



# The Fairy tale of McHugh's Forest Park and The Green Man of Greendale

by John E. Feeney

Many many years ago, seeds fell on the ground.

The seeds germinated and grew into saplings.


The saplings grew into small trees.

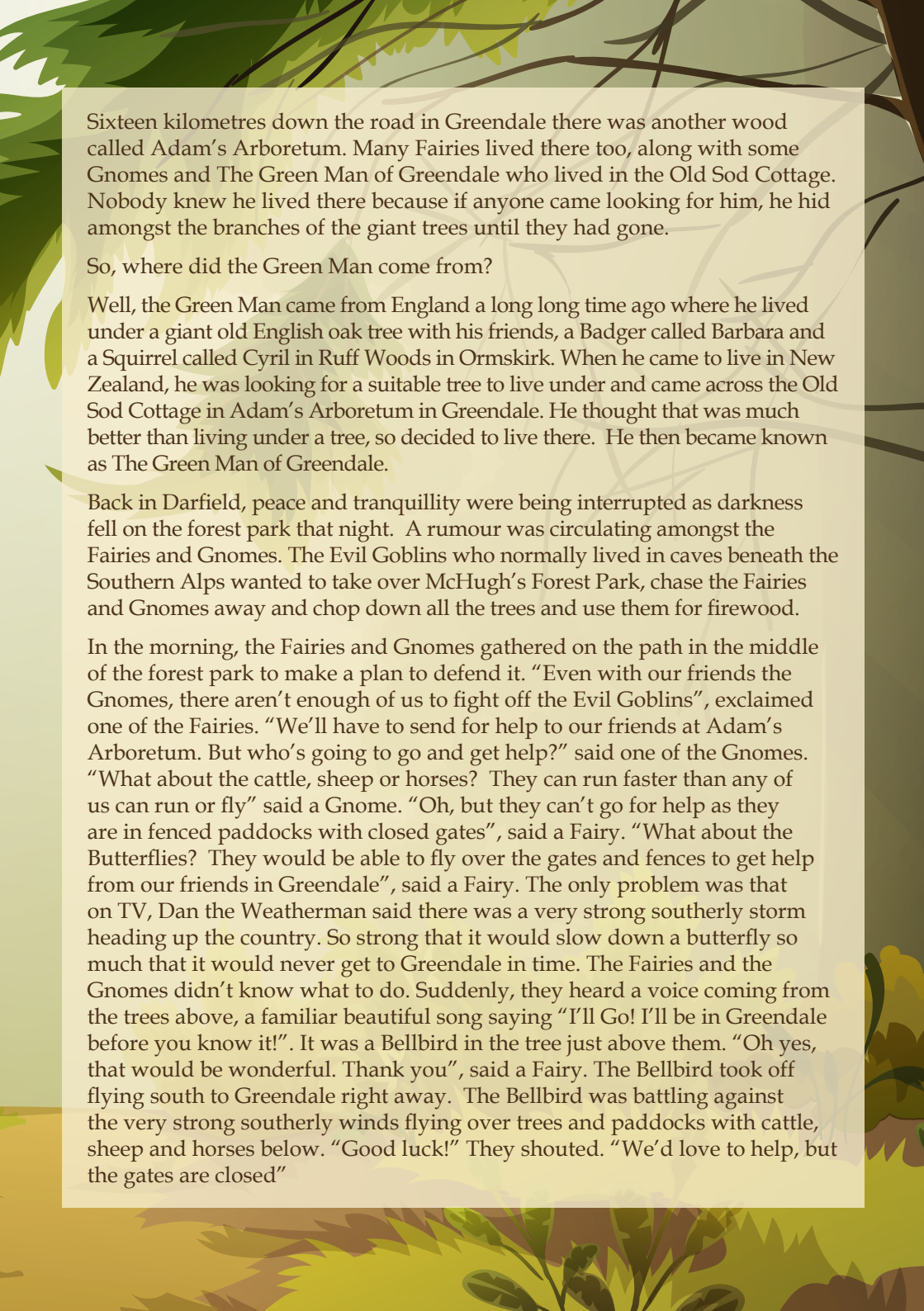
The small trees grew into big trees, and the big trees grew into giant trees,  
and this became McHugh's Forest Park.

People say that Fairies live in McHugh's Forest Park.

So how did the Fairies come to live there?

Well, they used to live in native bush near Springfield. Then one day lots of children lost their baby teeth and put them under their pillows for a Tooth Fairy to come that night. There were so many children needing a visit from a Tooth Fairy in one night that all the Fairies had to help. They all left the native bush in Springfield in one big flock once all the children had gone to bed. They visited all the children, taking their teeth and leaving money under their pillows. They were hovering above the town waiting for them all to gather together into one big flock before flying home to their native bush in Springfield, when suddenly, out of nowhere, a very strong nor-west wind blew them off course. They fought against the wind as hard as they could, but it was too strong. Being pushed around by the very strong winds for hours made them very tired and they needed rest and shelter, so they landed in McHugh's Forest Park. The Fairies liked the forest park so much they made it their home, living peacefully in harmony with nature and their new friends The Gnomes, who had been living there for many years. Everyone was happy in the beautiful peaceful forest park.





Sixteen kilometres down the road in Greendale there was another wood called Adam's Arboretum. Many Fairies lived there too, along with some Gnomes and The Green Man of Greendale who lived in the Old Sod Cottage. Nobody knew he lived there because if anyone came looking for him, he hid amongst the branches of the giant trees until they had gone.

So, where did the Green Man come from?

Well, the Green Man came from England a long long time ago where he lived under a giant old English oak tree with his friends, a Badger called Barbara and a Squirrel called Cyril in Ruff Woods in Ormskirk. When he came to live in New Zealand, he was looking for a suitable tree to live under and came across the Old Sod Cottage in Adam's Arboretum in Greendale. He thought that was much better than living under a tree, so decided to live there. He then became known as The Green Man of Greendale.

Back in Darfield, peace and tranquillity were being interrupted as darkness fell on the forest park that night. A rumour was circulating amongst the Fairies and Gnomes. The Evil Goblins who normally lived in caves beneath the Southern Alps wanted to take over McHugh's Forest Park, chase the Fairies and Gnomes away and chop down all the trees and use them for firewood.

In the morning, the Fairies and Gnomes gathered on the path in the middle of the forest park to make a plan to defend it. "Even with our friends the Gnomes, there aren't enough of us to fight off the Evil Goblins", exclaimed one of the Fairies. "We'll have to send for help to our friends at Adam's Arboretum. But who's going to go and get help?" said one of the Gnomes. "What about the cattle, sheep or horses? They can run faster than any of us can run or fly" said a Gnome. "Oh, but they can't go for help as they are in fenced paddocks with closed gates", said a Fairy. "What about the Butterflies? They would be able to fly over the gates and fences to get help from our friends in Greendale", said a Fairy. The only problem was that on TV, Dan the Weatherman said there was a very strong southerly storm heading up the country. So strong that it would slow down a butterfly so much that it would never get to Greendale in time. The Fairies and the Gnomes didn't know what to do. Suddenly, they heard a voice coming from the trees above, a familiar beautiful song saying "I'll Go! I'll be in Greendale before you know it!". It was a Bellbird in the tree just above them. "Oh yes, that would be wonderful. Thank you", said a Fairy. The Bellbird took off flying south to Greendale right away. The Bellbird was battling against the very strong southerly winds flying over trees and paddocks with cattle, sheep and horses below. "Good luck!" They shouted. "We'd love to help, but the gates are closed"

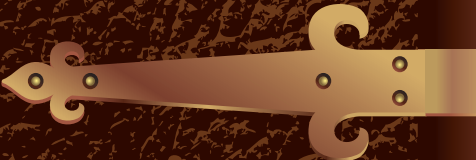
The Bellbird had to stop frequently to rest in trees as 16 kilometers was a long way for a small bird to fly without stopping. After many rest stops taking frequent nectar drinks from the native trees, the Bellbird arrived in very good time, managing to land on a branch at the very top of the largest and oldest tree in Greendale. Despite being out of breath, the Bellbird sang loudly to warn the inhabitants at Adam's Arboretum of the danger facing everyone in Darfield. Everyone gathered amongst the trees just outside the Old Sod Cottage; The Fairies, Gnomes, all the birds in the area, and The Green Man of Greendale. "Let's get over to McHugh's Forest Park and help our friends defend the forest from the Evil Goblins" said The Green Man. One of the Gnomes said: "We need to get there quickly and it's 16 kilometers away and we can't fly, and walking would be far too slow". Their heads dropped as they stood in silence for a minute, then the Green Man said: "I can't fly either, but if we build a raft out of the lightest wood and straw we can find, we could use it like a 'Magic Carpet' then the Fairies and birds who can fly, could carry us to Darfield. Once we're up over the trees, the very strong southerly winds will blow us there very quickly".

They all agreed that the 'Magic Carpet' idea was a very good one, so they started work right away. Everyone helped and the 'Magic Carpet' was built in quick time. The Green Man and the Gnomes jumped on, and all the Fairies and birds grabbed hold of the edges and worked together as a team to lift the 'Magic Carpet' up and over the trees. Straight away, the very strong southerly winds took over and pushed them north very quickly back to Darfield, with the Bellbird showing the way.

After flying all that way, the Fairies and birds were very tired and struggling to keep the 'Magic Carpet' in the air with the weight of The Green Man and the Gnomes. They came in low across a sheep paddock, over Highway 73 just missing a big truck heading into Darfield from the milk factory and sneaking in below the power cables and just clipping the 'Railway Crossing' sign in Horndon Street. They crash landed on the grass and the 'Magic Carpet' smashed into the metal picnic table throwing everyone off and onto the grass where it continued to roll into the low-level post and wire fence and broke up into little pieces on the gravel.







They arrived just in time. The Evil Goblins had gathered at the corner of Highway 73 and Homebush Road. They were marching on the grass beside the railway line towards Horndon Street.

The battle took place on the grass between McHugh's Forest Park and the railway line. The Fairies and Gnomes led by The Green Man of Greendale fought courageously. They pushed the Evil Goblins backwards into the water race where they got soaking wet. Then they chased them back towards Homebush Road and all the way to the caves under the Southern Alps. The only casualties of the battle were The Evil Goblins who caught very bad colds from their soaking in the water race.

The victory celebrations inside McHugh's Forest Park went on for days with lots of dancing, eating of fairy cakes, fairy bread and drinking elderberry juice.

The Fairies felt safe in McHugh's Forest Park again and decided to stay to carry on their work so there would be no shortages of fairy bread, or fairy cakes in the town, and all the children in the area would still wake up with money under their pillows if they left a tooth there for the Fairies.

The Gnomes decided to move into town and live in gardens, where they were very happy, being closer to town services such as the Medical Centre and the Library where they had internet access.

During the day the Gnomes stand completely still so everyone thinks they are just garden ornaments, but after dark, who knows?

The Green Man of Greendale returned to Greendale. People say he still lives in Adam's Arboretum in the Old Sod Cottage, but I've never seen him there. People say he is sometimes seen working in gardens all over the area, so look out for him...

If you walk through McHugh's Forest Park, you will know which trees the Fairies live inside because of their doors at the bottom of the trees. Sometimes they even have a window so they can look out. The Fairy doors are always locked just in case the Evil Goblins ever return.

I have never seen a Fairy, but if you look hard enough - you might...

