

# Pattemore House



## PATTEMORE HOUSE: THE HOUSE OF STORIES



*After four owners and four eras of Hinterland history, the restoration of this council owned asset is capturing as many memories as it is relics.*

"If these walls could talk..." Never has a cliché been more apt than when talking about Pattemore House. What a tale those walls could tell. Capturing the old girl's stories is a labour of love for Friends of Pattemore House (FOPH), appointed custodians by Sunshine Coast Council who officially owns this heritage-listed farmhouse.

"Our aim is to conserve everything that was here when Council purchased the property in 1995," explains Gail Denver, FOPH Secretary. With four major owners over a hundred-year span, there are many stories to be captured during the restoration process underway within the Maleny Community Precinct.

Pattemore House, originally named *Fairview*, was built in 1907 by brothers William, Ernest and Stan Pattemore after moving from Tilba Tilba in NSW, seeking a place with a higher rainfall.

They chose a site on a ridge covered with rainforest, which included many white beech and cedar trees and were joined a year later by brothers Albert and Ernest. Over the next year, the brothers dug saw pits and began turning white beech

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by Dale Jacobsen

trees into timber for a home for their parents, John Robert (JR) and Emily Pattemore. The property operated as a dairy farm on the share farming principle.

Ninety-six years later JR's granddaughter Emily English, fearing the unique farmhouse would be demolished, worked to place the property on the Queensland Heritage Council list. Today, it is one of the oldest surviving *in situ* pit-sawn timber residences in the area.

Story gathering began with an archaeological dig by local archaeologist Steve Chaddock (Timeline Heritage). Over the years, household rubbish had been buried at various sites, including next to an ancient fig tree, which later blew over in a storm. "We uncovered chards of plates, bottles, all sorts of household items, and took them to family members to find out which era they belonged to," said Gail.

They also found a bottle of Granny Smith's Health Salts. A check on Trove website turned up a poster that claimed this potion cured just about everything. There is little doubt that Emily Pattemore, who was unwell when she moved into her house, placed great faith in this remedy.





Susan Carbery tells of how her grandmother, Alma, was left at the house as a nine-year-old child to help look after her grandmother, a task she performed until she married. John Robert died at the grand age of 96, Maleny's oldest resident.

Pattemore House is considered a major asset by Council, and part of the Cultural Heritage Levy is earmarked for its preservation.

Sixty per cent of FOPH Executive are Pattemore descendants. President Susan Carbery (Maleny High School teacher) is JR's three-times great granddaughter. Her mother, Valerie, used to visit the house as a girl.

Stories don't just come from the Pattemores. George Armstrong and his family, the final owners before it was purchased by Council, called the farm home for nearly as long as the Pattemores. The story goes that they arrived at 2:00am with two cattle trucks, in complete darkness, drove in as close as they could to unload their gear, made themselves a cup of tea, then in the morning saw they had cracked all the front path. This is one of the dilemmas facing conservationists: whether to leave the path to tell its own tale, or repair it for visitor safety.

There are very strict guidelines for preserving a heritage-listed property. "If we can't prove it was once there, we can't introduce it," explained Gail. "Because we want to showcase the four major eras of the farm, particularly the gardens surrounding the house, we need to do a lot of research to see which plants were originally here. This is where family photos are invaluable." FOPH have assembled artefacts from the farm, including the original Pattemore branding iron and cross-saw, donated by the Armstrong family.

Council have appointed a team of heritage consultants to work on a five-year management plan that will continue no matter the make up of the Council or the FOPH. Landscape Architect Catherine Brouwer has produced beautiful drawings of the proposed garden restoration. Work is

underway to repaint the house, inside and out, in the same colours that the Armstrong family knew.

FOPH and Sunshine Coast Council believe the property should be available to the community to use and appreciate. Many projects are proposed, including re-establishing a stand of beech trees that once occurred near the house. Author Germaine Greer symbolically planted the first seedling in the back yard when she visited in 2013.

The Friends plan to include the community and schools in further archaeological investigations. Appropriately-themed art displays and book launches are mooted in the plans and a display of objects, photographs and interpretive signage will illustrate the stories that make up this house.

As Emily English, JR's granddaughter, said: "It was worth every moment of the five years it took to get the listing done, because my uncles assured me that this house would last forever, and now I think that it will, because of the listing".

**Historical background and photos of this unique farmhouse are courtesy of Friends of Pattemore House, visit their facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pattemorehouse>**



**Opposite page:**  
*Descendants of William Pattemore. L-R Kathleen, Aaron holding Samara Pattemore, Dianne Smith, Vince and Valerie Carbery, Susan Carbery, front Luca and Gianni Curiale.*

**Opposite page inset:** *JRP branding irons*

**Top:** *Emily Pattemore with some of her family*

**Above:** *"Fairview" family group.*

**Left:** *John Robert and Emily Craddock Pattemore in 1935*