



*Mineral Explorations Pty Ltd  
Oriomo Explorations Pty Ltd  
& Hill End Alluvials Pty Ltd*

*Not only a Brief Story but also a Brief History, 1936-1939*

*Warwick P Taylor  
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## *Preface*

*This history of the Oriomo Explorations mining venture relies heavily on the accuracy of the newspapers of the day to tell the story.*

*The articles are laid out in chronological order. Hopefully this will put to rest the many and varied perceptions and analysis's that have long been discussed, some do not do the history of the only remaining artefact justice, the DAM.*

*The Dam is very much a part of the landscape and a part of the more recent history, it is the only remaining visual structural object that was a part of the attempt to either swindle the shareholders or genuinely try to reward them apart from the work face on Tambaroora Creek below Red Hill, even that is now evident due to unrelated soil erosion.*

*Many thanks to Sheena Goodwin, daughter of Bruce Goodwin the author of "Gold and People – Recollections of Hill End 1920s to 1960s" for allowing me to reproduce Chapter 18 in this narrative.*



***Acknowledgement of the Wiradjuri Nation as the Traditional Owners***

***We would like to acknowledge  
and pay our respects to the  
traditional custodians of this land***

***the Wiradjuri People***

***and pay our respects to the  
elders both past, present and emerging  
who's land we are on today***

### *The Companies Beginning*

The undertaking by Mineral Explorations was on a scale never seen before on the Tambaroora Gold Field, 1936 saw the Company apply for five lease areas. The coverage was extensive, from approximately Lot 7 on Alpha Station in the north down to the head of Golden Gully at Glendorra, the eastern boundary was from Mudgee Road (Hill End Road) extending as far west as Lot 50 in the Tambaroora Suburban Lands, the plan below shows the extent, [Appendix A](#) shows the lease areas.

In the later part of 1936 the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission received an application from Mineral Explorations Ltd for a dam and pumps on Tambaroora Creek. This was to form part of the mining operation that was planned for the area around Red Hill on Mining Tenement 388

20<sup>th</sup> Nov 1936 - Application for Dam and Pumps<sup>1</sup>

**THE Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission has received the following applications for Licenses under Part II of the Water Act, 1912, as amended by subsequent Acts:—**

**Cecil George Evans and John Edward Pollock, for a pump on the Murray River, on portion 413, parish Mourquong, county Wentworth, for irrigation of an area of 4 acres. (W.C. & I.C. 36-7,097)**

**Minerals Exploration Limited, for a dam and 2 pumps on Tambaroora Creek, on part of Reserve No. 29,572, held under Mining Tenement No. 388, Hill End, parishes Tambaroora and Cummings, county Wellington, for water conservation and supply for mining purposes. (W.C. & I.C. 36-7,880)**

**Arthur Yates and Company Limited, for a dam and pump on an unnamed tributary of Subiaco Creek, known locally as Ponds or Iona Creek, on portion 158, parish Field of Mars, county Cumberland, for conservation of water and irrigation of an area of 20 acres. (W.C. & I.C. 36-7,840).**

**All persons interested are requested to inform the Commission whether they support the applications or any of them or object thereto, and if they do object the reasons therefor. The information is to be sent to the undersigned at the address given below, and the last day on which such information will be received is 11th December, 1936.**

**H. BEVAN, Secretary,  
Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission,  
Box 2708C, G.P.O., Sydney,  
(8388)**

*Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia*

<sup>1</sup> NSWGG, No.189, Pg.4808, dtd 20 Nov 1936

*5th Feb 1937 - Approval Given with Conditions and Limits<sup>2</sup>*

WATER ACT, 1912-1936.	
<p>IT is hereby notified that the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission has decided that a license be granted for a period of five years, in respect of the application by Minerals Exploration Limited, for a license for a dam and two pumps on Tambaroora Creek, on part of Reserve 29,572, parishes of Tambaroora and Cummings, county of Wellington, and that the license be subject to the following limitations and conditions:—</p> <p>(1) Level of crest of dam shall be fixed at not more than 0.70 feet above a bench mark established on a rock on the left bank of the Creek near the dam and particulars of which are retained in the office of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission.</p> <p>(2) The bywash of the dam shall have a width at bed level of not less than 25 feet throughout its entire length and the level of the bed of the bywash shall be fixed at not less than 2.30 feet below the level of the bench mark referred to in Condition 1. The said bywash (downstream of the centre line of the dam) shall be so constructed that the flow from the dam shall not cause any scour in the banks of the creek or in the bed of the creek at the road crossing downstream from the dam.</p> <p>(3) The licensee shall construct through the dam a pipe of diameter of not less than 8 inches fitted with a valve or other control device to be approved by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission. The said Commission shall have the right of complete control at all times over the operation of the said</p>	<p>valve or control device. The invert level of the said pipe shall be fixed at not less than 25 feet below the bench mark referred to in Condition 1.</p> <p>(4) If and when called upon to do so by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission the licensee shall release through the pipe referred to in Condition 3 a flow of water at such a rate and for such a period of time as the Commission may direct provided that the rate of flow through the pipe shall not be required to exceed the rate of flow at the time existing in the creek upstream of the stored water.</p> <p>(5) No water, after having been used, shall be allowed to be discharged into any watercourse until first reasonably cleared of silt, or any form of earthy matter in suspension, to the satisfaction of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission and this shall be done by provision of suitable settling pools or other means to be approved by the said Commission.</p> <p>(6) The work shall be constructed and maintained in such manner as will ensure its safety and as will preclude the possibility of damage being occasioned by it, or resulting from it, to any public or private interest.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">H. BEVAN, Secretary, Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, Sydney, 4th February, 1937. (W.C. &amp; I.C. 1936-7,880) (447)</p>

*Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia*

Bruce Goodwin describes in his book<sup>3</sup> the operations initially undertaken by Mineral Explorations Ltd and continued by Oriomo Explorations Ltd and its subsidiary company Hill End Alluvials. Chapter 18 of the book gives a full account of the Companies short life from the mining operations inception to its sudden demise, see [Appendix B](#).

Page 116 of **Gold and People** notes the exploratory drilling undertaken by Mineral Explorations Pty Ltd, the application made by the Company to hydraulically sluice areas of Tambaroora as noted in the book and which included a plan showing the extent of the areas applied for, see [Appendix A](#).

At a later date operational control was passed to Oriomo Explorations Ltd and again to Oriomo's subsidiary Hill End Alluvials Pty Ltd. The following is the chronological order of events taken from newspaper reports relating to the Companies ongoing development prior to their actual gold production.

<sup>2</sup> NSWGG, No.610, Pg.610, dtd 5 Feb 1937

<sup>3</sup> Book, *Gold and People – Recollections of Hill End, 1920 to 1960s*, Bruce Goodwin,

### *Investigation and Development of the Companies Leases*

*1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1937 - Exploratory Operations of the Grounds<sup>4</sup> – Poor Mans, Tambaroora and Golden Gullies*

**ORIOMO EXPLORATIONS LTD.**  
Oriomo Explorations, Ltd., reports on its gold prospecting operations as follows:—  
**Hillend Areas (N.S.W.):** These have been investigated by the company's engineers during the last seven weeks. Poorman's Gully contains 311,000 cubic yards, averaging 6/7 per cubic yard, calculating gold at 1/4 per grain, the average sluicing depth being 8ft. The sampling of Tambaroora Gully is favourable, but estimates are not yet completed. Sampling the Golden Gully, which is the main gully, is in hand, and will be resumed next week. The peculiar nature of these old "digger-worked" alluvial areas, which contain detrital gold from the line of gold reef-bearing country they follow, entails very close sampling along section lines, and already 280 pits, faces, and bores have been carried to bottom rock and sampled. The results decidedly indicate that work should be continued.  
**Gympie (Q.):** Developmental work in the Inglewood shaft has been suspended pending a decision by the Queensland Government on the company's request for co-operation in obtaining a fresh and extensive geological survey of the field before further developmental work is commenced.

*Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia*

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<sup>4</sup> Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.9, dtd 1 Jan 1937



*6<sup>th</sup> Jan 1937 - Interim Report on Operations at Tambaroora<sup>5</sup>*

### ***Oriomo Explorations***

**T**HE directors of Oriomo Explorations, Limited, have issued an interim report covering testing operations on an alluvial area at Hill End, New South Wales, over which the company holds an option. Sampling of Poorman's Gully, computed along section lines spaced 5 chains to 10 chains apart, give a content of 311,000 cubic yards having an average value of 6/7 per cubic yard based on gold at the present Australian price (four-pence per grain). The sampling of Tambaroora Gully along section lines similarly spaced has been completed, and estimates of yardage and value should be available early this month. It seems probable that the result will be much the same as that shown for Poorman's Gully. The sampling of Golden Gully has been partly carried out and will be resumed this week. The nature of these old digger-worked alluvial areas, which contain detrital gold from the gold-reef bearing country, entails close sampling along section lines, and no fewer than 280 pits, faces, and bores have been carried down to bottom rock and sampled.

The results obtained so far are decidedly encouraging, and confirm early anticipations as to values. A preliminary survey made some months ago gave 21 million cubic yards on the optioned areas, which comprise some 400 acres, in addition to which the company has applied for a further 700 acres of adjoining country. Although the values may appear to be high, the method of sampling adopted by the company's engineers leaves no room for doubt, and will probably be found to be conservative when actual sluicing commences. Although the directors do not say so, they encourage the hope that the option will in due course be exercised. Oriomo Explorations has a half-interest in the property, which promises to be one of the richest alluvial areas recently brought to light in New South Wales.

*Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia*

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<sup>5</sup> Newspaper, Sydney Mail, Pg.34, dtd 6 Jan 1937

20<sup>th</sup> Jan 1937 - *Engineers Computations of Values on Prospecting*<sup>6</sup>

### ***Oriomo Explorations***

**F**OLLOWING the testing of the Poor Man's Gully section of the optioned area at Hill End, which revealed 311,000 cubic yards worth 6/7 a yard, a report has since been issued giving the engineers' computations of the values in the Tambaroora Gully, which work out at 7/10 per yard for 300,000 cubic yards. These sections comprise together only 55.8 acres of the area under option, which measures 400 acres, in addition to which adjoining areas of about 600 acres have been applied for. The Golden Gully section of some 200 acres, which is the most important portion of the optioned area, is estimated to contain approximately 2,000,000 cubic yards, and is now being sampled.

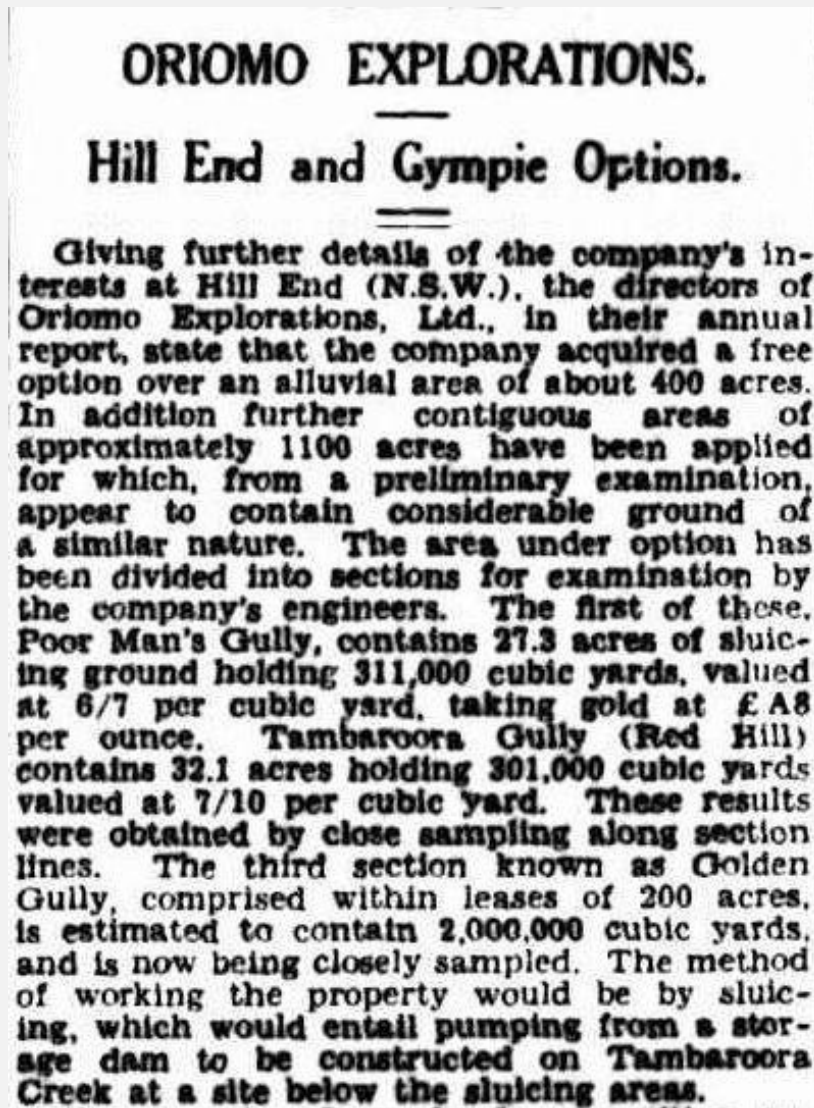
Thus far the original estimates of values have been more or less confirmed, but the company is doing a thorough job and leaving nothing to chance. How much of the remaining area contains payable values is yet to be shown, but there seems very little doubt that sufficient yardage will be proved to warrant equipment. This will not necessarily involve testing the whole area. The ground that has already been proved, showing a gold content of about £220,000 concentrated in 55 acres, is itself a payable proposition, and if it can be brought up to anywhere near a million yards of similar value the issue should be beyond doubt.

*Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia*

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<sup>6</sup> *Newspaper, Sydney Mail Pg.19, dtd 20 Jan 1937*

25<sup>th</sup> Jan 1937 - The Companies Options<sup>7</sup>



*Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia*

<sup>7</sup> Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.11, dtd 25 Jan 1937



31<sup>st</sup> Jan 1937 - The Companies Prospects<sup>8</sup>

## HILL END AREA

### Promising Alluvial Field

## ORIOMO PROSPECTS

**A** MINING company likely at any time to again reach the lime-light is Oriomo Explorations Limited. The company is interested in properties at Gympie and Hill End, the latter, comprising an alluvial gold area of about 400 acres, being of particular interest.

The Hill End area is divided into three sections. The first of these, known as Poor Man's Gully, covers 27 acres and contains 311,000 cubic yards of alluvial material going 6/7 per yard. The second, Tambaroora Gully, covers 32 acres and contains 301,000 yards going 7/10. The third section, Golden Gully, is comprised within leases of 200 acres, and is estimated to contain about 2,000,000 yards.

Values in the Golden Valley area have been checked several times in the last two years. Most of this checking was done for Mineral Explorations Limited, the company from which Oriomo holds its option.

It showed on each occasion average values of 8/- per cubic yard. The engineers then reported that a near estimate of the available yardage would be 1,000,000 cubic yards for each 100 acres. Oriomo is now engaged in making further tests.

"Truth" understands that the material can be treated simply, without expensive plant, and that the heaviest expenditure will be in constructing a dam to provide adequate supplies of water. Costs should not, therefore, be high.

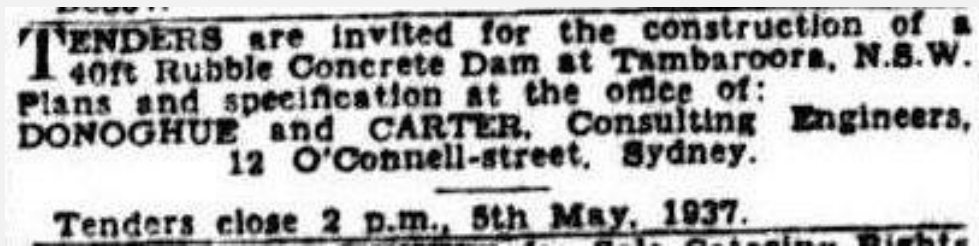
**If the profits run to 5/- per yard, and 3,000,000 yards are available, then Oriomo, or a subsidiary company formed to exploit the area, might make £750,000. Oriomo's capital is only £75,000, in 5/- shares.**

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

<sup>8</sup> Newspaper, The Truth, Pg.25, dtd 31 Jan 1937



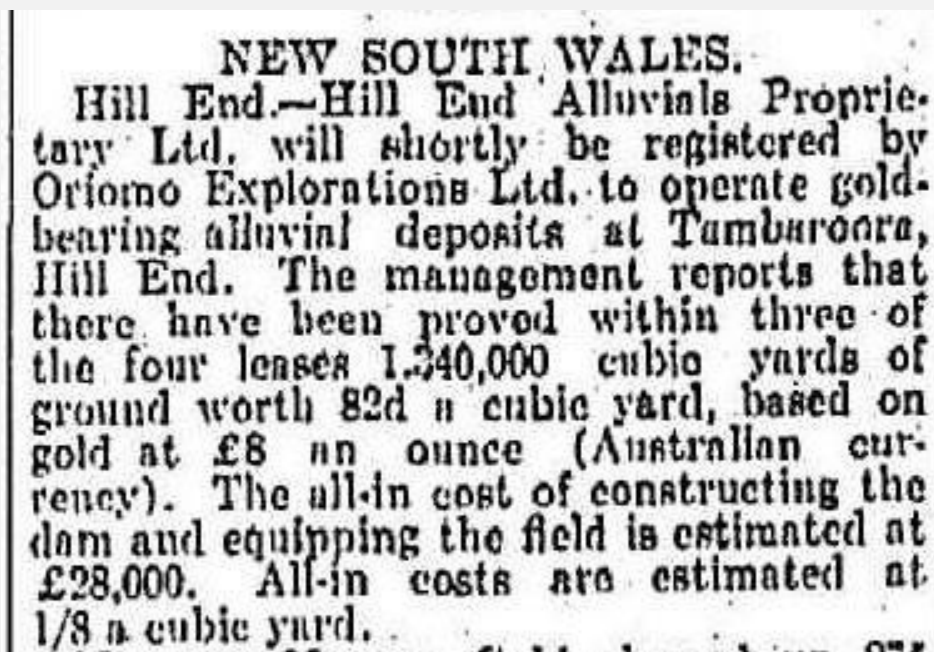
17<sup>th</sup> Apr 1937 - Tenders for Rubble Concrete Dam on Tambaroora Creek<sup>9</sup>



**TENDERS** are invited for the construction of a 40ft Rubble Concrete Dam at Tambaroora, N.S.W. Plans and specification at the office of: **DONOGHUE and CARTER, Consulting Engineers,** 12 O'Connell-street, Sydney. Tenders close 2 p.m., 5th May, 1937.

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

30<sup>th</sup> Apr 1937 - Registration of Hill End Alluvials Proprietary Ltd<sup>10</sup>



**NEW SOUTH WALES.**  
Hill End.—Hill End Alluvials Proprietary Ltd, will shortly be registered by Oriomo Explorations Ltd, to operate gold-bearing alluvial deposits at Tambaroora, Hill End. The management reports that there have been proved within three of the four leases 1,340,000 cubic yards of ground worth 82d a cubic yard, based on gold at £8 an ounce (Australian currency). The all-in cost of constructing the dam and equipping the field is estimated at £28,000. All-in costs are estimated at 1/8 a cubic yard.

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

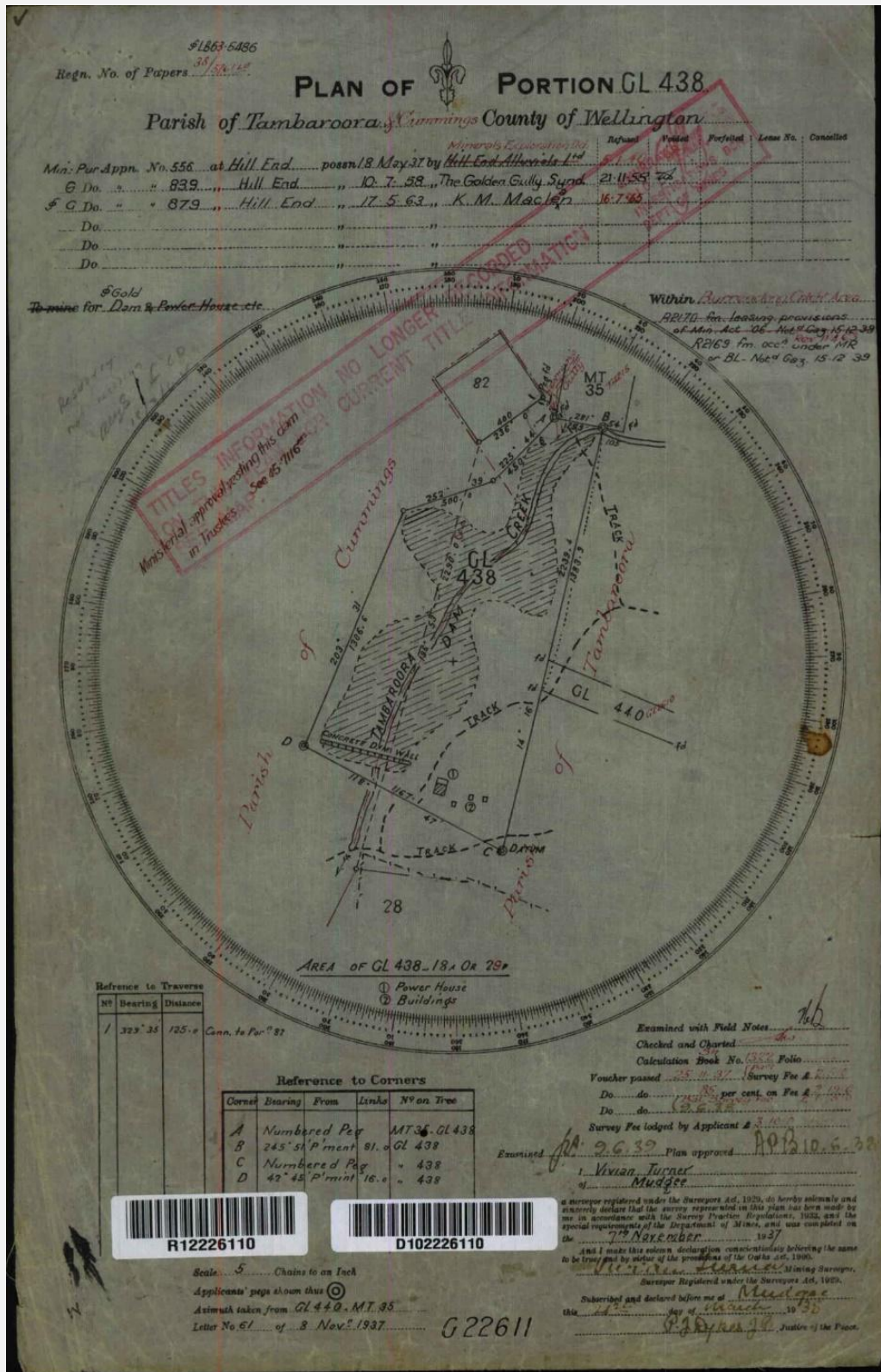
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<sup>9</sup> Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.30, dtd 17 Apr 1937

<sup>10</sup> Newspaper, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, Pg.4, dtd 30 Apr 1937

18<sup>th</sup> May 1937 - Application for Gold Lease 438, (see Figure 1) – Shows the layout of the Dam and Buildings<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1 - Layout of the Dam, Power House and Buildings



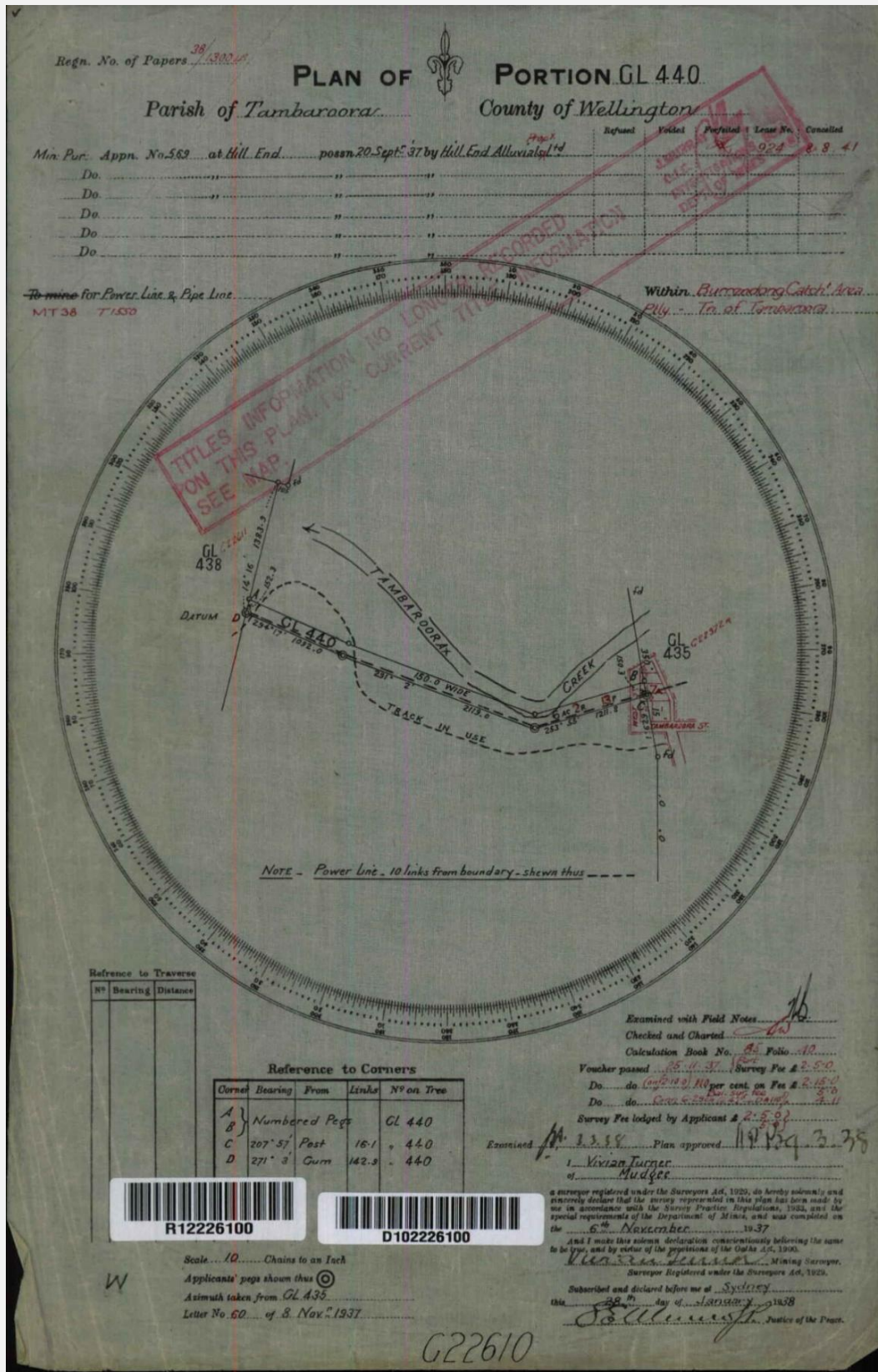
Plan Courtesy of Digital Imaging of Geological System (DIGS), NSW Trade and Investment

<sup>11</sup> Digital Imaging of Geological System, NSW Trade and Investment



20<sup>th</sup> Sept 1937 - Application for Gold Dredging Lease 440, (see Figure 2 )

Figure 2 - Layout of Infrastructure from Dam to Work Face



Plan Courtesy of Digital Imaging of Geological System (DIGS), NSW Trade and Investment

27<sup>th</sup> Oct 1937 - Hill End Alluvials Application for Dredging Lease<sup>12</sup>

(Form G. 1.)
<b>NOTICE UNDER MINING ACT, 1906—APPLICA- TION FOR A DREDGING LEASE.</b>
AN inquiry in terms of section 91, Mining Act, 1906, will be held as follows:—Application No. 565, Hill End, by Hill End Alluvials (Limited), to mine for gold by means of hydraulic sluicing on portion GL 341, parish Tambaroora, county Wellington, embracing eastern slope of Red Hill, Tambaroora, at Warden's Court, Hill End, on 27th October, 1937, at 2 p.m.
Objections to the application must be lodged in the Warden's Office where application made before the date of the inquiry.
F. A. HYNES, Warden. 12th October, 1937. (6530)

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

1<sup>st</sup> Nov 1937 - Concrete Dam nears Completion<sup>13</sup>

**Sluicing Dam**

**T**HE big concrete dam on Tambaroora creek, Hill End, being constructed for an extensive sluicing scheme, is now nearing completion. A manager's residence has also been erected at Tambaroora. This is something very new for that old village, where hundreds of houses were pulled down after the gold boom of the seventies and eighties had fizzled out. Success for the new venture will be the wish of thousands of ex-Tambarooraites scattered throughout the country, who would like to see the old town come into the limelight again.

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

See Figure 3 for the Photo Album of the Dam's Construction.

<sup>12</sup> NSWGG No.157, Pg.4304, dtd 12 Oct 1937

<sup>13</sup> Newspaper, Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative, Pg.4, dtd 1 Nov 1937



Figure 3 - Photo Album of Dam's Construction

The following Images are Courtesy of the Bill and Betty Maris Collection, held by the HETGG<sup>14</sup>



<sup>14</sup> Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group







*Bill Bennett      Son*







30<sup>th</sup> Jul 1938 - The Oriomo Debacle<sup>16</sup>

THE ORIOMO DEBACLE	
Property Still Has A Chance	
<p><b>T</b>WO the already long list of debacles in gold mining shares has been added two new names—Oriomo Explorations Ltd. and Minerals Explorations Ltd.</p> <p>But in this instance there is one important difference, that while the show at Hill End (N.S.W.) is down it is not yet out—it still has a chance.</p>	<p>prices, the two companies concerned have joined the list of previous debacles. That list comprises such companies as Tullamore, Euratha, Arnheim Land, Hilltop, Mount Marshall, Mandated Alluvials, Cullengoral, Lady Shenton, and many others. But unlike many on the list, Hill End still has a chance of regaining its feet.</p>
<p><b>P</b>HENOMENAL values estimated by the engineers of Hill End Alluvials Pty. Ltd. (the operating company owned jointly by the two companies named above) have always left the public sceptical. For that reason the shares have never had the run of popularity they might otherwise have enjoyed. They have been as high as 6/8 but they have hung stubbornly around 3/- and 3/3 for some months. And that in spite of production drawing rapidly nearer each day.</p>	<p>In the first place, the property had been proved, sampled, and checked by no less than four mining engineers of the highest standing in Australia. In fact, had the companies tried it is doubtful whether a more experienced or more reliable group could have been gathered together.</p>
<p>Because the shares lacked in public favor, the extent of their fall last week was much less serious, and its effect less far-reaching than would otherwise have been the case. Still the slump from 3/- to 1/1 in Oriomo Explorations and from 8/- to 2/- in Minerals Explorations cannot be considered anything but a debacle.</p>	<p>Is it reasonable to assume that four experts, working individually, would have made similar miscalculations so as to arrive at high values which so closely resembled each other? It is most unlikely. Furthermore, engineers of experience would look with suspicion on values as high as 6/10 a yard, and would thus be doubly careful in ascertaining their accuracy, especially when professional reputations hang on the answer.</p>
<p>After several months of testing, the Tambaroora area at Hill End, N.S.W., Oriomo Explorations Ltd., a company associated with the Oriomo Oil and Oil Search group, exercised its option early in 1937. In conjunction with Minerals Explorations Ltd. a new company, Hill End Alluvials Pty. Ltd., was formed to equip and sluice the selected areas. Capital was £43,000, of which £21,500 in cash was provided by Oriomo Explorations and £6,500 by Minerals Explorations. The latter received 15,000 free shares of £1 each as consideration for the area.</p>	<p>As "Smith's Weekly" sees the problem now, it may be divided into three possibilities:—</p>
<p>Basing gold values at £8 an ounce, engineers estimated the gold content of the 106 acres selected at £457,000. That was made up of 1,340,000 cubic yards worth an average of 82 pence a yard. In those circumstances the report that 38,000 yards had produced only 200 ounces of gold—an average of 10d a yard—could scarcely have been expected to give the market a stimulating effect.</p>	<p>(1) That values, as reported, were miscalculated.</p> <p>(2) That the plant is not efficient, and is not recovering according to design.</p> <p>(3) That gold has disappeared in some manner so far unexplained.</p>
<p>Thus, from the point of view of share</p>	<p>The directors and engineers, with the assistance of the N.S.W. Mines Department, are now concentrating on the property to find the solution of the mystery. On their answer will depend the future price of shares.</p> <p>Meanwhile, in "Smith's Weekly's" opinion, holders would be unwise to sell.</p>

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

<sup>16</sup> Newspaper, Smiths Weekly, Pg.29, dtd 30 Jul 1938



26<sup>th</sup> Jan 1939 - Decision to Liquidate Hill End Alluvials Pty Ltd<sup>17</sup>

## HILL END ALLUVIALS.

### Proposal to Liquidate.

The directors of Oriomo Explorations, Ltd., have decided to take steps to place Hill End Alluvials Pty., Ltd., a subsidiary, in liquidation. Shareholders will first have an opportunity of discussing the proposal.

Efforts to interest major mining capital in the reef mining possibilities at Hill End proved unavailing. Each of five large companies declined the offer, the directors state, mainly on the ground of the speculative nature of the proposition and the difficulty of obtaining financial support for major gold-mining development at present. The directors are not prepared, in the circumstances, to ask shareholders to subscribe fresh capital.

They have again considered the use of a more mechanical process of sluicing the alluvial areas in order to reduce costs to a profitable margin. Check sampling had proved that the only ground where values of more than 1/ per cubic yard obtain was in Red Hill Gully, where Mr. P. A. Yeomans estimated an average value of 16.2d per cubic yard. The total area of such ground available was only approximately 250,000 cubic yards. The margin of profit would be too small to compensate shareholders adequately for additional financial support.

The directors point out that there is no need for Oriomo Explorations, Ltd., to go into liquidation, as the company is solvent and may eventually receive out of the liquidation of Hill End Alluvials Pty., Ltd., some of the advances made to it. The Mines Department had agreed that in the event of liquidation of that company it would accept the dam at Tambaroora in full satisfaction of its advances, thus releasing the whole of the plant and stores, etc., for the benefit of creditors and the two contributing companies, Oriomo Explorations, Ltd., and Minerals Exploration, Ltd.

After inquiry into the interference with the valuations of the property, the police reported that no evidence was forthcoming to justify proceedings against any person. In view of this finding the directors cannot see any use in pursuing the investigations further on their own account.

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

<sup>17</sup> Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.9, dtd 26 Jan 1939

30<sup>th</sup> Jan 1939 - Mining Companies not Interested in Taking over Operations<sup>18</sup>

## HILL END REEFING

### Mining Men Not Interested

THE directors of Oriomo Explorations Ltd. have decided to take steps to place Hill End Alluvials Pty. Ltd., a subsidiary, in liquidation. Shareholders will first have an opportunity of discussing the proposal.

Efforts to interest major mining capital in the reef mining possibilities at Hill End proved unavailing. Each of five large companies declined the offer, the directors state, mainly on the ground of the speculative nature of the proposition and the difficulty of obtaining financial support for major gold-mining development at present. The directors are not prepared, in the circumstances, to ask shareholders to subscribe fresh capital.

They have again considered the use of a more mechanical process of sluicing the alluvial areas in order to reduce costs to a profitable margin. Check sampling had proved that the only ground where values of more than 1 - per cubic yard obtain was in Red Hill Gully, where Mr. P. A. Yeomans estimated

an average value of 16.2d per cubic yard. The total area of such ground available was only approximately 250,000 cubic yards. The margin of profit would be too small to compensate shareholders adequately for additional financial support.

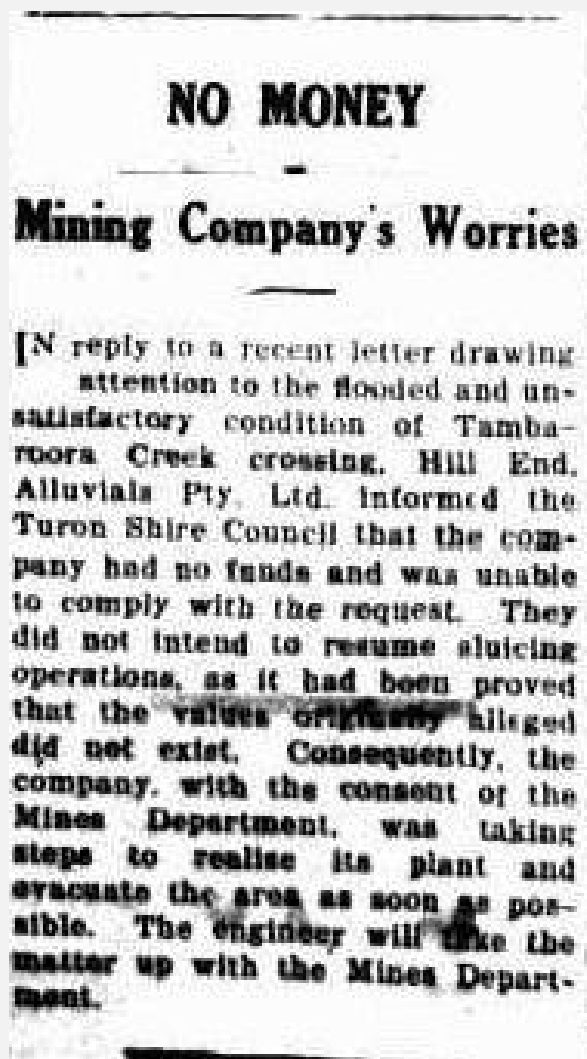
The directors point out that there is no need for Oriomo Explorations Ltd. to go into liquidation, as the company is solvent and may eventually receive out of the liquidation of Hill End Alluvials Pty. Ltd. some of the advances made to it. The Mines Department has agreed that in the event of liquidation of that company it would accept the dam at Tambaroora in full satisfaction of its advances, thus releasing the whole of the plant and stores, etc., for the benefit of creditors and the two contributing companies, Oriomo Explorations Ltd. and Minerals Explorations Ltd.

After inquiry into the interference with the valuations of the property, the police reported that no evidence was forthcoming to justify proceedings against any person. In view of this finding the directors cannot see any use in pursuing the investigations further on their own accord.

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

<sup>18</sup> Newspaper, Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative, Pg.4, dtd 30 Jan 1939

25<sup>th</sup> May 1939 - Hill End Alluvials Pty Ltd – No Funds<sup>19</sup>



Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

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<sup>19</sup> Newspaper, Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative, Pg.14, dtd 25 May 1939



3<sup>rd</sup> Jun 1939 - Tenders Called for Purchase of Companies Holdings<sup>20</sup>

**TENDERS**

**A LLUVIAL MINING PLANT & MACHINERY.**  
**HILL END ALLUVIALS PTY., LIMITED.**

Tenders are invited for the purchase of the whole or any of the Company's Plant and Machinery, etc., at Tambaroora, near Hill End, via Bathurst, N.S.W., comprising such items as:—

<b>GENERATING SET,</b> 375 K.V.A.	<b>GALVANISED IRON BUILDINGS</b>
<b>CONDENSING PLANT &amp; AUXILIARIES.</b>	<b>B. &amp; W. BOILER,</b> 3580 sq. ft.
<b>SLUICING EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>CENTRIFUGAL PUMPS</b>
<b>TRANSMISSION LINE</b>	<b>SWITCHBOARDS &amp; METERS</b>
<b>SPIRAL RIVETTED PIPING</b> 15in. & 8in diameter	<b>TRANSFORMERS,</b> 2200—415 volts
	<b>ENGINEERS STORES TOOLS, Etc.</b>

Motors, Pumps, Pipes, Electrical Gear and all Alluvial Plant are in good order, nearly all being new when installed at the end of 1937, and having had less than six (6) months' use since then.

Schedules of Plant, etc., may be obtained at the Company's Office:—  
3rd Floor,  
350 George Street,  
SYDNEY (BW.6403).

or from—  
Mr. Geoffrey Anderson, M.I.MAR.E.,  
Engineer,  
25 O'Connell Street,  
SYDNEY (B6601).

Intending Tenderers should obtain a form of tender with conditions of tendering from either of the above addresses, and lodge them at the Company's Office in Sydney before noon on Tuesday, June 27th, 1939, in a sealed envelope marked "Tender."

Hill End is 52 miles by road from Bathurst along the Bathurst-Mudgee Road, and good hotel accommodation can be obtained there. Inspection may be had only by making application to the Caretaker at the Manager's Cottage, Tambaroora, near Hill End, or by an order from the Company or Mr. Anderson at the above addresses.

**NOEL WALKER,**  
Secretary.

Newspaper Article Courtesy of TROVE, National Library of Australia

<sup>20</sup> Newspaper, *The Courier Mail*, Brisbane, Pg.8, dtd 3 Jun 1939

***The Hill End War Agricultural Committee<sup>21</sup>***

1944-45      *An approach was made by the Chairman of the Hill End War Agricultural Committee, Mr. Harry Walpole to the NSW Government with the view of gaining control of the Dam and using it in conjunction with a re-forestation post war project of the Hill End district.*

*Formal approval was given in Jun 1945 and five persons were appointed as Trustees of the Dam:-*

*Mr. Thomas John BAIRSTOW, Carpenter,  
Mr. Leslie James Hamilton, Labourer,  
Mr. Lindsay Patrick KIMM, Grazier,  
Mr. Kevin Clarence KEARNS, Constable and Warden Clerk, and  
Mr. Harry WALPOLE, Teacher.*

*Control of the Dam was to be invested in the above persons subject to the Government still retaining control.*

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<sup>21</sup> Newspaper, Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative, Pg.1, dtd 2 Jul 1945

### ***After the Mining Companies Demise - Issues Created by the Dam and Spillway***

*25<sup>th</sup> Mar 1969 - Complaint made by Mrs. G.C. Kimm<sup>22</sup>*

*Mrs. Kimm's complaint was to do with the silting of Tambaroora Creek behind the dam wall and spillway and the problems this created upstream at the crossing on the junction of Tambaroora Creek with Newman's Gully at Lot 82. This made it impossible for the family to gain access to their property west of the Common.*

*Numerous visits to the crossing and dam were undertaken in the ensuing months by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Advisory Committee (W.C. & I.C.) and Cudgegong Shire Council to try and remedy the ongoing problem.*

*A suggestion made by the W.C. & I.C. in 1950 to lower the dam wall was revisited in 1969 by Council and W.C. & I. C staff but both agreed that the demolition of the Dam would be a major undertaking and a costly one and one that would not immediately remedy the situation. The alternative would be to construct a rock crossing.*

*Further visits were made to the crossing and dam in the company of Mr. Lindsay Kimm and both agreed the crossing was in reasonable condition and in time with more rain and flooding it would wash out the remaining silt. An alternate route to the Kimm property was discussed and inspected by Cudgegong Council who approved the substitute route.*

*A comment was made on the 29 Jan 1970 that no work had been undertaken by Cudgegong Council to rebuild the crossing after promises had been made. Later, on the 1 Apr 1970 it was noted that the crossing had been recently rebuilt at the departments cost but had been partially washed away. The alternate route discussed earlier was looked at again, this entailed a road from the Kimm property up to Ullamulla Road.*

*24 Jun 1970 saw mention made again of the condition of the crossing and although it had deteriorated further it was still passable. Representations were made to the owners of Alpha Station to see if an alternate route could pass through Lot 34 to Mudgee Road.*

*An inspection was made on the 21 Nov 1974 with the Assistant Under Secretary to Mines (Technical) to assess and look at what could be done to eliminate the ongoing issue. The conclusion was to demolish the dam and allow for the rain and floods to remove all the silt.*

*Throughout the year and the following year continual monitoring of the crossing was made with reports noting that it was holding and vehicle traffic was crossing both ways.*

*11 Feb 1975 - Demolition of the Spillway*

*An inspection was made on the 11 Feb 1975 following the recent destruction of the spillway. The result was that there was indication that the silt had started to dislodge and clear the crossing.*

*In March the same year a visual inspection was made and it was seen that the debris from the demolished spillway, see Figure 5 and Figure 6, had been completely cleared and the silt had started to drop along the length of the creek where it had found its natural course.*

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<sup>22</sup> Digital Imaging of Geological System, NSW Trade and Investment, Miscellaneous Mining Documents



*Figure 5 - Demolished Dam Spillway*



*Image © Warwick P Taylor 2021*

*Figure 6 - Demolished Dam Spillway*



*Image © Warwick P Taylor 2021*

*Today the crossing is located a few metres on the downstream side of the original crossing, you can still see traces of the work undertaken by Cudgegong Council in the early 1970's. Where the creek has found its natural course it has washed away the silt down to either the bedrock or the heavy gravels. The banks of the creek from the crossing down to the dam wall is a result of the mining and erosion from upstream as far away as the headwaters of Tambaroora Creek and its tributaries at the junction of Hill End Road and Ullamulla Road, and the headwaters of Golden Gully and its tributaries starting at Fischers Hill, Hill End.*



***Photo Album of How it Looks Today***

*Figure 7 - View looking North West from the Downstream side*



*Image © Warwick P Taylor 2021*

*Figure 8 - View looking west along the Dam wall*



*Image © Warwick P Taylor 2021*



*Figure 9 - View looking at the upstream side of the Dam wall*



*Image © Warwick P Taylor 2021*

*Figure 10 - View looking south over the plinths used to mount the Engines and Pumps*



*Image © Warwick P Taylor 2021*



Figure 11 - View looking south west towards the plinths used to accommodate the Engines and Pumps



*Image © Warwick P Taylor 2021*

Figure 12 - View looking north west, over looking the path the water took around the Dam via the Spillway (out of picture)



*Image © Warwick P Taylor 2021*





## Appendix B

### Gold and People – Recollections of Hill End 1920s to 1960s – Chapter 18

These pages are reproduced here with the kind permission of Sheena Goodwin, daughter of Bruce Goodwin

## Chapter 18

### Oriomo-Hill End Alluvials

In 1936-37 a company titled Mineral Explorations had applied for large areas of the alluvial gold bearing gullies and creeks at Tambaroora. It commenced to sink holes on a grid plan, the holes being sunk until they reached the rock bottom. Then a four-inch wide strip of dirt was taken from top to bottom of the hole. The dirt thus obtained was then bagged and numbered in relation to the hole and its place on the grid. The samples were then taken to a testing point. They were reduced by panning and the value of gold obtained was calculated as being so much per cubic yard.

After some of this testing had taken place Mineral Explorations granted an option to Oriomo Explorations Ltd. Oriomo was a company that had the financial resources to fund the project, if, after investigation, it considered it a viable proposition.

The following press reports appeared in Sydney papers early in 1937:-

*The Telegraph* (Sydney) headed **Hill End Alluvial**, the article continued, "Testing of Mineral Exploration alluvial property at Hill End has been completed with the following results: Total area 1,500 acres; area tested 400 acres; yardage 3,000,000, value, eight shillings (80c) per cubic yard. The figures have been determined over a period of two years, and from the results obtained by three independent engineers. Application was made to the Mines Department for a grant to equip the property. An engineer from the department inspected the area to check the values and a grant was recommended.

"11,000 acres remain to be tested in detail. Preliminary sampling of this section indicates a probable further 3,000,000 yards with similar values. Following a preliminary inspection, with satisfactory results by, the engineers of Oriomo Explorations Ltd. an option has been granted to that company on a basis which permits a satisfactory return to shareholders."

If the values as reported in the above article had been correct the gross value of the area would have been between four and five million dollars, a very large sum of money for that period (1937). To give some comparison of the worth of the property, at 1988 gold prices, given that

the sampling was correct, the estimated value would have been in excess of \$132,000,000.00.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* dated 25 January, 1937 states;

"Giving further details of the company's interests at Hill End (N.S.W), the directors of Oriomo Explorations Ltd. in their annual report, state that the company acquired a free option over an alluvial area of about 400 acres. In addition further contiguous areas of approximately 1100 acres have been applied for which, from preliminary examination, appear to contain considerable ground of a similar nature. The area under option has been divided into sections for examination by the company's engineers. The first of these Poor Man's Gully, contains 27.3 acres of sluicing ground holding 311,000 cubic yards, valued at six-shillings and seven-pence per yard, (70c). Taking gold at eight pounds per ounce (\$16.00) Tambaroora Gully (Red Hill) contains 32.1 acres holding 301,000 cubic yards valued at seven-shillings and ten-pence per cubic yard. These results were obtained by close sampling along section lines. The third section known as Golden Gully, comprised within leases of 200 acres is estimated to contain 2,000,000 cubic yards, and is now being sampled. The method of working the property would be by sluicing which would entail pumping from a storage dam to be erected on Tambaroora Creek at a site below the sluicing areas."

A further article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, dated 3 February, 1937 states:

"At the annual meeting Of Oriomo Explorations Ltd yesterday, the chairman (Mr J.D.Fell) said that the company's engineers at Hill End had reported that approximately one-half of the Golden Gully area had been sampled with the following results 700,000 cubic yards, average depth 8.8 feet, average value six-shillings and two-pence (62c) per cubic yard.

"Mr.Fell said that the total yardage proved to date out of nearly 300 Of the 400 acres under option was 1,312,000 cubic yards, having an average value of six-shillings and eight-pence (68c) per cubic yard. The property appeared to be a valuable one. A further area of approximately 1100 acres of surrounding ground of a similar nature had been applied for. They would now await a report from the managing directors upon the cost of constructing a water conservation dam and equipping the field, and the best manner in which it could be worked.

"The chairman mentioned that the financial position of the company at February 2nd. 1937, was as follows:- Cash in Bank five thousand and seven pounds; cash on deposit Fifteen thousand pounds; calls deferred Six thousand eight hundred and sixty pounds; calls overdue five hundred and sixty-five pounds".



The sampling methods used, to arrive at the values quoted, at the annual meeting of Oriomo Explorations Ltd, were carried out and supervised by various independent, as well as interested parties. The procedures adopted were the accepted testing methods of that period. However, either by faulty methods or deliberate design, the values obtained from the grid test holes were grossly inflated. The local fossickers knew that the areas tested would not average the stated value of almost one pennyweight of gold to the cubic yard. If average values had been as claimed, local fossickers could have made very good money just using a fossicking dish.

However, Oriomo Explorations exercised the option and accepted the estimated values as correct. Work was started on a concrete wall dam across Tambaroora Creek at the lower end of the leases. The dam had a capacity of 31,000,000 gallons of water, and was estimated to have cost eight thousand pounds (\$16,000) to build. This dam was subsidised by Government aid, and for what it was worth, became the property of the government after the closure of the venture.

The machinery installed consisted of a twin drum Babcock and Wilcox boiler, steaming at 160 pounds per square inch fitted with a condenser etc.,. A 540 B.H.P Allen vertical compound steam engine direct coupled to 375 K.V.A Crompton generator set, which supplied electric power for the whole project.

The water from the dam was delivered to the workface by two six-stage centrifugal pumps, pumping the water through a 10 inch spiral steel rivetted pipeline. The water from this line was supplied directly to a settling dam situated on the eastern side of the Mudgee Hill End road. The water from this settling dam then passed through steel mesh screens and down a pipe line under a road bridge. This pipe line was directly coupled to the Monitor Pumps. The monitor pumps were electric motor driven 10/8 centrifugal pumps and they were capable of providing a nozzle pressure of 80/100 per square inch.

The water and alluvial material washed down by the monitors then travelled down open races to a sump hole where it was picked up by a 9 inch gravel pump. The gravel pump then lifted the water and alluvial material up through a delivery pipe to the top end of elevated sluice boxes. The gold was caught in the steel ripples fitted in the sluice boxes and the water and waste material passed back into the settling dam.

After the heavy material had settled in the tailings dam, the water continued back on its endless circuit to the monitor pumps. When the water became too heavily loaded with suspended clay, make-up water was pumped from the main dam to the settling dam.



This system is known as closed circuit hydraulic sluicing, and is usually adopted when water supply is a problem.

This system was not entirely satisfactory at Tambaroora because of the clay content in the material being sluiced. The clay was very fine and remained in suspension, the water becoming so loaded with this fine clay that the water and clay mixture from the nozzle lost its cutting ability, and would not penetrate the alluvial banks with the same efficiency as clean water.

Another disadvantage of this dirty water was an unacceptable loss of gold. The fine gold failed to settle in the sluice box ripples due to the density of silt in the water. There was never an adequate supply of clean make up water delivered to overcome these problems.

The dredging plant was estimated to have cost approximately twenty thousand pounds (\$40,000) to install. The completed plant was undoubtedly the most modern and efficient mining plant ever installed at Hill End. It was sad that such a well planned and equipped project had such a short and financially disastrous fate.

My brother and I worked at the sluicing face. On afternoon and night shift three men operated the plant, one man on the nozzle, one on the gravel pump. The third man relieved either of these positions and saw that the water race and boxes were running correctly. Jack Bairstow, was the gravel pump operator on our shift. The whole area was floodlit by electricity which was generated at the main power plant. From my recollection there were three men required at the main power plant on each shift.

Extra workers were needed on day shift to carry out plant maintenance and establishment tasks, while the night and afternoon shifts just concentrated on sluicing as much alluvial as possible.

During the construction period there would have been about fifty or sixty men employed on the project. Some of these were indirectly employed, carting cement from Kandos, carting machinery and supplies from Bathurst, cutting and carting wood for the steam boilers etc..

Local men such as Cliff Fuge and Perc Flynn purchased motor trucks fitted with Berryman-Loaders and took up contracts to supply gravel for the construction of the dam wall. The building of the dam gave employment to a large number of men, and certainly the largest number of men to be employed at Hill End since the Reward Mine closed down more than a decade before. Many of those employed at the mine were the men who had come to live at Hill End during the depression.



Apart from the dam and machinery installation, a number of large buildings had to be built. These were required to house the power plant, store rooms and smaller portable buildings for the work face.

The pipeline from the dam up to the sluicing site had to be laid, and tailings dam built.

A saw mill was established and all the sawn timber used at the mine was harvested locally and then milled on the site. Poles and power lines for the distribution of the electric power from the generating plant to various sections of the leases had to be erected. All these tasks required a considerable work force.

On the 8 November 1937 when the power lines were nearing completion, a fatal accident occurred, resulting in the death of Les Judge. Les was working up a ladder on one of the power poles when a wire stay on the pole was removed. The main power wire had been run out under the stay cable and in order to lift the power wire up onto the pole the stay cable was removed. The pole fell to the ground and as Les was holding on to the cross bar of the pole his weight brought him underneath as the pole fell. He was crushed between the pole and a bar of rock and the injuries sustained proved fatal.

As a residence for the mine manager, Mr Rowe, the company built a substantial house near the Mudgee-Hill End road. It was built of local white stringy-bark timber and was clad with wooden shingles, which were also of white stringy bark, all the timber being cut at the company sawmill.

I purchased this house in 1939 for 130 pounds (\$260). It had 3 bedrooms, lounge room, dining room, kitchen, laundry, bathroom, verandahs back and front, was wired for electricity, was fully furnished, had septic system, water tanks, feltex floor covering throughout and insect screens on all doors and windows. This was a very modern and well equipped house for the times. In later years I cut this house into sections and moved it to Reef St. Hill End. Some design alterations were made during this move.

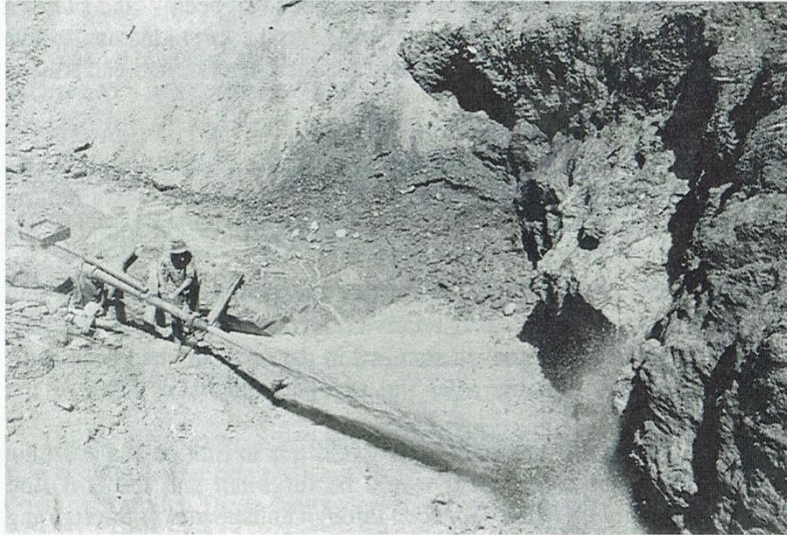
Nick Harvey now owns the house and has made further alterations and has also replaced the timber shingles with alternative cladding.

The Company started sluicing early in 1938 and the operation was closed down in July 1938. After this date my brother, Ivor and several others carried out some prospecting under the supervision of the company engineer Mr Moore and the manager Mr Rowe. This sampling revealed values much lower than the initial testing.

Dad was asked to attend a meeting of company directors and management to discuss the future of the mine. At this meeting, it was



revealed that the average values recovered during the duration of the sluicing were 10 pence per cubic yard (10c). This represented about 12% of the values arrived at during the initial testing of the area. Admittedly there was some gold lost during the sluicing operations, but not on such a scale that would account for this large discrepancy.



*Hydraulic sluicing at Golden Gully in 1963. This style of sluicing was similar to the system used by Oriomo*

I have been unable to ascertain the actual amount of gold, obtained by the Company. However Mines Department records reveal that the amount of gold produced at Hill End during 1938 was 995 ounces. This was approximately 700 ounces more than 1937. So it can be assumed that most of this increase of 700 ounces of gold, if not more, came from the company's work. I say possibly more, because most of the workers, who under ordinary circumstances would have been getting some gold, were employed by the Company..

There were some post mortems as to how the actual results had so dismally failed to match those obtained in the extensive testing that had taken place. It was obvious that some grave errors had occurred either by incompetence or design, but so many people both independent and company associated, had been involved in the preliminary testing that it was difficult to ascertain just what had gone wrong.

Sluicing operations had commenced close to the Hill End Mudgee Road and at the southern end of Red Hill. From an engineering point of view this was the logical and most efficient position to start this type of sluicing operation. However, it was certainly not the best place as far as values were concerned. Perhaps a greater degree of success would have resulted if operations had commenced in Golden Gully.

Part of the area sluiced in this first paddock had been the site of a Chinese settlement and Joss House. New Chip the last chinaman to live at Tambaroora had also lived on part of the land that Oriomo had sluiced away.

My brother and I assisted in the first clean up, and the sluice boxes contained a great number of Chinese token coins, Round with a square hole in the middle, no doubt lost by the Chinese many years before. There were also a number of old coins of English origin found in the sluice boxes.

The closing down of this project was a severe blow to many Hill End families, some of whom had received regular wages over the past eighteen months. The improved standard in the economy had been short lived but most acceptable after the stringent financial years of the depression.

There was already talk of another world war in Europe and soon the depression and unemployment would be forgotten and the Hill End population would be rapidly reduced through enlistments in the fighting forces and work in war related industries.