

IN MEMORY OF ELIZABETH VINE



8TH JULY 1904

MEMORIAL INVITATION

Elizabeth Vine (nee Hibbs), drowning - 1904

As mentioned earlier we intend to unveil a memorial plaque for Elizabeth Vine (nee Hibbs, descendant of Peter Hibbs, First Fleeter) who drowned in Warlands Creek in 1904, being washed from her horse in a flood.

We plan this event Saturday 31st October.

All are invited. Please feel free to invite friends.

How to get here, or phone or email the contact details below.

We plan to meet around 2.30pm on the day, at the point shown on the map.

From the meeting point we will travel in 4-wheel drives approximately 1km to where the planned re-enactment of Elizabeth's last ride will start.

As the track to the re-enactment is 4-wheel drive only, it is hoped those with 4-wheel drives may be able to render assistance, if they have any spare seats available for those arriving in cars.

The re-enactment ride will be over a distance of approximately 1km to the creek crossing, where Elizabeth was washed from her horse. We then travel downstream approximately 400 metres to where her body was recovered and where the unveiling will take place.

We hope to have an open fire and boiling of the billy, so please feel free to bring your own afternoon tea.

If any Vine/Hibbs descendants have any photographs or history, you may like to bring these with you on the day.

Please note, this event has been totally unrehearsed, therefore E&OE.

This is a privately funded project by "Norville" family and friends.

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SYNOPSIS

So, why did it happen?

I have thought about this many times over the years, since I first heard the story. If we look at the facts as best known to us, we might come to some conclusions. Elizabeth had spent the previous night with her sister Mary-Anne and husband Dave Norvill in their tiny house on the site where our re-enactment commenced. It had been raining. It was the middle of winter. It would have been cold. Dave and Mary-Anne had their own children. Due to the inclement weather undoubtedly they would have spent some time cooped up inside the house. By the end of the second day Elizabeth probably had had enough, and kids being kids, she wanted to go.

This likely was a lot of the reason Elizabeth insisted on going home to her Father, when Dave had tried to talk her out of doing so.

Having seen many floods in this creek over my life time, it is not difficult to envisage what sort of flood it would have been. Obviously it was not too high for a horse and rider to cross, or Dave would not have entered in the first place, nor would he have made it to the other side as the report states he did. It would seem Dave rode back through the flood again immediately after Elizabeth fell.

As Dave had his back turned, no one actually saw Elizabeth fall. Her horse may have reared, not liking the flood water, or her horse may have stumbled.

The site where they would have crossed the creek is a place we used ourselves when crossing with horses well into the 1960's. The stone content in Warlands Creek is fairly large and the creek being narrow here any flood water moves very quickly, hence any stone it is carrying may move very quickly also. Elizabeth was riding side saddle and this probably did not help in her circumstances.

Once she was down in the water, the type of clothing she was wearing of that era, plus a coat to keep out the rain, would have all added to her difficulties. Not only was she battling with flood water, it is certain she would have come into contact with stone. Between that and the water, she would have lost consciousness very quickly.

Many years ago I heard my Father make comment that Dave Norvill had been criticised in the early years for not trying hard enough to rescue Elizabeth. From my experience there is absolutely no question, no person on foot, or on a horse, could have rescued her. Her only hope of rescue was within herself and it's a pretty fair certainty that chance was taken from her within seconds.

Peter Norvill

SAD DROWNING FATALITY

The Scone Advocate, Friday July 15, 1904

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NEAR BLANDFORD

Through the courtesy of the Coroner for the Murrurundi district, (Mr. C. F. Juchau J.P.), we are now enabled to supply full particulars of the sad occurrence at Warland's Creek crossing, near Blandford, on Friday last, by which Mrs Vine, wife of Mr. J. M. Vine, of Tomalla, a well known and respected settler of the district, met her death. It was reported that the deceased sustained some injury while the horse was plunging in the water, but there was no evidence to this effect at the magisterial enquiry. The deceased, who was a daughter of Mr. J. Hibbs of Timor, and who was on a visit to her father at the time, was very highly respected and spoken of, and leaves, besides her husband, a grown-up family to mourn their loss. The funeral (which was delayed owing to the flooded state of the rivers) took place on Wednesday and was very largely attended.

A magisterial inquiry concerning the death of the deceased was held at the Royal Hotel, Murrurundi, on Wednesday, before Mr. C.F. Juchau. J.P., and Coroner for the district, when the following facts were elicited:-

David Charles Norvill deposed—I am a selector, and reside at Warland's Creek, and am a brother-in-law of the deceased; on Friday last she was at my place; she came there on the previous day; it rained all night on Thursday, and nearly the whole of the day on Friday; deceased was a daughter of Mr. Hibbs, who lives about 2 ½ miles from my place; she was on a visit to her father's; she was married, and resided with her husband at Tomalla, near Ellerston, about 50 miles away; on the afternoon of Friday, she wanted to go home to her father's place; she asked me to catch her horse; I told her I thought it was too wet for her to go; she said that it was not, that she had an overcoat which would keep her dry; I caught her horse and saddled it, also my own; we then started for her father's; to get there we had to cross Warland's Creek; we rode to the bank and I said to her, "It looks too rough;" she said it was nothing; we rode about half-way down the bank; I pulled off my overcoat and placed it on my arm, and said to her "You stop here till I go in and try it;" she stopped; I rode into the creek and went about half-way across my horse stopped to drink; the water was about the horse's shoulders; I started my horse on again; and heard a splash behind me; I looked over my shoulder, and saw her horse's head going under the water; when he rose she tightened the reins, and he appeared to rear; the next I saw the horse was on his side with his legs pointing down the stream, and the deceased (.....) and rubbish; I ripped off (.....) and vest, and "cooeed" at (...) time (....) leaning over the water where I ran down; I thought I had a chance of catching her; I caught hold of the sapling and went into the water to try and reach her; but my legs went from under me; the deceased was floating on her back and the current was carrying her along very fast; I then let go of the sapling and swam after her, but found she was getting further away from me; I then came out and started to "cooe" again, and made my way as fast as I could to Dangar's house, 300 or 400 yards away, and when I got to the lucerne paddock near Dangar's he came out; I called to him and told him what had occurred; we both ran to the creek, but could see nothing of the deceased; I then said "I will go and tell her father," which I did, and then galloped back and followed the creek down to where she was found by Dangar, about 400 yards below where we had attempted to cross;

.....

Dangar and Wilde got the body out; she appeared to be quite dead; I did all in my power to save her, but the current was too strong and the creek full of large stones.

Thomas Dangar deposed:- I am a boundary rider at Barsham, and live at Warland's Creek; on Friday afternoon last, shortly after 4 o'clock, David Norvill came to my place and told me that he and Mrs. Vine were crossing the creek and the horse the deceased was riding commenced to buck and throw her off; and that she had been drowned; I asked him where he saw her last; he replied "just up here near the top of the paddock;" I ran down to the creek with him and looked to see if I could see her passing; the creek was running very strong; as we could see nothing of her, I asked him what he would do; he said he would go and see her father; he ran to his horse and galloped away; I then went by myself to where he said he last saw her; but could see nothing; I went and got a horse of my own and rode to where she fell in; I saw a horse there with a side-saddle on, which was very wet; I tied the horse up to a fence, and crossed to the other side of the creek and rode down to about opposite my house; there were some small oaks growing in the creek, which I thought would be a likely place for the body to get caught; I went close to the edge of the creek and saw a foot sticking up out of the water, and when I got closer, I could see the body; I got on to my horse and rode to a man called Wilde, about 200 yards lower down, who was camped there, for assistance, and he returned with me and we succeeded in getting the body out; the water was about 2 ft deep at this place; she was lying face downwards when we found her; she was held fast by the oak tree; she appeared to be quite dead when we got her out; with the assistance of one of her brothers, who had come up in the meantime, we tried to restore animation, but failed; I went part of the way with the body to her father's house.

Arthur Benjamin Hibbs deposed: I am a selector near Wallabadah Rock, on Warland's Creek; the deceased was my sister, and resided with her husband at Tomella Tops, near Ellerston; she was about 46 years of age; deceased was on a visit to my father; on Thursday last she went over to David Norvill's; it is necessary to cross Warland's Creek to get there; on Friday afternoon David Norvill came to my father's, and then to my place; I asked him if anything was the matter, as he appeared very excited; he said "Mrs Vine has been drowned;" I asked him if she was still in the creek and he said "Yes, I was unable to get her out; I saddled my horse and started for the place: Dangar and Wilde were then taking the body out of the water; we tried to restore animation, but without success; I do not for a moment accept that there was any foul play, and am quite satisfied that the drowning was accidental, the creeks all being flooded; I had a difficulty in getting in to Murrurundi to report the matter, but got in on Saturday to Blandford and took the train to Murrurundi.

This concluded the evidence. His Worship found that the deceased was accidentally drowned in crossing Warland's Creek, which at the time was in flood.

Transcribed by B. Riddell, November 2003. Some parts of the text on page 1 are obliterated and are shown in italic parenthesis.

MEMORIAL PLAQUE
UNVEILED
SATURDAY, 31ST OCTOBER, 2009

Elizabeth Vine

This plate is in memory of Elizabeth Vine (Hibbs), of Tomalla, who was washed from her horse in flooded Warlands Creek approximately 400 yards up stream of this point on 8th July 1904 at the age of 46 yrs.

She had been in the company of David (Dave) Charles Norvill. Dave had preceded her through the flood on his horse when a noise caused him to turn. Elizabeth and her horse were down in the water.

She was rapidly washed downstream, undoubtedly suffering injuries. In spite of Dave's frantic rescue efforts he lost sight of her.

Her body was eventually retrieved, her dress tangled in tree roots, at this point.

Elizabeth left behind her husband, Mr James Vine and four children.

*Placed by "Norville" family and friends
2009*

FAMILY PHOTO



James Vine, Elizabeth Vine (nee Hibbs) with Rhoda, Sarah,
Pearl & Joe

ELIZABETH'S HEADSTONE



Elizabeth beloved wife of J M Vine
who was accidentally drowned on 8th July 1904, Aged 46 Years

"We th loss most deeply felt"

MURRURUNDI ANGLICAN CEMETARY