

The Carrolls

By Jane Smith

Patrick and Bridget Carroll were in their twenties when they arrived on the *Emigrant* with their two-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, and Patrick's younger sister, Ellen. They had left their home in Tipperary, where Bridget's parents still lived. The pair took up a selection in Bundamba, where they lived quietly until 1886. It was then that a terrible accident destroyed them.

Patrick was walking along the footpath beside the railway track when the train from Ipswich approached. As the train neared, he suddenly and inexplicably turned and tried to cross the line. He had reached the opposite side rail and put his hands on the platform to haul himself up, when the engine overtook him. The train's cow-catcher (the guard mounted at the front of the train that deflects obstacles on the track) caught Patrick's legs and flung him into the air. He fell onto his back, where he lay parallel to the track, with his right arm extended beneath the train's wheels. The arm was severed at the shoulder. The train stopped and a doctor who happened to be a passenger on it hastened to his side. The station's ambulance stretcher was fetched and Patrick, who was suffering 'great agony', was taken to the hospital. He was rushed into surgery but died within a couple of weeks.

Patrick's poor widow, Bridget, was inconsolable. The pair had prospered on their selection but had no children – their daughter presumably having died in childhood. Bridget, all alone now, took her loss 'greatly to heart'. She was committed to the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum nine months after her husband's death. The 'widely respected' widow died four years later. She was buried at Ipswich.