

The Fraser Island Adventure of Dapple & Fluff

A story written for John Sinclair's grandchildren Surveying George Haddock Track January 2010

One hot summer day while Grandpa John (GPJ) and his mates were working on a big project surveying a walking trail on Fraser Island, two little white clouds were formed over the Pacific Ocean just east of the island.

At first the clouds were very small but there was hardly any wind and as the two little clouds slowly rose ever higher they grew in size. But as they got higher and larger they felt a gentle wind nudging them towards Fraser Island.

At first they were afraid of the breeze that blew from the south east, but the wind spoke so softly to them to soothe their worries, "Don't you worry I am taking you to one of the most beautiful places in the world."

So the two little clouds began to get more excited. Then as they drifted they saw Fraser Island in the distance. As they got closer they could see the high forest clad dunes and the long straight beach that waves crashed on to. There was a pretty mix of colours with the deep blue of the ocean the white foam of the breaking waves and the golden sandy beach. They became more excited when they saw 4WDs moving up and down the beach because everything they saw was new to them and these were amazing machines.

Fluff looked to the left and saw lots of vehicles gathered around the mouth of Eli Creek. Just in from the beach was a big area of sand surrounded by forest. Below them Dapple could see the wreck of an old ship asleep on the beach with people getting out of the cars and looking into this old rusty wreck. Then Dapple looked to the right and saw the interesting shapes and bright orange colours of the Pinnacles, a set of high coloured sand cliffs coming right down to the edge of the beach. They were most impressed because what the wind had told them was true.

Then the breeze lifted the two little clouds higher and let them drift over the amazing forests of Fraser Island. First there were the foredune forests of she oaks and banksias, then they were passing over the pointed emerald green cypress forest and then they noticed that the trees were getting much taller as they passed the scribbly gum forests.

Dapple tried to read the funny writing on the scribbly gums but just could only make out scribbling. There were also some scribbles on the big blackbutt trees that came along next.

Fluff observed, "Those blackbutt trees look as though they have forgotten to put on their shirts!"

Then they saw the magnificent grandeur of the rainforest. The two little clouds were already in raptures when they saw the lakes buried amongst the forest. Fluff was surprised to see the beautiful Hidden Lake when Dapple spied Grandpa and his mates coming back from their hot sweaty survey work to take a swim in Lake Coomboo.

By now the wind that had brought them in from the sea stopped blowing altogether and they were almost motionless. Until they were over the still waters of Lake Coomboo neither Dapple nor Fluff knew what they looked like but then they saw themselves for the first time in the mirror like surface of the lake. They were more amazed.

Meanwhile Grandpa and his mates were also impressed by the two little clouds that were sitting over the lake and not moving. Grandpa said, "I like some of the funny shapes

that clouds make. I have seen some that look like fish, others that look like dragons and others that look like the map of Australia."

One of his mates piped up that he had seen clouds that looked like a ballroom floor filled with lots of dancers. Both Dapple and Fluff were listening to this conversation then Fluff turned to Dapple and said, "That sounds like real fun. Why don't we try to make some funny shapes and let them see what we can look like."

"But how can we do that when we aren't even able to move on our own?" Dapple responded.

Just then Gentle, the breeze that had been asleep woke up and interjected, "I can help you to change your shape and make these old men down below say 'WOW!'"

So Gentle started to blow. Gentle pushed stronger and higher. The two little clouds merged into one as they were lifted to gain height. But now Gentle was moving them faster and they got strung out into a long wispy stream. They no longer looked small and fluffy. They were starting to look like a big line of Conga dancers when they met an upper level wind blowing in the opposite direction to Gentle. The new wind strung out the Conga line even further. It spun them around and almost wound the wispy bits of the line into a complete circle above the lake.



Down in the lake Grandpa and his mates looked up and were amazed at what they saw. They all said "WOW!" Then Grandpa raced off to get his camera. But by the time he got back to the lake the amazing circling cloud was starting to drift apart. But all of his mates were still looking up in wonder at the amazing spectacle of the dance that Dapple and Fluff with the help of Breeze had created over Lake Coomboo.



Meeting a Peripatus on Fraser Island

A Children's Story by John Sinclair Working on George Haddock Track

While Grandpa was busy clearing a path through some rainforest on Fraser Island to become part of a great hiking trail, Mary Lou busied herself studying the forest floor to see what interesting fungi in the form of mushrooms that she could discover. Most were white or cream or even brown but some were bright red or even blue. She started trying to see what the difference was and then she discovered that most had radiating ribs underneath that were a different colour to the top of the mushrooms. Some of those ribs were black or nearly black while others were either white or a soft pink.



Mary Lou got really excited as she noticed more and more fungi on the damp forest. There were some though that didn't have ribs underneath like the ribs of an umbrella and these looked like sponge. She got really curious and accidentally bumped one of the sponged ones. She then watched with amazement as the part she had hit started to turn blue like a bruise.

Now Mary Lou was really hooked on fungi. When she saw a mushroom, she would almost put her ear on the ground to look under the mushroom to see if they had ribs or sponge underneath. Most were ribbed. While she had her ear on a mossy bit of forest, she heard a sound in her ear.

"Watch out! You might crush me!" the voice said.

Mary Lou instantly lifted her head and was amazed to discover the most unusual, small brown and blue creature where her head had been. It was unlike anything she had seen before. It looked a bit like a centipede but without as many legs. In fact it didn't have proper legs and instead of being shiny, it looked like it had the prettiest velvet skin. She looked in amazement and wondered aloud, *"I have never seen anything like you before. I wonder what you might be!"*

Then to her surprise the creature answered her in the softest voice that only very curious children like Mary Lou can hear, *"I am Perry Perapitus one of the*

velvet worms. You don't see many of us about because we live only on damp forest floors and there isn't very much of that or very many of us left around the world now."



Mary Lou was eager to know more about this strange creature. *"I have never heard of a peripatus before. Are there any other creatures like you?"* she asked.

"Not far from Fraser Island there are platypus and ceratodus. Have you ever heard of them?" Perry replied.

"I have seen platypus; they are a cross between a duck and a furry mammal but I don't think I have seen a ceratodus. What do they look like?" she answered.

"It isn't surprising you haven't seen ceratodus because although they live in the Mary River and breathe air like you, they look like fish that get their oxygen from the water but they aren't as easily seen as Platypus," Perry told her.

"So, if they both live in the water and you live on the forest floor, what is your connection with them?" the inquisitive Mary Lou asked.

"It is simple. We are some of the evolutionary links. The platypus is a connection between birds and reptiles and mammals. The Ceratodus is the link between aquatic creatures and land animals because they were the first creatures that could live out of the water and breath air. Peripatus are the connection between the segmented worms and insects and other arthropods. However while there are countless species of arthropods around the world, there are only a few species of peripatus and we have remained unchanged for 570 million years!" Perry told her.

Just then Mary Lou heard the tractor coming up the track and it drowned out whatever else Perry might have told her. The tractor coming back told her that it was lunch-time and so she said farewell to Perry and went to join her grandfather.

Mary-Lou Meets Terri Tractor

A children's story written in June 2014 working on George Haddock Track
Dedicated to Robin Hyde one of almost 100 volunteers who worked on the project

Mary Lou was curious because she loved her grandparents but they were not home much. When she was smaller they were both busy working. She didn't see as much of either of them as she wanted. She thought that when they retired they would spend more time with her, reading and telling stories and taking her on picnics and other outings. They were fun people to be with and she enjoyed all the time she could spend with them. But after two years they seemed to have even less time to spend with her.

They loved Fraser Island and so did Mary-Lou. They spent more time to go to Fraser Island. Because she had to go to school she couldn't go with them. She missed seeing them when they were away. Mary-Lou began to feel some envy as well as sadness at missing out.

One day Grandparents announced that they had volunteered for a working party to extend a wonderful bushwalking track on Fraser Island. Then Mary-Lou started felling resentful about her Grandparents interest in Fraser Island and their neglect of her.

When her Grandparents returned from their week away they couldn't stop talking about the wonderful time that they had. They talked about the new friends they had made especially one that they called Terri. It seemed as though meeting and sharing adventures with Terri was the highlight of their week.

This was too much for Mary Lou whose nose was now quite out of joint. She broke down in tears and sobbed, "You seem to get more pleasure out of Terri than me!"

"No we don't," said Grandma who quickly realized that Mary-Lou was feeling that they neglected. Then she thought of a nice trick that she could play on here granddaughter who thought of Terri as a rival and as someone about her age.

"I'll will make it up to you and you can come on our next working bee to Fraser Island and meet Terri for yourself. It will be in your school holidays so if your parents are willing you can come and help us as we are building this new walking track which we think is going to be the most popular long distance hiking track in Australia," Grandma said.

Terri became very excited and Grandma told Grandpa not to let on that Terri was a tractor that they were using to help build the walking track

When Mary-Lou's parents told her that she could go with Grandma and Grandpa she was overjoyed. She couldn't stop thinking about it especially when Grandpa told he of all of the antics that Terri could get up to and how strong Terri was.

"Terri is quite a great performer," Grandpa once told Mary-Lou. "Terri can put on some very clever turns and is even good at weightlifting."

That had Mary-Lou wondering if Terri might be a boy and how old he or she might be. He grandparents had never said "he" or "shee" and whether Terri was a boy or a girl.

"Terri is not that much older than you," replied Grandpa, "You should get along really well together." But Grandpa's answer left her still puzzling.

Mary-Lou's curiosity was soon to be satisfied. Her parents agreed that she could join her grandparents on a visit to beautiful Fraser Island. They travelled up the beach and watched the birds and surf. They passed a shipwreck and coloured sand cliffs and then travelled through the always interesting eucalypt forest before passing a huge sandblow and reaching the rainforest. It was dark by the time they reach the barracks where her grandparents and other volunteers were going to stay. Mary-Lou looked at the volunteers. Most of them looked even older than her grandparents and she couldn't find anyone of her age or anyone called Terri.

"Where is Terri?" she asked. "I thought I was going to meet her here," she said with some annoyance.

"You will meet Terri in the morning," her patient grandparents responded.

Next morning Mary-Lou met Terri and discovered that she wasn't a rival at all. Terri was the tractor that her grandfather drove to help building the track they were working on.

"You tricked me," Mary-Lou told her grandparents "But I love this baby orange tractor that is just about my age. Now I know why you have so much fun up here with the other volunteers," she confessed with a great smile.



Grandpa used Terri the Tractor to help make a new walking track on Fraser Island

Fraser Island Super Heroes get the B Team on Track

A children's story by John Sinclair from a George Haddock Track working bee October, 2014

The Fearless Leader set the B Team a challenge to clear a section of track that was to form part of a longer walking track on Fraser Island. He left them under the care of a very experienced leader who had previously marked the route. However that was some years ago and since then the track had become very overgrown. As a result the eager and energetic B-Team set to work clearing expecting to meet up with another team working from the other end.

Alas they were working on the wrong track. There had set off in the wrong direction without realizing. In that direction they could never meet the C team in the middle of the track.

As it happened though they had aroused the interest of the Fraser Island Team of Super Heroes. These Super Heroes did not have to live under secret identities such as Clark Kent. They proudly wore their identities. Super Scorpion had the biggest most powerful claws for a critter of his size. Each claw has a big "S" on it. Super Snake didn't have any "S" brand on it because it just kept saying "S" "S" "S" "S" all the way and all day. The other member of the Super Trio was a special spider, named Shirley. Shirley though didn't hang her web out to blow about in the breeze. She didn't swing about doing airy tricks like Spider man. She lived in a hole in a rotten log that was lined with her silken web. She was a Fraser Island Funnel-web spider and that have the most poisonous venom of any spider in the world.

The Super Trio didn't use their muscles and physical powers. They used super telepathic powers they each possessed to transmit and strengthen special qualities in people. Together they call the powers the three "I's" — Integrity, Inspiration and Inter-relationships. Super Scorpion had powers to promote Integrity and honesty. Shirley Spider Inspired people to give more and work harder while Super Snake helped people have better friendships.

The Super Trio did not live in a cave like Batman and Robin. They all just shared a rotting log in the bush on Fraser Island where they were working out how they could protect the Fraser Island forests in their own special ways when suddenly there was a thump as one of the B team started chopping into the rotting log while they were clearing a track to Nowhere. They had been led astray.

The Super Trio heard members of the B Team talking, *"Gee we are making great progress. From what the Charlie team said at lunch today we are moving much faster than them."*

"I wonder if we will run into them today. I haven't heard them yet," said another.

The Super Heroes used their special powers. They could also read the minds of the people near them. They quickly discovered that the B Team was not following the explicit instructions that the Fearless Leader had given them. They were heading off south east instead of north west. They were clearing the wrong track.

"We have to get them to realize that they have made a serious mistake and get them to admit it so that they can go back and clear the right track," said Super SS Snake.

"If they admit their mistake, I will give them my energy elixir so that they will make up for lost time and catch up in a couple of days," said Shirley Spider.

"Well if I inject them with the truth serum instead of the sting in my tail they should get the message. Besides they are trying to do a great job in making a walking track so that the in future visitors won't cause as much damage to Fraser Island because they will be walking instead of driving. The walking visitors will see more and not churn up the roads," said Super Scorpion.

"Then," said Super Snake, *"I will give them the special power of friendship, so that they will all remain good friends over this working bee and into the future."*

With that they began to use their Super powers on the misguided B Team. Even though a couple of the team thought that they wouldn't tell Fearless Leader how misguided they had been, Shirley Spider's Truth Elixir worked and they all owned up that they had made a careless mistake and had headed off in the wrong direction. In no time they were laughing about their mistake. They quickly set to work to make up for lost time and using the new energy that Shirley Spider had secretly bestowed on them they were moving quickly to catch up to the C Team.

But the best outcome of all was that they enjoyed the work and when the working bee was long over they remained friends.



A Butchulla Name Game

A Children's story by John Sinclair

For Aroha, Tuliara and Wiremu

Aroha, Tuliara and Wiremu were very excited because their mother had introduced them to a new game. All proud of their Butchulla ancestry but like most Butchulla children they grew up speaking only English. The new game helped them start to learn some of the Butchulla language.

About a hundred years before their mother was born, the Butchulla had not only lost all of their land including K'Gari (Fraser Island) to the Queensland Government and other land users. In that process they had also lost their language. But the Butchulla never gave up and in 2014 the Butchulla won back Native Title to Fraser Island. The mother of these three young girls became the main contact person to protect the Butchulla Native title rights. They had regained some of their traditional lands but their mother was keen to help revive the Butchulla language. She thought of a new fun way for her children to learn some of the lost Butchulla language.

The game was that the children had to learn the Butchulla names for trees and animals from a list. If the three of them as a team could correctly answer enough quiz questions based on these Butchulla names their mother would take them on a special walking trip to explore parts of K'Gari they hadn't previously seen.

Because Aroha was the oldest she became the Team leader and started coaching her younger sister and brother. They were quick learners and kept testing each other:

Question: *"What is the name for the white cockatoo?"*

Answer: Gigum

Question: *What is a nar?*

Answer: Black duck

Question: *What is the Butchulla name for the Fraser Island Turpentine or Satinay?*

Answer: Pibin

Question: *What do white fellers call Ti?*

Answer: Tallowood

In a short time they were snapping back the answers almost as fast as the questions were being asked.

They practiced and practiced for a week until their Uncle came to visit. It was his job to decide whether they got enough questions right so that they could win the trip to K'Gari as their prize.

"What is the Butchulla name for a brolga?" Uncle asked them expecting that they would be struggling to remember.

"Kunurang!" was their quick response

He was surprised at how sharp they were. *"What is a 'boon boon?"* he asked.

"That is one very easy easiest ones," Wiremu the youngest quickly replied. *"Boon boon sounds like the call of the swamp pheasant. I like the names of birds where their name sounds like the calls they make."*

Uncle was firing questions at them as fast as he could and they fired back the answers. Sometimes he had to check up because he wasn't sure of the correct answers although the team were always correct. He even started trying to

catch them out asking questions about critters that they rarely ever saw.

"What is the name for a scorpion?" he asked?

"Yilai", they replied eagerly.

"What is a mumba?" he quizzed.

"A soldier ant", they snapped back as a chorus

Uncle realized how good they were so he asked one final question, *"What is a 'yullu"?*

"A yullu is a dolphin", responded Tuliara. *"I love to see dolphins when I go swimming in the Bay"*,

"OK," said Uncle, *"You have passed this test with flying colours. You know many Butchulla names better than me and you well and truly deserve your trip to K'Gari."*

So they went to their precious island but their lesson wasn't finished. Now they had to recognize which tree was a *pibin* and which was a *ti* and which was *dhinkar* (brush box) and so many others. The forest was so complicated but learning to identify every tree in the forest and call them by their Butchulla names was great fun. But they had even greater fun sorting out the animals and birds than they had learning the Butchulla names for them in the Name Game.



The real challenge for the children was to identify in the field every plant and animal that they had a name for as they explored K'Gari with their mother