



Dear Hill Enders & Tambaroorians

The theme for our 2027 Gathering is reconnection.

Paraphrasing Harry Hodge, in his 3rd volume of the Hill End Story, let's RECONNECT.

"Hill End seems to distil a magic potion which draws its children back to it, sometimes after many years of separation. It generates an urge to return that cannot be denied. So, the wanderer returns, sometimes after a lifetime spent in other climes..."

Often after a few days of looking up old friends or seeking out their graves, the native son is hard put to it to fill in his time...but he returns again and again. Hill End may relax its grip on its sons and daughters, but it never entirely lets go."



Our Annual March Gatherings seem to have dwindled in numbers of late, so we are planning to revive them with a new approach! So many of you who have attended in the past have taken advantage of all the resources that we have selected for display on the day, often finding out information about your ancestors that had been tucked away in the records, etc. for years. Initially, we had prepared and carted crates of folders, scrapbooks and maps from my home in Carlton, which wasn't such an effort. However, now that most of these resources are resting in peace in our Family History



Centre in Hill End, this has become more difficult to implement as it means a couple of return trips to Hill End. Yes, we're not as young as we used to be and packing, lifting, loading the Hilux, and then unloading etc. at Rhodes, then reversing the procedure to get them back safely to Hill End is becoming more of a challenge.

So, in 2027 it will be your turn! Let's keep those paper resources in Hill End and concentrate on the family reunion aspect of the Gathering Group. Now is the opportunity for all our members, and especially those who live in Sydney and environs to contact those parents, sons and daughters, aunts, uncles, and cousins and designate **Saturday 6 March** as a "family reunion day". It is **YOUR** chance to bring along family memorabilia, photos and your stories to share with your extended family and new friends made on the day. Digital is fine too, considering that we have so much stored on our laptops and iPads these days. You never know, ancestors of others attending may have been neighbours or close friends of your ancestors, with their names appearing on Birth, Death or Marriage certificates or Christmas cards. Let's reconnect the community and make new friends, all with that same pull, back to Hill End & Tambaroora.

Don't leave it all until you regretfully say, "We only ever seem to get together at funerals". Make it happen NOW. Start planning, send out the invitation in your Christmas letter or email. Dig out all those tangible collections, the photo albums,

the knick-knacks, etc that have been handed down through generations and be prepared to share them with others with a similar connection to the district.

Parking is available, and the updated facilities at the Kokoda Walkway Shelter Shed make it easy to bring along a picnic lunch. We'll make sure the billy is boiling for a cuppa.

We'll send out a reminder later in the year and hope to see our Annual Gathering numbers double in size!

Here are the 2026 attendees, and the following families were represented. Let's aim to double these family names and representatives in 2027.

Alder	Elliott	Lawler	Petrie	Toohey
Bryant	Gardiner	Ley	Rapp	Treffone
Carver	Goodwin	Longmore	Rayner	Wardman
Craigie	Jackson	Millett	Smith	Whittaker
Deadman	Lalechos	Norton	Starr	Williams

Lorraine Purcell,
Hill End & Tambaroora Gathering Group Convenor

Our local community

Condolences

According to the age-old belief, which can trace its origin back to early European and Scots-Irish folk traditions, the phrase “death comes in threes” is a centuries-old superstition and folklore, suggesting that when two people or notable figures pass away, a third death will quickly follow.

Sadly, the Hill End district has experienced this belief in recent times. This year has been especially poignant, with the passing of current residents Bruce Drakeford and Marianne Kimm (née Stuart), as well as former resident Tony Hibbard.

All three were well known in the district. Bruce and Marianne grew up there, while Tony was a more recent arrival who lived in English Lane for many years before moving to Bathurst.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families at this sad time

Bruce Drakeford

Bruce was born in Mudgee Hospital on Wednesday the 22 of July 1953 to a farming family from Hill End. His parents, Allen and Betty Drakeford, were both veterans of the Second World War — Allen as a Gunman on the 42nd Port Landing Craft Call Borneo and Betty as a Theatre Secretary in the 2/2 Field Hospital Cairns. Bruce later became an older brother to Robyn in 1956.

From a young age, he was involved in working and helping out on the family farms of Paling Yards and Ullamalla. Ranging from all sorts of activities, including fencing, rabbiting, stockwork, weeding and land clearing. He grew up in an environment of hard work and discipline.

In 1967, at the age of 14, his parents decided to send him to Mudgee High School and board in town. In August 1967, Hill End was hit with a massive snowstorm, smashing tonnes of timber in the local scrubs. The Hill End Bush Brigade decided at the time to back burn the whole lot. Bruce and other teens around wanted to contribute as most farming families at the time were brigade members. They joined the brigade, as they weren't allowed to come along unless they had done so. Bruce volunteered for the NSW Rural Fire Service for the last 59 years, proudly fighting fires all across the area. In 2017 he was recognised for 50 years' service to the Rural Fire Service.

On leaving school, Bruce worked for many of the local farmers, and he joined Mudgee Pistol Club when he turned 18, enjoying the sport until he passed.



Bruce and his son Allen on the occasion of Bruce being made a Life member of the RFS.

The Drakeford Family ended up selling Paling Yards in 1980, and then Ullamalla in 1983 to Don Fox. And ended up managing the place. And for the next 16 years they ran a Merino/Poll Hereford Stud. Don sold Ullamalla in 1999, and Bruce made a deal buying a third of it back and called the new property 'The Willows'. He would run mainly cattle and a few crossbred sheep till this very day.

During this time a mutual friend introduced him to Feli, and they married in Manilla, Philippines, in 2002. They had two sons, William and Allen, and he instilled in them the same strong work ethic that he had acquired growing up on the land.

In the last few years, Bruce battled with prostate cancer, then, stemming from that, bone cancer. Not once giving up and fighting, working the paddock till the day of his spine surgery. When close to death, he wished "to die at home looking out the paddock in amongst all me shit", which he did peacefully.

Known for his big hat, flannelette shirt and two belts, Bruce was remembered as hardworking and stubborn, but also fair, kind-hearted and thoughtful. Those who knew him described him as someone who "always stood his ground and did what he thought was right", "the best employee we ever had", and the "hardest worker I've ever met". Though he could be hard at times, he was also deeply caring — and, most importantly, "the best father and husband his family could have had".

He was farewelled at a funeral ceremony in Mudgee on 5 June 2026 and now lies with other members of the Drakeford family in Mudgee Cemetery.

Marianne Kimm

Marianne Kimm is remembered with deep love and respect by the community of Hill End. Her passing leaves a quiet sadness over the town, as she was part of the heart and spirit that made Hill End so special.

Born on 26 May 1960 to Bruce and Jean Stuart of Braeside, Hill End, Marianne passed away suddenly in early May 2026. Our condolences to her husband Noel, children Leita, Jeanine, Jeffrey and Sarah, and her adored grandchildren.

Marianne commenced her schooling at Hill End Public School in 1965 and always said she "never left the school", having been a former student and then working for many years as a teacher's aide. Her colleagues and friends remember her as a kind, trusted and good-hearted soul who touched the lives of every child and staff member through her work in the classroom. She brought patience and dedication to her work and genuinely loved the children she taught. She not only taught key academic skills but modelled and taught life skills of kindness and respect — expecting children to grow up with pride in themselves and to become good citizens.

Marianne was part of the fabric of this community — a farmer, wife, mother and grandmother, teacher's aide, skilled horsewoman, exuberant and loud-laughing woman and a painter.

A celebration of her life was held at an overflowing service at the Presbyterian Church in Hill End on 29 May 2026.



Marianne Kimm at Hill End Public School.

Tony Hubbard

Tony Hubbard passed away in late June, peacefully, while in an induced coma following an extended hospital stay. After a rich and varied life in Sydney, Melbourne and on the Gold Coast, Tony and his husband, Peter Dorling, chose Hill End as the place where they truly felt at home, finding their "happy place" in the cottage they built together in English Lane. It was known as Toad Hall in recognition of their connection to Queensland.

Even after more than 50 years together, Tony and Peter were still affectionately known by many in the village as "the boys", and they soon became a much-loved part of the community. Though they moved into Bathurst a few years ago, they remained regular visitors to Hill End, returning often to catch up with friends and keep close to the place they loved. Tony will be remembered with great affection for his cheeky grin, quick humour and wonderful sense of the absurd. His warmth, wit and gentle presence will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Our heartfelt condolences go to Peter and his family.



Tony Hubbard 2007

The Marshalls Return

A very special visit was recently arranged for members of one branch of the Marshall family descendants to visit their ancestral home. Originally it was planned for earlier in the year, but a sad event happened and so it was postponed until mid-June.

Claire O'Neill initially contacted HEATGG on behalf of her family. Her great grandfather Gordon Stanley Marshall was the last person to be born at Craigmoor House, and the place still holds a lot of sentimental gravitas and memories for all the family.

Sharyn (Gordon's granddaughter) was turning 80 on 18 April this year and the family were planning to bring her to Hill End to celebrate and show her through Craigmoor where she spent many hours during visits in her childhood.

With the help of National Parks & Wildlife staff we arranged a special opening of Craigmoor for the family, and all were looking forward to the visit.

Unfortunately, the birthday travel plans were interrupted when Sharyn was admitted to hospital a few days before the trip, and she was medically advised not to travel. The family still joined her in Tamworth instead to celebrate her 80th. But sadly, her health deteriorated rapidly and she passed away a week or so later.

The family still wanted to hold a memorial service and reunion in Hill End in mid-June, so we were again able to revisit the initial plans. On the Saturday the family spent a few hours at the Family History Centre browsing the many documents, photos and records pertaining to the Marshall family and Craigmoor and offered to update our copy of the original 1972 Family Tree compiled by Bob Marshall.

On Sunday 14 June Learna Hazeltine (NPWS Senior Historic Site Officer) and myself then had the privilege of showing the family through Craigmoor. Many had not been to Hill End before and none had ever had the chance to see through the building that held so many memories for Sharyn.

We all met up with Learna at Craigmoor on the Sunday morning. The old building is still standing strong and proud, and major interior preservation works are ongoing. It is now sporting a fresh coat of cream paint on the exterior. All the memorabilia, photos and books are being digitally recorded and catalogued. Most of the original furniture has calico covers now, to save them from the (gold laden?) dust. Whilst it is not currently open for inspection it is hoped that once the preservation work is completed, that it may once again become the jewel in Hill End's crown.

The family held a short memorial service in the grounds, and I have heard that they may now consider making the reunion an annual event. It was wonderful to be part of this gathering.

In the meantime, if you haven't seen it, there is a wonderful opportunity to "walk through the house" digitally. NPWS have an interactive virtual tour available on their website at <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/immersive-stories/craigmoor-house-virtual-tour>

It is well worth the visit if you have ever wondered just what was behind those timber walls and lace curtains. Basically, it is just how the house looked when the last Marshalls residents left in in the 1960s. Take a look.



Hill End Rural Fire Service — Blitz

In early June, the Brigade members spent the morning cleaning the old Hill End RFS Brigade, 1942 Blitz truck.

The Hill End Blitz was the brigade's first fire truck and served the Hill End community for many years.

The Blitz was eventually replaced and wound up on a property on the Bridle Track. Some time ago, brigade members reacquired the Blitz and spent considerable time and effort restoring the Blitz to as-new condition.

Today, the Blitz is preserved and protected in the Hill End Heritage Centre.

facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083039635190

facebook.com/photo?fbid=1001860219258623&set=pcb.1001860389258606





The Pull of Place: Answering Your Ancestral Call

The following item has been adapted from an article posted on Facebook in February 2025 by Marc McDermott. With our plans for the 2027 Gathering coming along it seemed particularly relevant when thinking of the “Pull” that Hill End has on its descendants.

You’re staring at that village name on your computer screen. Again.

Five generations of your family lived there. Worked there. Built lives there. And now here you are, a century and even an ocean away, trying to piece together their world through pixels and papers.

But deep down, you know: Documents can only take you so far.

Every serious genealogist reaches this moment. When records aren’t enough anymore.

When you need to see it for yourself. Touch it. Feel it. Breathe it.

Let’s talk about taking that next step. About transforming your research from pixels to place. From documents to discovery. From records to reality.

The Power of Place: When Research Comes Alive

Something shifts when you walk the streets your ancestors walked. The names in parish records become real people. The places in ship manifests become living, breathing communities.

That village church isn’t just an address anymore. It’s where generations of your family marked their most important moments. Where they gathered. Where they mourned. Where they celebrated.

The general store isn’t just a spot on a map. It’s where your great-grandmother might have bought her bread.

Where your great-grandfather might have sold his produce.

These places hold stories that no document can tell. Stories written in stone and soil. In architecture and landscape. In the rhythms of daily life that haven’t changed for centuries.

The cemetery holds more than graves. It holds context. Family groupings. Naming patterns. Social connections hidden in plain sight. When you see familiar surnames carved in stone, generations of research suddenly take on new meaning. These aren’t just data points anymore. They’re your people.

And the land itself speaks volumes. The steep hillsides that forced hand dug shafts. The distant church spire that served as a landmark for generations. The Bridle Track that shaped relocation patterns.

From Paper Trail to Sacred Ground: Building Your Path Home

Every family researcher knows the thrill of discovery. Finding that crucial record. Breaking through that brick wall. Connecting another generation. But here’s the gamechanger: Taking that research into the real world. Each document you uncover is more than just evidence. It’s a piece of your map home. Marriage records show you where families joined. Land deeds reveal where they built their lives. Ship manifests trace their journeys. When you piece these together, something magical happens. Your ancestors’ world takes shape. Their choices make sense. Their lives gain context.



1872↑ St Pauls Presbyterian Church ↓2012



Military records show more than service dates. They reveal the political boundaries your ancestors navigated. The conflicts that shaped their decisions. The alliances that influenced their movements.

Financial records tell stories of prosperity and hardship. Of drought years and bumper crops and duffer mines. Of industrial changes that rippled through communities.

Church records speak of more than births and deaths. They reveal religious shifts that split families. Community tensions that drove migrations. Social networks that supported generations.

This isn't just about proving relationships. It's about understanding lives. Communities. Choices that shaped generations.

The Detective Work: Building Your Case for Place

Finding your ancestral native land takes more than just family stories. It requires methodical research. Cross-referencing. Verification. Start with what you know. Family stories hold clues. Old letters mention landmarks. Photos show architectural styles. Even recipes can point to specific regions.

Census data and Post Office directories pin down locations at specific times. City directories map out neighbourhoods. Church records anchor families to parishes.

Immigration Records often hold the key. Passenger lists name specific villages. Naturalisation papers can list precise birthplaces.

But don't stop there. Local histories provide context. Maps show changing boundaries. Newspaper archives such as Trove reveal community connections. The goal isn't just finding a place name. It's understanding your family's place within it.

Local Knowledge: The Key to Deeper Understanding

Local historical societies guard the heart of community memory. They know the stories that never made it into official records. Be prepared to share your story.

They understand how communities evolved. Which families traditionally intermarried. How natural disasters or economic changes drove migration patterns. These local experts can translate more than just documents. They can read the landscape. Interpret architectural clues. Recognise patterns in settlement and movement. They know which church records survived. Which oral histories fill the gaps in written documents.

But their greatest value lies in context. They can tell you why your ancestors lived where they did. Worked where they did. Moved when they did.

Planning Your Journey: More Than Just Travel

Most people travel to see new places. You're travelling to understand your past. Think about that for a moment. You're going to walk into a tiny village that appears to have been built for tourists. A place that might look ordinary to others. But to you? It's the centre of a story generations in the making.

You're going to stand in the exact spot where your great-grandparents were married. Huge difference.

This isn't tourism. This is pilgrimage.

The planning needs to match the mission. This journey deserves more than just booking flights and hotels.

Start with deep research. Know every available record. Understand the historical context. Map out family connections.

Contact local resources early. Archives require appointments. Churches need advance notice. Historical societies appreciate preparation.

Learn about the culture. Not just the history, but the present. These communities aren't museums. They're living places with their own rhythms and rules.

Master a few key phrases. "I'm researching my family" or "Where is the Cemetery?" can work miracles.

Plan thoroughly but stay flexible. Sometimes the best discoveries come from unexpected detours.

Making the Connection: When Past Meets Present

The moment will come. You'll stand where they stood. Breathe the air they breathed. See the views they saw. You'll understand why they settled here. Why they left. Why they remembered. Their stories will become real. Their struggles will make sense. Their triumphs will feel personal.

This is when genealogy transcends hobby. When family history becomes your history. When inherited memory becomes lived experience.

The Journey Begins Now

Your ancestral village is waiting. The streets your grandparents walked still wind through towns. The churches still stand. The pub still serves drinks.

You've done the research. Built the trees. Gathered the documents. Now it's time to bring it all to life.

The path from records to roots lies open before you. The tools are in your hands. The knowledge is in your grasp. Your ancestors' world is waiting to become real.

Take that first step. Start that deeper research. Plan that journey. Their story is your story. Time to bring it home.

Come visit us in Hill End. You are the reason our Family History Centre exists and why we passionately collect the information we have. We are happy to help you walk in the footsteps of your ancestors. But let us know so we can ensure that our volunteers are available to assist.

Can't make it to our village? Then check out our website (heatgg.org.au) where we have "Virtual Resources" available for you to start the journey from home. Use the "Contact us" tab to see what we may have in the collection...you may be surprised. But just remember, we can't change history.



Research Officer's Report – Helen Wood

Research enquiries

There have been 23 research enquiries since January through the website, 3 of which are still outstanding. Some have involved lengthy research. The following is a list of families Helen has researched in this time. Helen can be contacted at info@heatgg.org.au if you would like some help finding information about your Hill End and/or Tambaroora descendants.



Family of interest	Name	Email
Feimsi Baan aka Ellen Behan and Samuel Ward Sarah Ward and Augustine Bender	Shirley Meredith	comboyne2259@gmail.com
Clarke, Toohey, Jackson and Norton	Trudi Williams	trudwill@yahoo.com.au
James Julian Coates	Maeve Wilson	maevem@aussiebb.com.au
Burridge, Delaney, Hughes, Farley, and Jones	Jennifer Consadine-Wade	integrityrose20@gmail.com
Arij Hoogwerf	Colin Hovey	colhovey2006@yahoo.co.uk
Thomas James Judge and Winifred Maude Cashmere	Helen Judge	hjudge48@gmail.com
George Edward Anderson	Danielle Anderson	danielleanderson885@gmail.com
Posey Hill and History Hill	Karen White	kwhitey8@hotmail.com
William Greig and Ellen Frances Carey James McGillion and Emily Greig		
George Joseph Weber and Anna Maria Strohschnitter		
Maris & Grose family history	Monique Constable	monique.constable007@gmail.com
J Bryant member of the Municipal Council 1882–85, 1887	Patricia Hutley	trishkev1410@bigpond.com
Mark Bennett 1973 to 1993	Neal Griffiths	griffo47@gmail.com
John Black, Charles Lindberg and Hector McLeod at Lower Turon x 2	Karen Wilbur	bygonedays@tpg.com.au
Hogan / Morris / Harrison Families (Orange)	Hannah Endacott	h.endacott1@gmail.com
Sarah Glendora Lawson and Henry Bennett Garner	Anne-Marie Haarihona	anne.mariiee@hotmail.com
Bryant family	Gav Brown	gavbrown02@gmail.com
John Gale	Julie Plunkett	j.plunkett09@gmail.com
Hector McLean, Mary McLean and Marcus Hector Woods	Marcus Woods	marcus.woods@outlook.com
Thomas Purcell	Cheryl Nicol	donaldnicol05@bigpond.com
Anthes family	Carol	carolfor769@gmail.com
Bosenburg rose cuttings	Melinda Simonds	melindasimonds@gmail.com
Eliza and Ellen Trevithick & families	Annette Edwards	netty11nov@yahoo.com.au

It's all Irish to me ...

Have you ever been frustrated when doing your Irish branch of the family tree? The following post, which appeared on an Irish Facebook page may just help you sort it out — especially if you have a few names missing. If your Irish ancestors stuck to tradition and named their children in a specific order, you might already know more about your family tree than you realise.

For roughly 200 years, from the late 1700s through the mid-1900s, Irish families across every class and religion followed an almost mathematical naming pattern.

- The first son was named after his father's father.
- The second son took the name of his mother's father.
- The third son was named after the father himself.

Daughters followed a similar order.

- The first daughter was named for the mother's mother.
- The second daughter for the father's mother.
- The third daughter was named after the mother herself.

It wasn't a law. It was just what nearly everyone did, generation after generation.

Genealogists still use this pattern today to break through brick walls when records are missing. If you know your ancestor's name and birth order, you can often make an educated guess about the names of grandparents you'd otherwise have no paper trail for at all. It's one of the reasons the same handful of names, Patrick, Bridget, Michael, Mary, repeat so heavily through Irish family trees. Nobody was running out of ideas ... they were following the code.

It's a small thing, a naming order nobody wrote down as a rule, and yet it carried the memory of grandparents forward through every child born after them, whether the parents even realised they were doing it.



October markets 2026

Our October Long Weekend Community market is on again on Saturday 3 October in the Royal Hall from 9 am–3 pm.

Come along, take a trip out to Hill End even for the day and enjoy it at the best time of the year. Always great fun for customers. And stallholders, you might even like a table yourself to sell whatever you need to.

Contact our market Coordinators, Ian and Julie by email to book a table (\$15) on markets@heatgg.org.au or phone Lorraine (0408 117 784) for more details.



Goat Villa – Warry’s Road Hill End. Goat Villa, nestled at the base of Bald Hill.

Intro:

In 2020, Christine Pingot and her husband Olivier bought a run down cottage in Warry’s Road at the base of Bald Hill. With ideas of restoration foremost they set about reviving this building into a liveable home. As part of their “Restoration Hill End” process Christine started researching the previous residents and couldn’t help breathing life into the static photographs, newspaper articles and records that she uncovered along the way. She chose to follow in the imagined footsteps of Elizabeth (nee Carty), who married a Greek immigrant and miner, Jeremiah Williams (born Gerasimo Vasilakis), in Nerrigundah in 1865. By the time they arrived in Hill End in the early 1870s, they already had several children. Elizabeth would eventually have ten.

Through Elizabeth’s voice, Christine is preparing work of historical fiction, based on archival research. In it she is tracing the daily realities of Hill End: the management of a household under uncertain conditions, the raising of children in a transient and often precarious environment, the relationships between families of different origins and the gradual shift of a community moving from optimism to contraction. The focus is not on gold itself, but on the lives structured around it. The following snippet from Christine is where it all started and is just a teaser of so much more to come.

From Gold Rush Dreams to Goat Ghosts: The Curious Tale of 85 Warry’s Road – Christine Pingot.

If you ever find yourself wandering the charmingly quiet (and slightly suspiciously calm) streets of Hill End, you might stumble upon a modest cottage with a past far livelier than it looks. Welcome to Goat Villa, where history, mystery, and one very unfortunate goat collide.

Let’s begin in 1873, a time when fortunes were made, lost, and occasionally misplaced under questionable paperwork. Enter Peter Herrmann, a German gentleman who, for the princely sum of four pounds, seven shillings and sixpence, became the official owner of the land at 85 Warrys Road in October ’73. A bargain by today’s standards—though, to be fair, the listing likely didn’t mention “future goat mummies included”.

A fellow German, Carl Boesenberg, had already snapped up a neighbouring block in May. One imagines the two exchanging polite nods over fences, each silently judging the other’s land investment strategy.



Enter the Williams Family (and Possibly Some Light Trespassing)

Fast forward a few years, and the plot thickens—literally, with timber. The Williams family, led by Jeremiah Williams (born Gerasimo Vasilakis in Greece, because why not keep things interesting), are said to have built part of the cottage in the 1880s.

Now here’s where things get delightfully unclear: did Jeremiah politely arrange this with Herrmann? Did they strike a gentleman’s agreement over tea? Or did they simply move in and hope no one noticed?

Given that the official title remained in Herrmann’s name even in 1899, we may never know. Real estate agents today call this “a flexible occupancy arrangement.”

A Multicultural Masterpiece... with Goats

Over the decades, the property passed through a colourful mix of people—from Germans to Greeks to (eventually) the French—making it something of a United Nations of rural cottages. Then came the modern era.

In 2020, new owners arrived with dreams of restoration... and were greeted by a mummified goat in the bedroom, kangaroo skeletons scattered about, a generous sprinkling of rat droppings and bird nests, and the unmistakable touch of recent squatters—best described as “post-apocalyptic chic”.

At this point, most people would have quietly backed away and pretended they had the wrong address.

Renovation, Resurrection... and Rebranding

Instead, the new owners rolled up their sleeves. While one tackled the structural chaos, the other softened the edges with quilts and cushions—because nothing says “cosy” like handmade touches gently covering the memory of a goat skeleton.

And thus, Goat Villa was born—a name inspired both by the likely goat-rearing Williams family and the rather more literal goat discovered onsite.

Final Thoughts: A Property with Character (and Characters)

Today, Goat Villa stands as a testament to Hill End’s layered past: gold rush ambition, migrant stories, questionable land ownership etiquette, and one goat who truly overstayed its welcome.

So next time you are house-hunting, remember: behind every charming cottage listing may lie a century of intrigue...and possibly a goat.

Moral of the story?

Always check the bedroom before signing the contract.



The protagonist of the story



Historic news

Time out

By Lorraine Purcell

Are you a fan of the old movies? What about a silent movie set in the vicinity of the Macquarie River, and Sofala? Check out a recently discovered upload to YouTube [youtube.com/watch?v=TwJyHip-KaU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwJyHip-KaU)

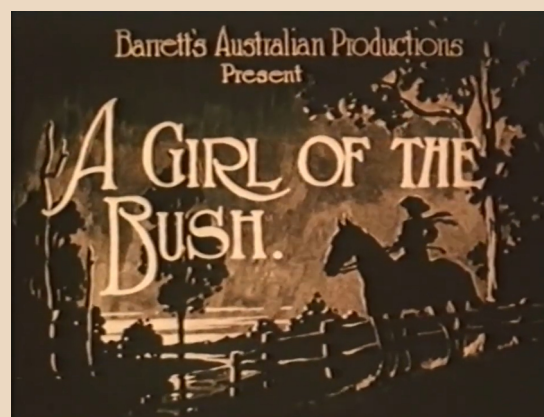
A Girl of the Bush (the classic 1921 Franklyn Barrett silent movie) was filmed on the Macquarie River at and around “Killongbutta” including the Killongbutta outbuildings and cemetery. Wikipedia mentions that the historic Freemantle shearing shed was also included and apparently it has some great footage of Sofala. If you have an hour and a half to spare, it is a real blast from the past!

Think back to the early silent films...it has a simple plot:

Lorna Denver manages Kangaroo Flat sheep station and is pursued by two men — evil Oswald and handsome young surveyor, Tom Wilson. Lorna gives shelter to a baby that has survived an attack by Aboriginals, but Tom thinks the baby is hers. This upsets Lorna, and she breaks it off with him. Oswald is murdered, and Tom is arrested. A Chinese cook reveals that the real killer was the father of a woman who had been seduced by Oswald.

For all its familiar characters and devices, *A Girl of the Bush* has a distinctive spirit of ‘documentary realism’. Picturesque scenes of station activity (sheep shearing, horse breaking and the muster) are interpolated throughout the film and carry far more punch than the plot mechanics. Similarly, a two-up game and a police raid, filmed in the back streets of Sydney, are full of vigour and immediacy lacking in the studio interiors.

Many years ago, I was contacted by one of our members who mentioned that a family ancestor had been part of the cast. Apologies, I am unable to locate the name at this time, but maybe they are still on our mailing list and would like to ‘own up’.



I Am Who They Have Been

In search of who and when and where, I look upon those names that share the intertwining branches of my clan, to find some kin I recognise and some that come as a surprise, for me to now unravel if I can.

I visit sombre sacred sites where mourners act out Christian rites midst rows of stone engraved with who is there, with name and date of their decease, assuring me they 'Rest in Peace', attended to by solemn words of prayer.

The gravestones at St Mathews show the names that I have come to know, were convicts who became the pioneers, and made a life on taken land in places I now understand, were occupied for sixty thousand years.

I recognise my forebears' crimes committed in those brutal times, with context from the pages of the past, but as the world of hindsight shows with words in books of verse and prose, the die of dispossession had been cast.



Mr Christie and Mrs Alice, (née Millett), Totolos



Mr & Mrs Peter Trefoni (sic) Treffone

Images from the Holtermann Collection, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.

The above poem was written by one of our members, David Judge, who has devoted untold hours to researching his family tree, and is connected to number of early families of the Hill End & Tambaroora district. He has done considerable research into the Treffone, Allen, Bradstock, Judge families — all with connections to the Forresters, Millets, and Bryces.

His award-winning poetic memoir, *I Am Who They Have Been* was written with all those families in mind. It was such an honour when that poem won the Banjo Paterson Literary Award for Contemporary poetry a few years ago. His latest book, *A Sense of Place* is full of Australian rhyming verse and has a rich and vibrant historical affinity with our national identity. It seemed to be the most natural way for the author to connect with the past in a way that is structured, logical and easy for most people to understand.

He has kindly allowed us to print this excerpt for your enjoyment.

To purchase his book of poetry, contact David by email to info@davidjudge.au — Price \$30 + postage.

Further Enquiries:

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Hill End & Tambaroora Gathering Group

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is given to all Members of the Hill End & Tambaroora Gathering Group that the Annual General Meeting of the Gathering Group will be held on **Saturday 6 March 2027 at 12 noon** at Rhodes Rotary Park, Killoola St, Concord West during the annual Gathering.

All Members are invited.

Lorraine Purcell — Convener

Barbara Burnett — Secretary

Mary Toohey's burial in 1950 and an interesting aside

By Lorraine Purcell — HEATGG Convenor

The Presbyterian Church's Ferguson Memorial Library published an Occasional Paper No 4 (July 2016) covering the history and reminiscences of the Bathurst Presbyterian Patrol during the years 1946–1958. In it, Reverend Peter Boase reminisced about his time while attending to the pastoral needs of the people of Hill End and surrounds. He tells the story of the burial of a local identity, Mrs Mary Toohey. It has been reproduced below:

Mrs Mary Toohey, an aged woman, died in Hill End in May 1950. The Bathurst undertaker, a Mr. McGuinn, as I recall, was not able to travel out to Hill End and Reverend Alan Dougan was otherwise engaged. Thus, it was that two young undertaker's assistants and a student minister had the responsibility of conducting the funeral. The three of us travelled out in the 1929 Nash Hearse then in use. When we stopped in Sofala for petrol and mentioned that we were going to Hill End to take Mrs Toohey's funeral, we were informed that the funeral could not go ahead. We were naturally curious but not over impressed at this intelligence. However, on arrival at the Hill End pub there was a message from the Bathurst Police. To the effect that under no circumstances could this funeral proceed...

All of NSW was to learn the following weekend from The Truth newspaper that there had been a man posing as a doctor — Doctor Darling — in the Sofala–Hill End area. Mrs Toohey's death certificate had in fact been signed by this bogus doctor.

At this point the phones ran hot until finally the local coroner, Mr. Crisps-Clark, learned of the circumstances surrounding Mrs Toohey's death and indicated he was prepared to sign her death certificate if we brought it to him on our return journey. He lived on the Mudgee side of Sofala, up Commissioners Hill. It was with some relief but a sense of urgency, as we were by this time 2 hours late for the service as advertised, that we drove to the Toohey's farm. The undertaker's assistants carried out their responsibility, and I conducted the burial service in the home. At this time, I had never previously seen a dead person. Because of the delays described earlier, all the necessary checks could not be made prior to the burial, and when the time came for the Interment at the local cemetery, this became all too obvious.

While the local gravedigger knew the small stature of Mrs Toohey and had dug the grave accordingly, the undertaker had sent out the largest available coffin just to be on the safe side. "What will we do?" asked one of the young assistants. "I will ask the crowd. It is a large one that had gathered, to move away and you get your coat off and start digging", I replied.

Finally, Mary Toohey was laid to rest with due dignity. Following the benediction, the undertaker's assistant announced that everyone was invited to the pub and that drinks would be on the undertaker, Mr. McGuinn. "The Boss told us this is the way we advertise out here," I was informed.

It was almost dark by the time we set out for home. The headlights on the Nash hearse were like 2 candles. We made our way up Commissioners Hill and the death certificate was duly signed. Then, a few miles out of Sofala, we came across a fellow, well and truly drunk, trying to stamp out an oil fire that had resulted from him rolling his car. We helped put out the fire, but the man refused our offer to drive him into Bathurst in the back of the hearse.

Her funeral notice appeared in the *National Advocate* (Bathurst, NSW) on 13 May 1950.

The funeral took place yesterday afternoon of Mrs. Mary Toohey, of Hill End. She died at her residence at Hill End on Thursday. She was 85 years of age, and was born at Triamble near Hargraves, and had resided in the Hill End district all her life. Her husband predeceased her by 2 years. She is survived by four daughters, Ethel (Mrs. Wheelan, Hill End), Maud (Mrs T. Medaris. Bathurst), Nellie (Mrs. Taylor, Hill End), Susan (Mrs. W. Miller, Glen Davis), three sons, Frederick, George and James, all of Hill End. Interment took place in the cemetery at Hill End. Mr. Peter Boase officiated at the graveside. Pall bearers Messrs W. Oates, G. Anderson, grandson, and F. and ? Reid nephews. Many beautiful floral tributes were received. A large number of relatives and friends were present at the graveside. Mr. Stan McGuinn, of Bathurst, had charge of funeral arrangements.



Mary Toohey's grave, Tambaroora Cemetery.
Image: Warwick Taylor tambaroora.com

Convener's note:

The story of a bogus doctor in the district intrigued me, so I researched it on Trove for the years 1950–1953. 'Dr. Darling' proved to be a fascinating figure who made headlines around the world during that period. After his death in Brisbane in 1953, his full story emerged and was widely reported in newspapers.

It turns out that Dr. Harry Cecil Darling was a notorious serial bigamist, fraudster, and unlicensed medical practitioner who operated across Australia, South Africa, Canada, the United States, and Britain.

Between the 1890s and 1950s he charmed numerous women across multiple continents under various assumed professional titles and fake medical degrees, marrying several of them while still legally wed to others. The list of his aliases is as long as your arm — Andrew John Gibson, aka Charles Ernest Chadwick, aka Charles Edward Chadwick, aka Sir Harry Westwood Cooper MD, aka Harry Westwood Cooper, aka Dr. Milton Abraham, aka Dr. Harry Cecil Darling, and finally aka Walter Thomas Porriott, the name under which his death was registered in Brisbane. Mary Ellen Chadwick, his daughter by his first wife (Francis Skelly), had married a Walter Thomas Poriotte in 1912. This Walter, a milk cart driver, died in a motor accident in Katoomba in August 1938. It appears that Gibson/Dr. Darling adopted this name as his last alias when he moved to Brisbane in 1950.

Gibson performed his same disappearing act many times over the course of his career, and no one is sure how many wives he left behind. It has been said that Gibson's life was one long honeymoon, and it might be called that — at least when he wasn't serving one of his many prison sentences. He spent about 44 years in gaol, most of his prison terms lasting only a few months or years. He is alleged to have married somewhere between 13 and 20 women, usually staying around only long enough to exhaust his new bride's savings and credit, or the credit of her friends. His fraudulent activities and bigamous marriages landed him in prison sentences in multiple countries, including a stint at San Quentin State Prison in California, yet he continued to con women upon his release.

Despite having some genuine intelligence or knowledge, he frequently fabricated medical credentials to secure positions and social standing. The young man used his time in England to good advantage, often claiming to be a member of the British aristocracy or attached to the royal family. An expert forger, Gibson was known for drafting false cheques, cables, family trees, credentials and official letters explaining he was due absurd sums of money.

The worst crime anyone can be sure Gibson committed was his role in the 1939 death of Gladys Higginbottom. She came into his care while he was impersonating a doctor at the City Maternity Hospital in Stoke-on-Trent, England. She was in serious condition when admitted, but he ignored her, finally inspecting her in 'a very amateurish way' only 2 hours before her death. For this, Gibson, who was 72 at the time, was convicted of manslaughter and imprisoned for 10 years, his longest sentence and one that was expected to keep him in gaol for the rest of his life. But Gibson managed to outlast the sentence and returned to Australia after his release. He picked Sofala as a remote spot where a doctor's credentials would not be too carefully examined and in early 1950 moved on to the last act of his dramatic life.

His name, he said, was Dr. Harry Cecil Darling, recently arrived from England where he had decided to relinquish his practice because of the introduction of the Government's health scheme. He was soon accepted by the good citizens of Sofala as a doctor and when the town was suddenly left without a medical man, they prevailed upon 'Dr. Darling' to come out of retirement and take over the post of Medical Superintendent at the hospital. He accepted the post in March 1950 at Sofala Hospital after the Hospital Board had determined him as a man of experience and integrity. Tucked away in the folds of hills, Sofala, a former gold town, housed about 150 residents and about 1,000 more living in the district, including Hill End. The Hospitals Commission guaranteed 'Dr. Darling' an income of £1,000 a year to take charge of the hospital and told him they would grant him the right of private practice. 'Dr. Darling' had 'arrived' in Sofala with a Vengeance!

During Darling's 6 weeks at the 10-bed hospital there were five bed patients, including bronchitis and pneumonia, who Darling treated with penicillin injections and an 87-year-old man who had pneumonia. Darling also treated outpatients. Every morning he did his rounds with Matron Mansfield, occasionally discussing with her cases he had treated. 'It's hard to realise that he is really sought by the police,' said Matron Mansfield. 'His manner was like any other doctor's. The patients liked him; he seemed to inspire confidence.' Mr. P. J. Moodie, a chemist in Bathurst for the last 37 years, said Darling's prescriptions were in well-written Latin script, signed 'Dr. Darling, M.D.', and were the same as any ordinary doctor's.

Local residents were soon extolling their new 'doctor', and in the forefront of those who lauded him were women. While at Sofala he treated more than 100 patients, most of them women. After he left, a *Sunday Mail* special representative interviewed scores of people in the Bathurst and Sofala district



Town of Sofala, August 1962
Photograph by R. Donaldson
 Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
<https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/9arWB77n/xggEQmgNQ4Z4a>



Sofala Hospital is now a B&B



THIS IS the police picture of Andrew John Gibson Residents of Sofala have identified the picture as that of Dr. Darling.

findagrave.com/memorial/160328452/walter_thomas-porriott

and discovered mixed reviews... 'Dr. Darling' treated all his patients to their satisfaction and was popular among women patients. 'Dr. Darling' referred two or three patients to Dr. Brooke Moore, of Bathurst, and one patient to Dr. Hugh Poate, Macquarie Street specialist. 'Dr. Darling' signed the death certificate of an elderly resident who died at Hill End 2 weeks ago (Hill End's Mrs Mary Toohey). Police stopped the funeral and got another doctor to sign the death certificate.

'I picked him for phoney right away,' Mr. Fred Smith, licensee of the Sofala Hotel said. 'He came in here for a nip of brandy every morning about 10. When a man says he only takes a little nip, buys a whole bottle and then comes back next day with his hand shaking, you know what to think.' The Sofala postmaster, Mr. John Kain said that various small things made him suspicious of 'Dr. Darling' right from the first. 'I thought his statements about brother doctors were unethical.' Mr. Kain continued, 'He told me he had left Australia in 1914 and had later practised in London and throughout England. He also said he had been in Scotland, and that he had studied medicine in a Canadian University. My

suspicions were further aroused by his refusal to act as repatriation doctor. I am a returned soldier and needed attention. He put me off for days and then told me it would take too much work. "The doctor" looked worried for 3 days before his disappearance, but after the detectives had interviewed him, he still found time to arrange for medicinal capsules so my neighbour would not be without them while he was away.' Mrs. Kain said, 'I took my baby to "Dr. Darling" and he examined him. He said he would send to Canada for drills for a subcutaneous injection.' The wife of the president of the Sofala District Hospital Board (Mrs. Hilton) said, "'Dr. Darling" not only "took in" country people, but he also had "taken in" a lot of city people too, if he was the same person as Mr. Gibson. He was always perfectly charming when I met him. I took him for an Englishman, but he said he was an Australian.' Matron Mansfield, of Sofala District Hospital, said, 'Builders are still working on a new residence for the doctor, which the Hospitals Commission is building down the road.' Dr. Hugh Poate, a Macquarie Street specialist, when asked if he had had any connection with 'Dr. Darling' said: 'Yes. I remember "Dr. Darling". I remember he was a little, wizened-up man. I thought at the time he was a pretty funny doctor. He came to see me in my rooms and told me about a patient at Sofala. The patient later went into hospital, and I have not seen "Dr. Darling" since.' A Bathurst chemist. Mr. P. J. Moodie said he had made up half a dozen prescriptions and repeats for "Dr. Darling". The prescriptions were written neatly in Latin. "Dr. Darling" had a real doctor's manner about him, and his prescriptions were quite up to date. The wanted man is not connected in any way with Dr. H. C. R. Darling, of Macquarie Street, Sydney, who is a well-known and highly respected practitioner.' Then, out of a serene sky, came a shattering bolt. Two Bathurst detectives went to Sofala and interviewed the 'doctor'. He arranged to see the detectives 'later', and immediately 'lit out' for an undisclosed destination. It was later revealed to be the Peel Island Lazaret, near Brisbane, where he was employed as a nurse.

At the time, to Sofala people, the name "Dr. Darling" meant the biggest sensation since gold was found near their town about 100 years ago. They said this week that Darling came from England last August to the home near Sofala of a woman who claims to be Darling's daughter. Darling told residents there that he had retired from practice. He treated some people, but did not charge them. The postmistress, Mrs. H. Goodwin, and the storekeeper's wife recall that he used to call everybody 'darling'. 'Poor old fellow,' said the storekeeper's wife, 'he was always buying little children bananas. He said they were good for them.' Mrs. Goodwin said Darling's wife came from Liverpool, England, and joined him at Wattle Flat last Christmas.

Mr. W. Pittendrigh, a grazier, says that late last year his brother showed Darling a clipping of the *Sunday Telegraph's* 'Real Life Dramas of the Courts'. 'The clipping,' says Mr. Pittendrigh, 'was about the divorce in Sydney of an Andrew John Gibson, also known as Dr. C. H. Darling. Darling,' he said, became incensed, threatened to sue a woman mentioned in the case, and to take legal action against anyone inferring he was the man named.'

In August 1952, an old man of 82 lay dying. By his side was Bessie, his sorrowing elderly wife of little more than a year. There was an inherited fortune coming to him from England, he promised, and she would live in comfort for the rest of her days. 'When you get the money, you can enjoy yourself, my darling,' he tried to console her. 'I won't be able to go, but you know I will be with you in spirit always.' The woman sobbed as the man closed his eyes. 'He always said the nicest things,' she told the friends who led her away from the death room. Not until several months later did she learn why her lamented husband was never at a loss to spout those 'nicest things' that all women like to hear. He had been practising them for more than 50 years on hundreds of women all over four continents. At that time, he went by the name of Walter Thomas Porriott. He was 82 but claimed to be 59.

His death in Brisbane meant that the last entry could now be made in the 'Darling' dossier in police archives. There will be no more broken hearts, ruined lives and empty purses to be recorded in his compendious criminal dossier!

Finding Mrs Whittaker

By Deborah Taylor (Committee member) 27 July 2026

My paternal Nana, Claire Taylor née Long, loved family history therefore would tell me all the stories she knew of our ancestors. In particular, she would tell me stories passed onto her from her maternal Grandmother, Annie Craigie née Deadman (my 2x Great Grandmother), about growing up on a property near Hill End in the old gold mining times.

I was told that Annie's father, with the surname of Deadman (my 3x Great Grandfather), had died young when Annie was a girl and that Annie's mother had remarried a man with the surname of Whittaker. We knew that Annie's mother had more children as my Nana would often tell me the sad story of Annie's young 16-year-old Whittaker half-brother who died from a gunshot accident on their farm near Hill End.

In 2019 I undertook to find out more about Annie's mother, my 3x Great Grandmother, Mrs Whittaker of Hill End. I first started with researching on the internet and I was amazed when I promptly found the fantastic website hillendfamilyhistory.com. On this website I very quickly found my 3x Great Step Grandfather William James Whittaker and my 3x Great Grandmother Mary Ann Whittaker née Ley living at 'Posey Hill', Hill End, occupation farmer 1862–1890. I was very excited as I uncovered important research leads that I hadn't been aware of, including my 3x Great Grandmother's first name being Mary Ann, her maiden name being Ley and that the Whittaker's lived at 'Posey Hill'.

My next research avenue was to contact [The Hill End and Tambaroora Family History and Information Centre](#). I rang and spoke to our wonderful Hill End and Tambaroora historian Daphne Shead about the Whittaker's and asked, "Where is Posey Hill?" Daphne replied it is a large property and is actually for sale at the moment. Then I searched the internet and found the Real Estate advertisement for 'Posey Hill'. Time went by until one day in 2020 scrolling through my Facebook 'Posey Hill' just popped up in my feed as a holiday rental (<https://www.stayz.com.au/holiday-rental/p9484003>). Instantly I thought what an amazing opportunity to stay where my Hill End and Tambaroora ancestors once lived so I promptly booked a long weekend for my family, it was wonderful. Only remnants of an old



Mrs Whittaker from the Holtermann Collection, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.



Remnants of an old chimney at Posey Hill

pioneer house and chimney remain on the property of which I guess is originally where my ancestors once lived.

It was fabulous to finally have the opportunity to explore Hill End and Tambaroora. I visited Hill End once as a child. However, my memories were very vague of being parked in Beyers Avenue and also wandering the Tambaroora Cemetery with my Dad. Fundamentally, it was an excellent opportunity to conduct more research at [The Hill End and Tambaroora Family History and Information Centre](#), which was then located at Northey's Store, and to especially meet Daphne Shead in person. When Daphne showed me all the research that had been collated in the family folders I was astounded. Daphne then produced the Whittaker family folder and informed me that Mrs Whittaker was included in the Holtermann Collection portraits and showed me the photos. I was amazed to discover photographs of my 3x great-grandmother, Mrs Whittaker, dating from the 1870s, something I had never expected to find.

Introducing the Hill End & Tambaroora Gathering Group Committee



Lorraine Purcell — Convener

Lives: Carlton, Sydney

Hill End ancestral families: *Paternal:* Gaynon, Fitzgerald, @ Sallys Flat & Tambaroora.



Sharon Shelton — Vice Convener and Family History Centre Manager

Lives: Duramana on the bridle Track (that will get everyone searching)

Hill End ancestral families: Ring in with no ancestors to HE, just an arty-farty member.



Barbara Burnett — Secretary and Treasurer

Lives: Woodford in the Blue Mountains

Hill End ancestral families: Longmore, Starr, Alder, Goodwin, Smith.



Helen Wood — Research Officer

Lives: Castlereagh

Hill End ancestral families: Hamilton, Heap, Drakeford, Everett, Gower, Hayley, Jarman, Murray, Wardman, Yates, Hocking, Lanes, Longton.



Deborah Court — Membership Officer

Lives: Springwood, Blue Mountains

Hill End ancestral families: Maris, Trevena.



Karen Bates — Publicity Officer

Lives: Drummoyne

Hill End ancestral families: Charles and Ellen Smith, John and Sydney Elliott, George and Jane Gardiner, Michael and Mary Lawler.



Michelle Brooks (Walpole) — Family History Centre Coordinator

Lives: Hill End

Hill End ancestral families: Walpole, Ellis, Ross.



Alison Briggs — Bookshop Officer

Lives: Oatley, Sydney

Hill End ancestral families: Millett, Treffone, Totolos, Clemens.



Debbie Taylor — Committee Member

Lives: Wattle Grove but escape to Hill End as much as possible

Hill End ancestral families: *Paternal:* Deadman, Ley, Craigie, Whittaker (by marriage Ackerman, Smythe, Uren). *Maternal:* Rayner, Fitzsimmons.



Ian Hodge — Committee Member

Lives: Arcadia Vale (Lake Macquarie), and occasionally Tambaroora

Hill End ancestral families: John Hodge arrived in Tambaroora in 1852. Wade and Carver families significant via marriage.

Thank you