



Enduring memories

The enduring memories of my childhood are of spending time with my grandparents on their farm. I loved to visit with Mumma and Daddad and collect vegies and flowers and fruit from the garden or the orchard. I loved feeding the chooks and watching Daddad chop the wood. I loved the library of books in the front room where I would snuggle into the club lounge and lose myself in the same stories that my mother read as a child whilst Daddad read his paper or one of his favourite novels.

I loved the smells that came from the kitchen as Mumma baked her famous sponges and scones. The joy of helping her measure and stir and roll and cut stays with me, as do the stories she told as we worked together in that kitchen warmed by the slow combustion stove.



Most of all I loved breakfast time. When we stayed with Mumma and Daddad we had a choice; to have bacon and eggs or porridge in the kitchen with Daddad, or to climb into bed with Mumma and sit, propped up by pillows, to receive the breakfast tray that Daddad brought into Mumma every morning. Two cups of black tea, toast and homemade jam. Just thinking about it makes me smile with the warmth and comfort of that double bed and the loving embrace that these two special people shared with me.

The joy of being a much loved grandchild is only superseded by having two much loved grandchildren. I feel blessed that our grandchildren, Aisling and Bridget, live close by so that I get to see them on a regular basis. Nothing touches my heart more than the excited 'It's Eileen' when I arrive and the race to jump into my arms. Our fridge is covered with drawings and letters from these precious little people who tell us that they love us in so many ways every day.

We are creating memories and rituals of our own:

Having tea-parties with the precious tea-set that my mother gave me.

Planting vegetables, watching them grow and, finally, the joy of 'harvesting' them.

Baking biscuits and cakes and sausage rolls together and not worrying one little bit about the mess.

Doing 'craft' on the kitchen bench in winter and on the patio on warmer days.

Following grandfather Mick around the paddocks.

Reading stories together, singing songs and even the occasional crazy dance.

Our grandchildren are an absolute joy.

An additional blessing is watching our son as a parent. It brings tears of pride to my eyes to witness the love with which he and gorgeous wife encircle their family, and the generosity with which they invite family and friends into that loving embrace.



Eileen Rice – Ballarat East