

Marlene (Venn) Wilton



At age 29 I was a widow, farmer and mother of 4 small children under the age of 7. I bought a scrambler and put the 2 year old on the petrol tank and the 3 year old on the back and started farming maize, sheep and beef on an extensive area of land in a remote part of East Griqualand, where we had a generator to make our electricity; our water was gravity fed from a seasonal spring; the party line telephones were dodgy and the roads all dirt.

I got very thin and worked very hard. My financial training stood me in good stead. As long as I had the finances under control, I felt that I could buy any other expertise that was needed. I considered feeling nervous of living on my own as a waste of energy!

A year later, I remarried a Johannesburg man, who was a Creative Director in an Advertising Company, who was also a widower, and became the mother of 6 children, whose ages went 8,7,6,5,4,3. We bought a puppy, Gilton, instead of having any more children! Having been married to a one Voogs Gilson and then Stooks Wilton, I was often just called *Mrs. Wilson*.

We settled half way between Johannesburg and Swartberg in Mooi River and I put a manager on the farms and came up to them once a week. We started a weaving business and exported Karakul carpets and home spun garments. I got very thin.

A year later we all returned to the farm, where I continued farming and we brought the weaving business with us. One day I resigned and Stooks and I swapped jobs. I became the weaver and sold the business in a week and Stooks became the farmer. I also ran a Trading Store so I wasn't short of occupation.

For the next plus/minus 25 years we survived veldt fires, stock theft incidents, floods, snow and escaped convicts. So life was not dull. You can die plenty of ways in Africa but never from boredom. We grew the farming enterprise into a seed potato concern.

We retired to Himeville, 50 kilometers away from the Farm, 9 years ago, and my son, Andrew, took over the farming enterprise and so we continue to feed the Nation.

I became a Tennis Coach recently and live right next to the local courts. I play the game often and cheat horribly at golf every Sunday in a very sociable group of old codgers. I still do plenty of work for the Stock Theft Prevention Association trying to combat cattle rustling into Lesotho.



Marlene Gwynneth Wilton, formerly Gilson, born **Venn**

Married 27th January 1968 to Christopher Hugh Gilson (aka Voogs)

died 23rd August 1976

Married 27th September 1977 to Bruce Anthony Wilton, widower.



Marlene with her sister, Lynette, and Santa (her nephew) on the back of a 'bakkie – Swartberg 2013

Children

Debra Lee Robinson, (43) formerly Gilson, living in Malaysia

Married Kendal

Robinson. Two children, Chloe Mei and Michael

Ingrid Gwynneth Clulow, (42) formerly Gilson,

living in Oman and now Durban .

Married Craig Clulow, an Australian, Two children Grace and Thomas.

Nicola Louissette Wilton, (42) living in Stellenbosch.

Andrew Charles Hugh Gilson (42) Married Jenny Hatch. Four children, Lucy, James, Christopher & William (twins)

Brenda Jean Gilson died age 20

Chloe Pamela Wilton (39) married Greg Hopkins. Son to arrive 24th Oct 2012.

Academic history.

American Field Service Scholarship to Wisconsin 1963-64.

BA Maths English 1966 University of Natal, PMB

University Education diploma UN PMB 1967.

Four of Marlene's grandchildren – in Ghana



