

Charles Uphill (1845-1936)

born Old Down Somerset - died St Kilda Melbourne Vic

"The search for the stained glass window"

In the churchyard of Holy Trinity, Binegar, is the grave of Robert Uphill with the inscription

"In memory of Robert Uphill Es^q who died Oct 23rd 1852 Aged 36 years.

Let not your heart be troubled, as I go to prepare a place for you 14th Chap of St John"



Photo Jeff Parsons

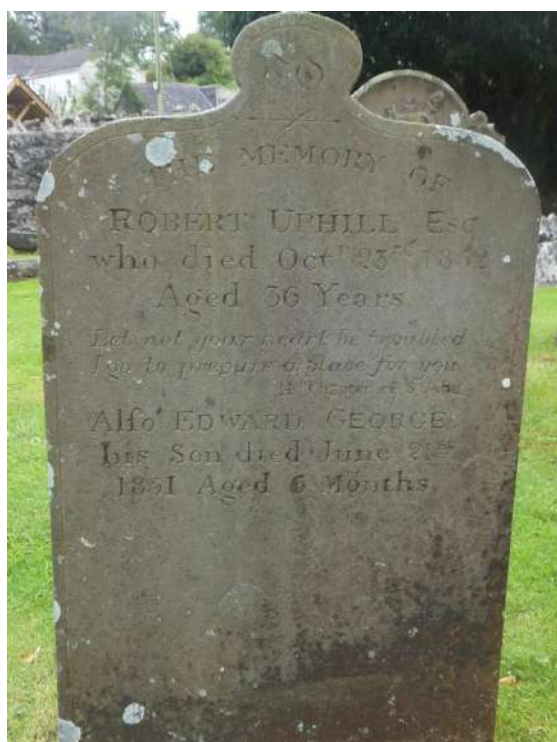


Photo Jeff Parsons

Who was Robert Uphill and what story is there to recount?

Robert Uphill was the Coroner for the North East Division of Somerset. His father, a surgeon and also named Robert, had been, until his death in 1838, the Coroner for Bath.

Robert was born in 1817 in West Lydford, Somerset and in 1841 married Isabella Harriet Wilson. They were living in Chilcompton, Somerset. In the period between their marriage and Robert's untimely death in 1852 they had six children, four boys and two girls. The youngest boy Edward died in infancy and is buried with his father.

The two eldest children were born in Chilcompton and the family then moved up the hill to the small hamlet of Old Down in the parish of Binegar, where the other children were born.

Robert died at the early age of 36, his death certificate indicating "a disease of the brain". It would seem that Isabella and the children then moved to Ilminster where her mother-in-law was living. Just a few short years later in 1856 Isabella also died.

So what then happened to the children?

Robert's brother George had emigrated to South Australia in the late 1840s and was living in Adelaide and in 1858, at the tender age of 13, Charles, the youngest surviving son of Robert and Isabella sailed in the SS Great Britain from Liverpool to Australia. He landed at Melbourne and then completed his journey on a coastal vessel to Adelaide, the Havilah II.

Charles' other two brothers Robert and John had also made the journey "down under" and both travelled on the SS Great Britain.

As we will see Charles made the most of his new life. Robert, his elder brother stayed in Port Adelaide and John worked for Charles on his estate in Delinquin.

Charles' sister Anne appears on a passenger list of SS Great Britain in 1868 to Melbourne, (Miss A D Uphill), arriving in February and returning in March. Did she go to visit her brother Charles for his wedding I wonder?

In 1872 she married and lived in London but died at the age of 46.

Charles' other sister, Sophia, died aged 11, not long after her mother.

My own involvement in the early history of this branch of the Uphill family came in rather an unusual fashion ,when, one afternoon in September 2012 I took a telephone call from a David Uphill who was on holiday from Australia. Amongst other things, he had been looking for a "**Methodist Chapel with a stained glass window, somewhere in the Bath area**". Unfortunately he was rapidly running out of time for any further research, was returning to Australia on the morrow but had, by some strange quirk, been given my name as "*someone who might be able to help!*"

I told him that I would give it a whirl and see what I could find.

The first thing to do was to ask Mr Google about any Uphill family connections with the local area and in that regard I was able to start the search. Of course Methodist Chapels do not normally have stained glass memorial windows. So where might this window be located? It was not rocket science, having the family history located in the Binegar parish records, to pay a visit to Holy Trinity Church and see for myself what David had been looking for.

In the east window I found this.

"To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Robert Uphill Esq who died October 23rd 1852. This memorial window was given by his son Charles on his visit from Australia September 1913".

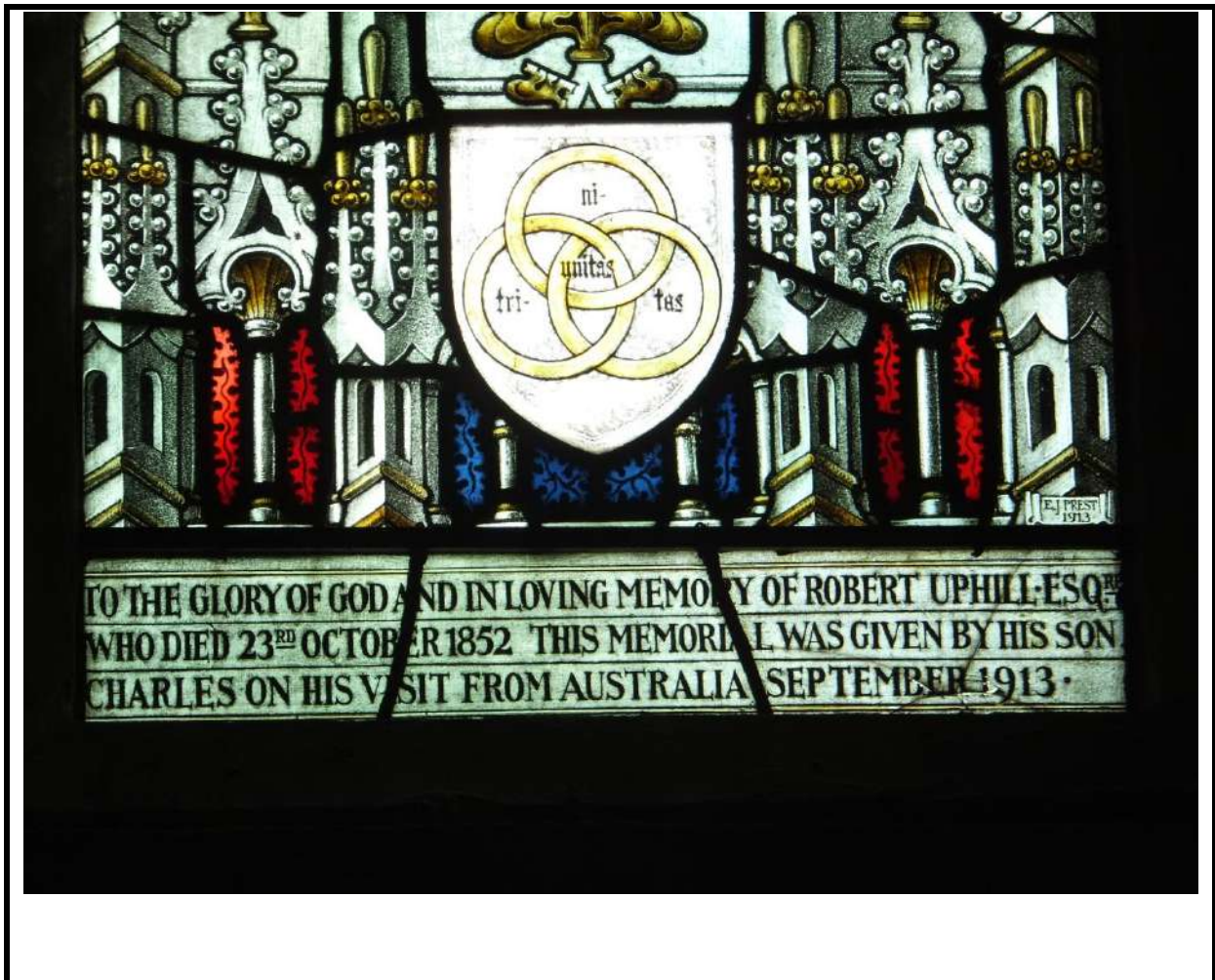


Photo Jeff Parsons

BINEGAR. Church Window Dedicated. — Saturday was an eventful day for the parish of Binegar, for on that day the Archdeacon of Wells visited to dedicate the East window of the parish church, an event long looked forward to by the parishioners. For six years subscriptions have been received and donations given by friends to the Rector and Mrs. Peart for this object, but no date. About the beginning of July Mr. Uphill, a son of Mr. R. Uphill, came to the parish see the grave of his father, who was county coroner in 1852 and lived at Binegar. He was buried in the churchyard and Mr. Uphill, wishing to do something in memory of his father, fell in with the idea of the window, and offered to put in one light. The parishioners and friends had collected enough for the centre window and smaller lights, and the whole sum became complete in the offer of Mr. Bown of the other in memory of his wife. The day of the dedication was perfect, and a very large congregation assembled to witness the interesting ceremony. The organist gave a short recital before the service. A procession of the clergy left the Rectory punctually at 3.30, the choir meeting them at the tower door, and the special hymn for dedication services was sung as a processional. A shortened form of evensong was used for the service, which was fully choral. The address by the Ven. Archdeacon Brymer, founded on I. Timothy i., 17, "Now unto the King eternal incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, amen." was impressive. He explained the different portions of the window as symbolical of the Holy Trinity, the church being thus dedicated. The choir rendered the anthem, "God be merciful to us," very well, and then followed the special dedication of the window. The recessional, "Stand up for Jesus," was sung with great fervour. Amongst many visitors were noticeable the Rural Dean (the Rev. L. Le Gendre-Horton), the Revs. W. T. Dyne, J. Allott, J. Smythe, Mr. G. Turner, Mrs. Allott, Mrs. Finn, Mrs. Atcheley, Mrs. Smythe, the Misses Hyatt, Mr. C. Uphill, Mrs. Uphill, the Misses Uphill, Mrs. O. Newman, and Mrs. Clarke. A reception was afterwards held at the Rectory.

Wells Journal Friday 3 October 1913

The window was the work of E J Prest a stained glass artist whose most well known work is probably that of The D'Oyly Carte Memorial window in the Savoy Chapel London.

So far so good, but where had the family been living? After their move from Chilcompton village the Census for 1851 showed them at Old Down, but nothing more specific by way of an address.

Looking at Charles' birth certificate and Robert's death certificate there was no other indication than "Binegar", which was not helpful.

(Copy.)

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385⁴ B.
47.

Old Down,
Near Radstock,
March 18th, 1847.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt
of your letter of this Morning and its
enclosure of a Post Office Order for two
Guineas, my fee for the Copy of
depositions in the case of Joyce Bryant.

I am,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,
(Signed) Robert White.
Clerk.

To Mr. G. Lumley Esq.

The only piece of evidence which has come to light is this copy of a letter dated 18th March 1847 from Robert to a client, but he merely gives the address as Old Down Near Radstock.

From the 1851 Census there seemed to be two possibilities. Firstly, what has recently been The Court Hotel. For some time I tried to establish a link between this house and Robert until I discovered that in the critical period the property was occupied by a William Ashman Green, a banker and Tax Commissioner.

The second most likely property was the detached house immediately opposite the Old Down Inn, (a famous Coaching Establishment on the mail run from the south west to London). This also seemed a nonstarter when I was politely told that the property had not been built until 1870.

However, perseverance prevailed and I have been made aware of a document which confirms my thoughts regarding Robert and his family home.

"1849 Prebend Report, Whitchurch Manor Farm Estate", comes with a set of plans and a detailed schedule of land and property within that Estate. This shows that Old Down Cottage, as it was known at the time, and now Old Down House is where Robert lived, as the occupier, not the owner.

But now back to the emigrant children, especially Charles. David Uphill has provided me with some background notes which set out the early days in Australia for Charles, his two brothers and their uncle George.

Charles' daughter gives a dramatic account of life of the early settlers.

Preface

I would like this book to be a record of the Uphill family and be of interest to the descendants of that pioneering family in the years to come. I am the only surviving member of the family of Charles and Margaret Uphill and while I am able, feel I should record some of the dates and happenings in their lives.

My father, Charles, was the youngest son of Robert Uphill of Binegar in Somerset, England, and his grandfather was also Robert Uphill.

My father was born on October 26th 1845 and came to Australia in 1858 when he was 13 years of age, in the ship SS Great Britain. His father and mother had both died and so father came to live with his Uncle George, arriving on Adelaide, South Australia January 26th 1859.

My mother was the second youngest child of a large family, 5 boys and 4 girls. She was born May 28th 1849 at The Mumbles in Swansea, Wales and came to Australia soon after with her parents, Margaret and Llewellyn Williams who settled in Mt Barker South Australia (Charles married their daughter Margaret).

Later they went to live near Mt Gambier and it was at the Yahl Paddock Methodist Church that father and mother were married on March 16th 1868.



David Uphill

They lived at Glenburnie a short time and then went to the Hamilton District, Sandford in Victoria and lived on a small farm near the town of Sandford (near Casterton).

Three children were born there, Lucy, Walter and Ella. One little girl called Ella died during an epidemic of Typhoid Fever and was buried in Sandford Cemetary (sic).

In 1876, my father selected land 23 miles North East from Delinquin in NSW and with his family and all their possessions and a neighbour (to drive one of the vehicles), they travelled overland, crossing the Murray River at Echuca on March 8th 1876, the eldest child Lucy's 7th birthday. What an undertaking it must have been with young children taking provisions and clothing for all weathers and sleeping under canvas at night. There were no made roads in those days, they just followed wagon tracks.

Note:

She does not say precisely the route taken, but as the crow flies the distance between Mt Gambier and Delinquin is around 300 miles. Bearing in mind that this really was "bush territory" and had only recently been explored and discovered by Capt. Mitchell in 1836 and then Charles B Hall four years later who made the passage through to Hall's Gap, the journey was a mammoth undertaking crossing the land around and over the Grampian Mountains. Even today looking out over the land from a point above Hall's Gap you get the feeling of almost impenetrability of the forests around. No doubt the traditional tracks of the Aboriginal Tribes in that area, known as Gariwerd, were of great assistance.

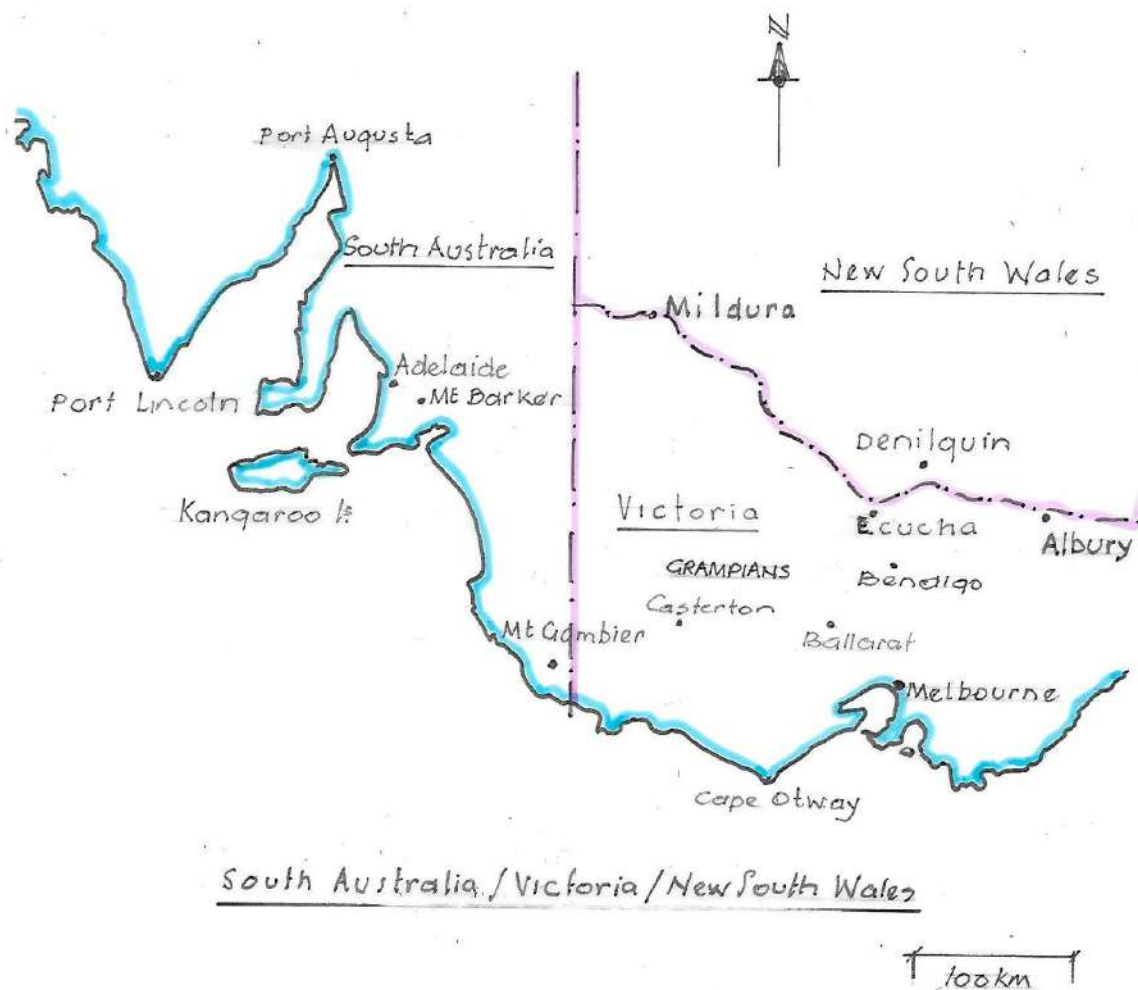


Photo Jeff Parsons

It is likely that Charles' holding had once been part of a 700,000 acre run in the Delinquin area owned by Benjamin Boyd , a well-known mid-19th century entrepreneur, whose exploits eventually brought him to ruin.....but that's another story!

The countryside around Delinquin at the time of Charles early life there was one of the haunts of the infamous Kelly Gang.

Charles Uphill Journey to Denilquin



They settled on a property they called Pine Hills, later building a house with four rooms to begin with (made with mud walls). It was wonderfully cool in summertime and remained in good order for many years and was added to with large weatherboard rooms and verandahs, according to the needs of a large family.

After settling at Pine Hills, 3 boys and 3 girls were born in Denilquin, 23 miles away, being the nearest Doctor's surgery and hospital.

The names of the children born in NSW were Herbert, Albert, Annie, Ella, Minnie and a baby (stillborn).

In the early years there was a subsidised school built and a government Governess sent. She boarded at Pine Hills and Lucy rode on horseback to school, about three or four miles away and the three boys walked.

Later the school was closed as there were not enough children to pay for a teacher and mother and father had to keep a Governess to educate the three

younger girls till they retired to Melbourne in 1901 and we three youngest girls went to school at Fairlight, Alma Road, East St Kilda.

We lived at Fulton Street, near the school for a year and then father bought a house in Hotham Street, East St Kilda.

To go back to our life at Pine Hills father and mother worked very hard to improve the land. Uncle John, (father's brother) who later came to live with us, selected 640 acres of land which adjoined Pine Hills and as the boys grew older, it was all cultivated and became one large property of nearly 7000 acres.

Large areas of wheat grew and were harvested for grain and hay - my brother Walter was an expert Haystack builder and so we always had plenty of hay for the stock in dry seasons.

We also grazed some cattle and hundreds of sheep. Shearing season was a busy time and father employed about 10 men to shear and a cook for them at the hut in later years.

NOTES.

Mr. Charles Uphill, of Pine Hills, Deniliquin, is one of the most successful breeders of merino sheep in Riverina. The blood he has stuck to is the Wanganella, and this has enabled him to find plenty of buyers whom he has been able to please, and who came back to him for the same class whenever they wanted a fresh supply. The fame of his sheep reached South Africa many years ago and buyers from there have paid up to 100 guineas for rams from Pine Hills. Last year, Mr. Uphill sold to a station near Longreach, 210 rams off shears. The buyer was so pleased with them that he sent an order this year for 250 more. He has a number of fine young rams still for sale from 2½ to 3 guineas apiece, much below their value.

From Trove Digitised Newspapers 1913.

(Riverina is an agricultural region in south west New South Wales, bordering the state of Victoria to the south and in the Rivers Murray and Murrumbidgee drainage area.)

Charles made a success of his pioneering life as a grazier and wheat farmer despite the uncertainty of being orphaned at the age of 13 years and was able to retire in relative comfort with his family to the Melbourne suburb of St Kilda, where he died in 1936 at the age of 91.

Old Down House c 1930- birthplace of Charles.



(Mr and Mrs G Payne Old Down House Farm Emborough N^r Bath, owners at the time of the photo)

MR. CHARLES UPHILL.

Mr. Charles Uphill, one of the last of the pioneer settlers who took up land in the district over 50 years ago, died on Friday at his residence, 19 Talbot Avenue, St. Kilda. Deceased was 91 years of age. Mr. Uphill, who was born in England and came to Australia when a young man, acquired land in the Pine Hills district and in course of time added to his original holding until over 6000 acres were embraced in the property known as "Pine Hills." He lived there with his family, and became a successful wheat farmer and grazier, and his property was regarded as one of the best improved holdings in the district. He retired to live in Melbourne many years ago, and his son, the late Mr. A. T. Uphill, managed "Pine Hills" until his death several years ago. Some time later the property was sold. Possessing a wonderful constitution, Mr. Charles Uphill was a very active man in spite of increasing years, and he was able to drive a car and attend to business matters up till a comparatively short time before his death. He is survived by his widow and five children—Lucy (Mrs. J. D. Robertson, Corowa), Walter (Coonabarabran), Herbert (Forbes), Annie (Mrs. MacInnes, Dubbo), Minnie (Mrs. W. G. Mackintosh, St. Kilda). The remains were taken to Deniliquin for interment in the family vault at the cemetery in that town.

Acknowledgements/References

Trove Digitised newspapers - National Library of Australia

Census Records 1851

Richard Higgins for "1849 Prebend Report Whitchurch Farm Manor Estate" and other local information.

David Uphill (Newcastle NSW) for family information- Great grandson of Charles

Lloyd Pearce NSW for "General encouragement"

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) Immigration and Passenger details

"The People of Gariwerd- The Grampians Aboriginal Heritage"- Published by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria May 1999

Wells Journal October 3rd 1913

National Archives - Robert Uphill letter.