mother, Sylvia, merely 15.

After Foster's death without a will, Hilda needed to shift from Hynam. The structure at Comaum that her husband had been building since the early 1930s was still incomplete, although the older boys did their best to make the small premises habitable so that their mother and younger siblings Sylvia and Vin could eventually shift there. In time some older sons moved out to find work or to marry, and Eileen, nursing in Pt Pirie, never lived at Comaum.

Photos that we have of our mother show how close she was to her five brothers. Her nature was sunny and dutiful as she cooked and washed for them. That was her work, with no chance of finishing her schooling or becoming a hairdresser, the career she would have liked. Just as well those brothers loved her then and throughout her life. She returned the love in spite of the lonely life it entailed to housekeep for them with no electricity and no running water, hot or cold, but plenty of ironing and the hated task of picking grass seeds from their socks. Their little sister always held a special place in their hearts. I hope that was enough. Thank goodness she soon met Kevin Penny and young love sustained her. They were married in 1941. At the end of 1944 her brother Keith brought his bride Jean to stay in his mother's place until their own house could be built on the property quite a few years later.

My only first-hand memory of the generation before my mother, therefore, is the old lady Hilda Berkin (pictured right), and her more congenial but far away elderly sisters and brothers from the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula. Black clad, she was humourless and stern, I thought as a child, without a glimmer of understanding of her crushing circumstances.

In the early 50s when I clambered on tiny legs across the few paddocks to where Hilda lived, I was only pretending to be a dutiful granddaughter.

The real attraction was my cousin Geoff, eight months younger, who was my playmate. I don't recall Grandma ever playing with me, I just remember her red hands washing dishes in a tin basin on the kitchen table after heating the water on the wood stove.

I admit that when Keith and Jean built their own home in spanking white Mt Gambier stone half a mile away, I didn't rush often to visit Hilda in the tumbledown old place.

In 1954, heart-broken when her eldest child Cyril died aged 44, Hilda bought a home in Portland, Victoria. For once she had a proper house with running hot water and electricity, but that interlude didn't last long as ill health soon brought her back to Comaum. Eventually Grandma took protracted stays with Keith and Jean, or some nights at our house. I recall our dad teasing her as momentarily, he could make her laugh away her melancholia and she'd respond with repartee and a pretend attack with her black walking stick. As she became sicker she would lie on the bed wheezing and whooping without modern treatments for asthma, the strain on her heart leading to her death at 69. I was nine when she died, oblivious to the disappointments, loneliness and sadness she suffered through a life of extreme poverty and hardship.



But out of all this, amazingly, came our mother whose positivity and dutifulness never flagged. She embraced her marriage across the road with love and pride, cherished her husband and daughters and was kindness personified, helping family members, taking in cousins and going well beyond the bounds of filial duty.

Not surprising though, she was always very private and spoke little about her early years of hardship as she strove to make life comfortable for her husband and daughters, and anyone who came within her ambit. Well-loved within the extended family, she led by example by having a grateful heart and fierce loyalty.



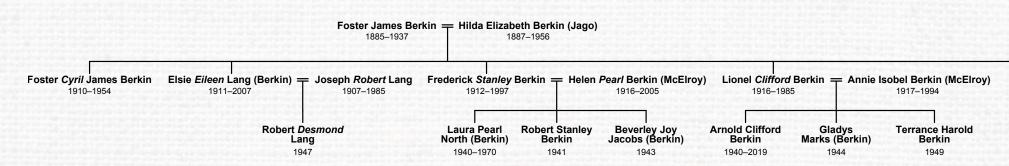
Sylvia as a teenager.

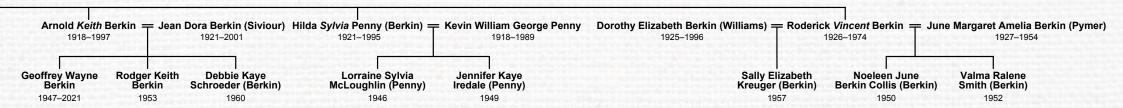




Descendants of Foster James Berkin and Hilda Elizabeth Berkin (Jago)







Sylvia's siblings and their families

Sylvia's siblings and their families gathered in 1956 at the house built by Foster Berkin at Locton Park Comaum in the 1930s. Our childhood was filled with love not only from our parents but also by the extensive and inclusive Berkin family of many cousins and aunts and uncles. A warmth and concern for members was strengthened by the women in the family and those who married in to it. While Eileen and Bob Lang and son Desmond lived in Sydney all others lived within 50 miles of the *Locton Park* property at Comaum. At least in our young years, there were strong links within the extended family.

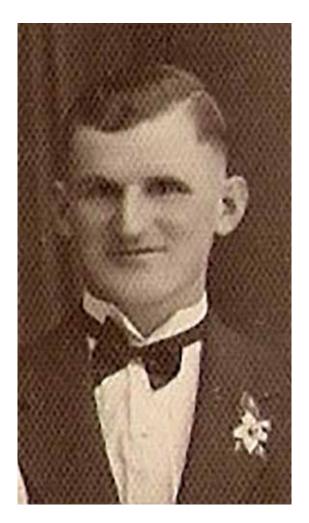
Right: Sylvia's siblings and their families (1956) at the house built by Foster Berkin at Locton Park, Comaum in the 1930s. Back row: Stan and Pearl Berkin, Robert, Keith and Arnold Berkin, Annie Berkin, Vin Dorothy and Cliff Berkin. Middle row: Eileen Lang, Gladys and Bev Berkin, Kevin and Sylvia Penny, Annie and Cliff Berkin. Front row: Geoff, and Terry Berkin, Des Lang, Noeline Berkin, Jennifer and Lorraine Penny and Valma Berkin. Far right: Foster and Hilda Berkin's descendents at a reunion at Locton Park, Comaum, in 2011.



Cyril Berkin

Foster Cyril James Berkin 1910–1954

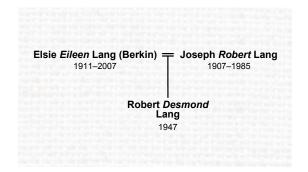






The young Cyril was named Foster Cyril James Berkin after his father Foster James Berkin. For Hilda Berkin, the death of her first born and only unmarried son, Cyril, at 44 in 1954, weighed heavily on her last years.

Family of Eileen Lang (nee Berkin)











Far left: Eileen with her mother Hilda. Top left: Des Lang with parents Eileen and Bob. Left: Eileen as bridesmaid for Sylvia Berkin's marriage to Kevin Penny, 1941. Above: Eileen marries Bob Lang, 1946.

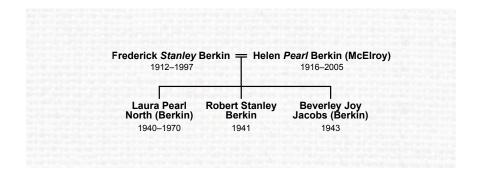


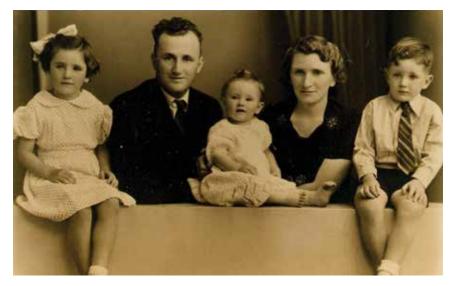
Above: Des and Suzanne Lang with Brett, Janine and Michelle. Top right: Des, Bob and Eileen, September 1961. Right: Des and family with Eileen.

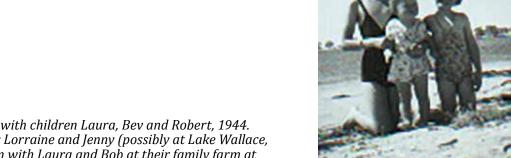




Family of Stan Berkin









Top right: Stan and Pearl with children Laura, Bev and Robert, 1944. Right: Laura with cousins Lorraine and Jenny (possibly at Lake Wallace, Edenhope). Far right: Stan with Laura and Bob at their family farm at Lochaber, 1943.

Laura graduated as a physiotherapist, and in December 1962 she married John North. She died of cancer in June 1970, leaving two young children, Kristin (b. 1967) and Alick (b. 1968).





Left: Laura Berkin as young woman (c. 1959). Above: Bev as debutante with Robert (Bob), 1960. Right: Siblings Bev and Bob at the Berkin reunion, 2011.

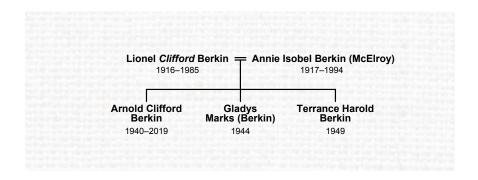


Stan and Pearl retired to Naracoorte while retaining links to the Lochaber property still farmed by son Robert. Eventually, after bowls trips and regular holidays on the Sunshine Coast, they moved to live in Maroochydore, Queensland.





Family of Cliff Berkin











Far left: Cliff aged ten. Middle: Cliff with his father, Foster Berkin. Left: Cliff, Gladys and Arnold, 1947. Above: Annie McElroy as bride with Sylvia Berkin as bridesmaid (on right) amid McElroy girls, 1939.





Left: Gladys won state titles in highland dancing in the 1950s, and was under eight national champion in Scottish dancing, 1951/1952. Above: Gladys as debutant, partnered by brother Arnold (1960). Overleaf: Annie and Cliff Berkin with Terry, Arnold and Gladys (c. 1960); Gladys with her father Cliff, before marrying Peter Marks. (Note: Gladys changed her name to Mariane Marks in the 1980s.)





Flexible fabric

WHAT you can do with a piece of fabric is quite amazing!

While in the US I found that the use of fabrica in the home is far more diverse than used widely by stretch-ing fabric over a frame us a wall Scature.

It is a new and easy way to create just the right atmosphere in your room or office.

Exerting and different. fabrics are available to give character to your room without great out-

fabries.
Trapunto work is to outline parts of the fabric pattern with stitching and fill it with Decree. so that it stands out from the rest of the design, giving a three-di-cvinyl coated fabrics mensional look. There is a wide var-

sety of fabrics available particularly for child-ren's rooms where matching quilt covers or outline-quilted cot covers can be used to co-ordinate with a scali-stretching and match-curtains or blinds. c fabrica and her available in funcif kita

Proprietor Mrs. Glad Marks started up Material Matters three years ago to use fabrics more as home decoration. She deals in materials for curtaining.

cushioning and blinds, but also for wall hangings and framings.

Previously, Glad owned Habitat for five

She has travelled around the world searching for fabrics and materials suitable for stretching, and recently attended the textile Paritex fair in Paris, where companies from all over the world exhibit their fabrics and textiles.

She writes about how to use fabrics innovatively to beautify the home.

much more depth when the property of the pattern with the pattern of the pattern

omantie.
On the home front, true Australiana fabrics, hand screen-printed by Peier Stripes, capture the outbeck scenes of homesteads. and windmills.
He co-ordinates PVCs

oration is being used the handy person is to and aproduit, chinties extensively in the US.

The pattern galant You will be surprised.

we use the stretching sites available available early Australian cot-

We use the stretchmgs in varying sizes,
from small onces for a
mirrory to quibe large
features for, perhaps,
that have wall at the
end of a half, behind the
state well, or any uninsecusing wall in the
form or cuffice.

The size and shape
wall and the
form or cuffice.

The size and shape
wall receiving used.

With the variety of
fairlies smallable, prices
can suit every pocket.

Occometric patterns
can suit every pocket.

Occometric patterns
can be ever effectively
and placed in separate
frames to form a modern wall pattern from
the move the piece of
fairlies and the second
can suit every pocket.

Occometric patterns
can be ever effectively
and placed in separate
frames to form a modern wall pattern from
the move the piece of
formers to form a modern wall pattern from
the special bond.

Another exciting inmovation used wisely inthe UE is the Trapunto
work on the stretched
fabrics.

Trapunto work is to

Trapunto work is to

Trapunto work is to

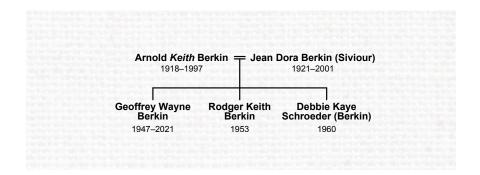
Trapunto work is to

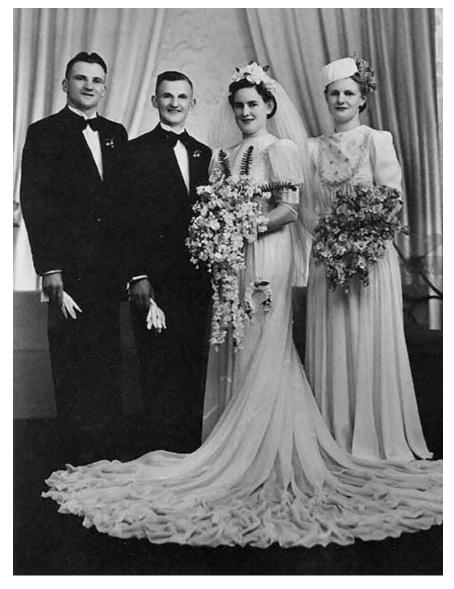
The loans front

Trapunto work is to

Trapunto work

Family of Keith Berkin





Right: Keith Berkin marries Jean Siviour.







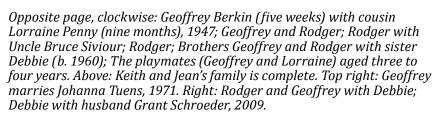










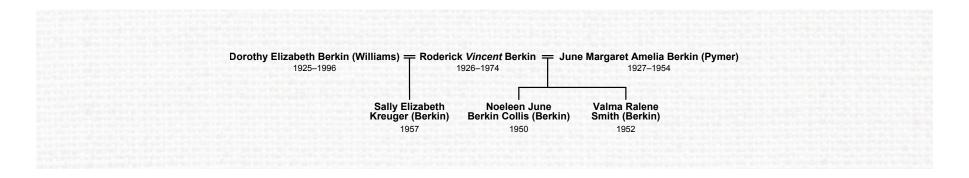








Families of Vin Berkin



















Opposite page, far left: Vin married June Pilmer in 1950, attended by Cliff, Annie and their daughter Gladys. They had two daughters Noeline (1950) and Valma (1952). June died in 1954. Middle left: A young Vin with big brother Stan. Left: June and Vin Berkin with Noeline, early 1951. Above left top: Noeline and Valma, with their mother June (1953). Above left: Noeline and Valma with their cousins Lorraine and Jenny Penny at Nambour (1954). Above right: Vin remarried in 1956, to Dorothy Williams, and they had a daughter, Sally, in 1957. Top right: Sally Berkin marries Rob Kruger. Right: Val, Sally and Noeline, 2019.



Foster and Hilda Berkin's descendents at a reunion at Locton Park, Comaum, in 2011.



Kevin and Sylvia's legacy

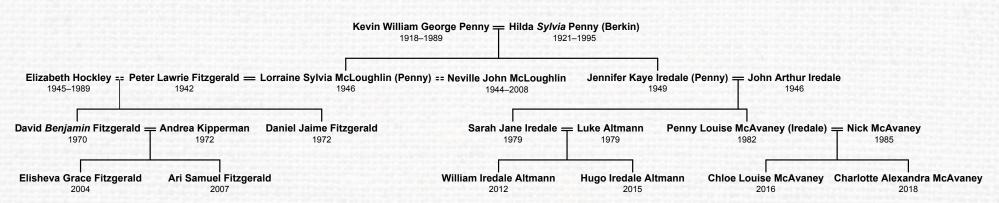
The story of Kevin and Sylvia continues in their descendants and warm recollections of their family and friends





Descendants of Kevin William George Penny and Hilda Sylvia Penny (Berkin)





Descendants



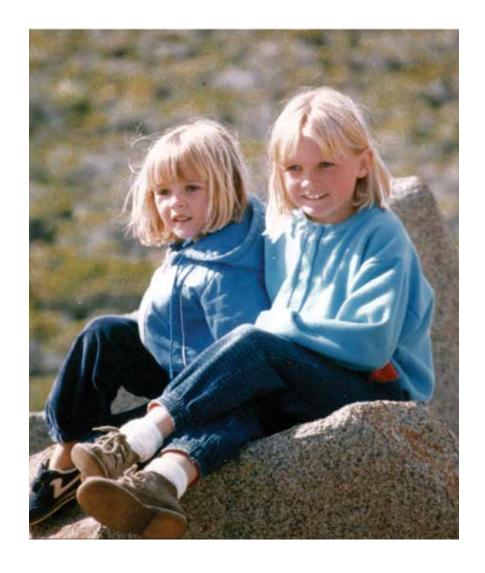
Jenny, Lorraine, Kevin and Sylvia with Jenny's daughters Sarah and Penny Iredale in front, March 1988.

Key family dates

| Date | | Event | |
|------------|--------------|--|--|
| 1930 | | Bill and Esther Penny brought their family from Adelaide to Nambour at Comaum. | |
| 1938 | | Foster Berkin's family shifted from Hynam to Locton Park at Comaum. | |
| 1941 | 17 September | Kevin Penny married Sylvia Berkin. | |
| 1946 | 20 July | Lorraine Sylvia Penny born. | |
| 1949 | 22 August | Jennifer Kaye Penny born. | |
| 1950 circa | | Bill and Esther Penny retired and moved to Portland where his father Thomas lived. | |
| 1953 circa | | Bill and Esther Penny moved to 17 Doughty Steet, Mt Gambier. | |
| 1952 | | Lorraine started school at Durr Primary school, soon to be renamed Comaum. | |
| 1955 | | Jennifer started school at Comaum PS; schoolteacher Anne Stephens boarded with the family that year and became a lifelong friend, the relationship maintained through the years after Anne moved to the Riverland and married Roy Mc Donald. | |
| 1956 | 1 March | Hilda Berkin (Sylvia's mother) died aged 69; her father Foster had died aged 58 in 1937 when she was 1 | |
| 1959 | February | Lorraine left for boarding school in Adelaide (MLC). | |
| 1962 | February | Jennifer also went to boarding school. | |
| 1963-1967 | | Lorraine began studies at The University of Adelaide and Adelaide Teachers College. | |
| 1966 | | Jennifer returned to the farm for a year. | |
| 1966 | 20 July | Bill Penny died aged 84. | |
| | | | |

| Date | | Event | | | |
|-----------|--|---|--|--|--|
| 1967–1969 | | Jennifer began three years of study at Wattle Park Teachers College. | | | |
| 1969 | 11 January | Lorraine married Neville McLoughlin and went to live in Canberra, then Newcastle. They returned to Adelaide at the end of 1972, settling in Lower Mitcham, divorcing in 1983. | | | |
| 1971 | 26 April | Esther Penny died aged 83. | | | |
| 1973-1974 | | Jennifer travelled overseas for 15 months. | | | |
| 1974 | | Kevin and Sylvia sold <i>Nambour</i> and retired to Victor Harbor. | | | |
| 1974 | 16 November | Jennifer married John Iredale. | | | |
| 1979 | 5 June | Sarah Jane born to Jennifer and John Iredale. | | | |
| 1982 | 11 May | Penny Louise born to Jennifer and John Iredale. | | | |
| 1986 | 26 April | Lorraine married Peter Fitzgerald. | | | |
| 1989 | 11 September | Kevin Penny died as result of an accident aged 71. | | | |
| 1995 | 16 August | Sylvia Penny died aged 74. | | | |
| 2012 | 31 May | William Iredale Altmann born to Sarah Iredale and Luke Altmann. | | | |
| 2015 | 12 November | Hugo Iredale Altmann born to Sarah Iredale and Luke Altmann. | | | |
| 2016 | 3 June | Chloe Louise born to Penny and Nick McAvaney. | | | |
| 2018 | 7 September | Charlotte Alexandra born to Penny and Nick McAvaney. | | | |
| | the state of the latter to be tracked by | | | | |

Jenny, John and family

























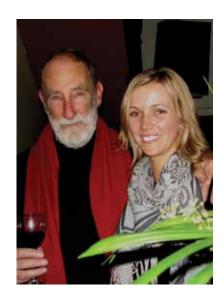
















Sarah, Luke and family











Penny, Nick and family











The grandchildren of Jenny and John Iredale

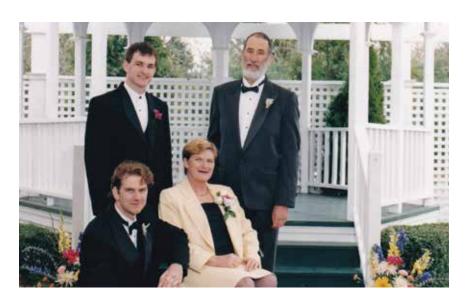


Hugo Iredale Altmann, Charlotte McAvaney, William Iredale Altmann and Chloe McAvaney, 2019.

Lorraine, Peter Fitzgerald and family



Ben Fitzgerald married Andrea Kipperman in Connecticut on 19 April 1998, with family members including Lorraine, Peter and Ben's brother Daniel flying to the USA.







Lorraine and Peter in Yankalilla, and family including Daniel, and Ben and Andrea and their children Elisheva (Ellie) and Ari.

















A piano

Sylvia's generous gift

by Jennifer Penny Iredale, March 2022

Our mother Sylvia gave us, her daughters, one of the greatest of gifts. Never having any opportunities for herself, somewhere deep inside her she valued the ability to play a musical instrument. From a place unknown, she had acquired a little flute and I can still recall the sounds of *Loch Lomond*, the only song she could play. Too late to ask questions now: where'd your flute come from, who taught you to play that song, why did you want us to learn the piano? All we can do is be grateful for her giving us the opportunity to learn the piano.

When her brother Cyril died prematurely at the age of 44, he left her a small amount of money. Enough however, for her to buy a German piano, a Lipp, an upright made of walnut wood. Soon, she and our father Kevin were taking Lorraine, aged ten, on a 23-mile (approx. 40 km) trip to have music lessons at the Naracoorte Convent of Mercy. A little later, I followed in her footsteps learning from a nun who thankfully did not hit my fingers with a cane when I erred. (A common practice in those unenlightened times.) We also drove to town on Saturdays to have theory lessons. Our parents were very busy and hardworking farmers. In the 1950s and days of slow travel, the return trip twice a week of 80 km constituted quite a sacrifice and devotion to their daughters.

Because it was so very different from our mother's upbringing, we considered this as a wonderful and generous gift. Both of us were quite happy to sit in our sittingroom and practise scales and the set pieces which were a requirement of the Australian Music Examination Board. We continued lessons when we were boarders at Methodist Ladies College in Adelaide and were both lucky to be taught by Miss Kimber, reputedly the best teacher there.



After leaving school neither of us played the piano much, but in my mid-20s the music bug hit me again and I bought myself another piano, as the Lipp had travelled with our parents in their shift to Victor Harbor, then later found a permanent place in Lorraine's home. I began lessons for four years with a wonderful teacher, David Gallasch.

I lapsed again when my daughters were born but was pleased to use my music skills teaching junior primary students when I returned to work. We've both had times without playing, but now Lorraine is enjoying playing regularly and takes lessons from a local teacher in Yankalilla. When she acquired a keyboard several years ago, I was glad to give the family piano a home.

Centenary of Kevin's birth

I too had often meant to take up playing again, but it wasn't until the eight weeks of COVID-enforced lockdown in 2020 that I disciplined myself (but with great enjoyment) to practise every day. I play my old favourites and have learnt a few new pieces, the criteria being that they are not too difficult. I enjoy it immensely even though my progress is slow. Favourites are Mozart, Chopin and Beethoven.

This little piece of writing is not meant to be about Lorraine and myself, though there would be no story without us. No, it is to acknowledge the generosity, love and commitment our parents made to us. I think it was Sylvia's vision for opportunities that she never had.

Probably made more than 150 years ago, the old piano is now literally worn out. Thus we have faced the very difficult decision that it is time for me to buy a new piano. I think and hope Sylvia would have approved. I'm about to search, albeit reluctantly, for a much newer second hand one. I am following the advice of Luke, Sarah's clever partner and composer of classical music, that it's time to let go, that it's like trying to keep an 80-year-old car on the road. The piano tuner too, when telling me it is now unable to be tuned, has told me how much more I will enjoy playing on a different piano. It's time to let go of the piano, but the gratitude we have towards our mother will stay forever. Thank you, dear parents, thank you quiet, gentle, unassuming and generous Sylvia.

From: Jennifer Penny Iredale To: Penny and Berkin cousins

Date: 08 March 2018

Subject: The 100th anniversary of KWG

Dear cherished cousins,

Today is the 100th year anniversary of the birth of Lorraine's and my dear Dad, Kevin William George Penny. You all knew him well and so I thought I would like to share this nostalgic, and for us, important day. Tonight John and I will have dinner at Jolley's Boathouse restaurant on the Torrens to celebrate a wonderful man. Lorraine will be with us in spirit as she and Peter enjoy the Sahara of Morocco.

Our father was a true gentleman and I love the fact that 08 March is also International Women's Day. Dad taught us how women should be treated and respected by his constant example and attitude towards women; in particular to Mum Sylvia, Lorraine and me. I consider myself to have been very lucky to have Dad as a male role model.

Both of our parents gave us the strength to be who we wanted to be and to be proud of our gender. Thank you, Mum and Dad.

And so, happy 100th Kevin,

Jenny

Epilogue

Exploring the story of our parents Kevin and Sylvia Penny, the times in which they and their forebears lived, and the legacy they created, has been both fascinating and confronting.

I have been heavily reliant on my sister Jenny Iredale who has written several of the stories and helped me unearth memories and old photos. Cousins also contributed reminiscences and photos over the prolonged gathering together of material, and graphic designer Alison Fort has made the medley into a coherent and beautiful publication.

Often memories meld into one another, there are varying slants on what went before, and numerous stories remain incomplete, leading to frustration at leaving it too late to access deep answers to many questions. We were often left wondering how and why.

As we glimpsed into our heritage, however, new or forgotten stories emerged and many wonderful memories flooded back. A sense of gratitude remains paramount.

Lorraine Penny McLoughlin

This story begins in Comaum halfway between Naracoorte and Penola in the South East, South Australia where author Lorraine Penny McLoughlin grew up on a farm in the late 1940s and 50s.

After attending Comaum Primary School, she went to boarding school and university in Adelaide, and then worked in various cities in teaching and a variety of positions in public administration and politics back in Adelaide. Her rural experiences and close-knit early family days, however, strongly shaped her interests and approaches to life.

Since retiring to five acres in the Yankalilla district, she has been involved in arts festivals and literary events, and authored biographies of several artists.

Glimpses into the family heritage of Kevin and Sylvia Penny celebrates the extended family story of her parents, with some focus on life in Comaum.

