

Memorial Windows of Camberwell Uniting (Methodist) Church

Part 2 - The Descendants of

Clement Herbert Derrick and Elizabeth Mary Derrick

❖ *A Quick Re-fresh*

Clement Derrick and his wife Elizabeth Derrick's lives are celebrated in a memorial stained glass window in the now Camberwell Uniting Church, which was dedicated within two years of their deaths, in 1948.

At the time of Clement's death, he was survived by his wife, and according to all records, his children – a son and two daughters, which the church described as “*all of whom are following in the way of Christ.*”

Now you might be excused for thinking that information relating to each of these family members might be reasonably accessible, and in respect of one son it was, but as it turned out, there was a second son, and for the daughters, the reverse was true. And in respect of the younger daughter in particular, the search proved most challenging, although ultimately rewarding.

❖ *The Next Generation of the Family tree*

The lives of the four children of Clement and Elizabeth Derrick unfolded as follows:

Herbert Clement Sweetman Derrick was the first born child.

Herbert (known as Bert) was born in 1895 in Blackwood. Victoria. He was, by all accounts, a brilliant student at Wesley College. However, his life was cut short when he contracted tuberculosis, and he died at a hospital in Sandringham at the age of eighteen, in May 1914.

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Edward Holbrook Derrick was the family's second son, born just over two years after Bert, in 1898, also in Blackwood.

As a consequence of his significant professional success in the medical, pathology and science fields, there is much material available in relation to Edward, however his many biographies also share light on the wider Derrick family and its background as well.

In addition to Methodism, or perhaps as an extension of it, there was a strong family bent for teaching. Derrick's paternal grandfather, father, mother, two uncles, and a maternal aunt were all school teachers, and one of the uncles became a lecturer in the University of Melbourne and wrote books on Australian history. Medicine was represented too, but more peripherally, by a great-great-grandfather, a grandfather, and an uncle, all on his mother's side. Derrick wrote of his lineage, but referring particularly to religion, 'Fortunate is the child with a goodly heritage'. (*Biography in the Australian Academy of Science*).

The “*Australian Dictionary of Bibliography*” (ADB) and the “*Australian Academy of Science*” (AAS) summarise Edward Derrick’s life as follows:



“Educated at Wesley College, Edward entered Queen’s College, University of Melbourne. On 14 June 1918 he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force, but, as a medical student, was not called up for service. He was appointed resident medical officer at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1920, and next year was the Sir John Grice cancer research scholar at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Research in Pathology and Medicine. Having been awarded a free passage to England, in 1922-23 he worked as a pathology assistant at a London Hospital.

Derrick’s programme of postgraduate training, directed at preparing himself for work as a medical missionary, was interrupted by illness: one brother had already died of tuberculosis, and Edward’s own battle with that disease had a major influence on his life.” (ADB)

“He had a half-formed intention to become a medical missionary in China.... Proficiency in surgery was an obvious pre-requisite for a medical missionary, so he began to prepare himself by reducing his post-mortem work, and attending lectures and sitting for the primary FRCS examination, which he passed in December 1923.

During this period, he visited Paris and one night, when alone in his hotel, he coughed up some blood, not much but of unequivocal diagnostic significance. He immediately returned to London where tubercle bacilli were found in his sputum, (and whilst) the physicians gave him a good prognosis, an early passage to Australia was arranged”. (AAS)

“Neither at the university, nor in his subsequent year at the Melbourne Hospital, then in Lonsdale Street, did he feel any attraction to pathology or microbiology. His basic concern was, and remained for the rest of his life, with sick people, and he vastly preferred out-patient clinics and ward rounds to any formal lectures and demonstrations.

He was fortunate in having two periods of student residence in a hospital (a wartime emergency), and in helping to cope with the 1919 pandemic of influenza in an Army camp hospital.

In spite of all this vicarious extra experience, he felt woefully inadequate and was horrified to discover how many diseases were incurable and how few of the drugs that doctors prescribed were of any real benefit to their patients. The inevitable course of lobar (lung-related) pneumonia to crisis or death particularly shocked him.” (AAS).

As mentioned above, “Edward returned to Australia in February 1924, and so, as he put it, ‘all my plans came to a sudden and inglorious end.’ He was later convinced that he had contracted his lung infection in the post-mortem room, but he had already had two intimate family contacts with tuberculosis in his youth, and the strenuous life he led could have activated a dormant infection.” (AAS)

While 'in search of a curative climate', he then spent over ten years in country practice, holding brief locum-tenancies in country towns in Victoria, South Australia, and (ultimately Northern) Queensland." (ADB)

"Believing that he was cured, he returned to Melbourne in January 1928 and was appointed resident pathologist at the Austin Hospital, but he soon relapsed with tubercle bacilli again in his sputum. Further rest and a trial of private practice in the Riverina brought little improvement, and he returned to Melbourne a very worried man.

Relief from this distressing situation came in July 1929, in the form of a telegram inviting him to take over the position of medical officer at the Irvinebank Hospital (a town and region in the western foothills of the Atherton Tablelands in Far North Queensland), on a permanent basis.

He accepted gratefully and returned at once to the town which held all his hopes of survival and a productive life. By 1930 he 'pronounced himself perfectly fit', and married Miss Margaret Gina Quadrio, matron of the hospital, at the Methodist Church, Irvinebank on 11 March, 1930." (AAS)

With his health restored, he resigned from the hospital in 1934 to begin a private practice in Brisbane. "That, indeed, was the end of his wanderings, for he and his wife remained in or near Brisbane for nearly 42 years, and their two sons (Noel Edward, born 2/1/1931, and Graham Holbrook, born 13/6/1934) grew up there." (AAS)



"In June 1935 Edward Derrick was appointed director of the Queensland Department of Health Laboratory of Microbiology and Pathology. His investigation of a series of unexplained fevers in abattoir workers defined a disease entity not previously described which he named Q (for Query) fever.

In 1947 he became deputy-director of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Brisbane; he succeeded Ian Mackerras as Director in 1961.

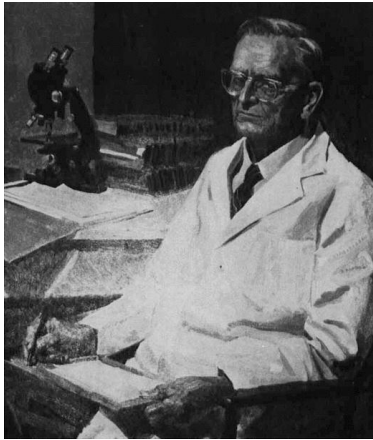
Interested from 1960 in the epidemiology of asthma in Queensland, Derrick carried out a long series of studies, especially of two annual seasonal peaks of incidence. He retired as director in July 1966, but continued to work as an honorary research fellow at the institute and published a further twenty-one papers. As Director (1966-73) of the Queensland Asthma Foundation's research bureau, he maintained an association with that organization until his death.

Derrick's achievements were widely recognised. Among his many honours, he was appointed C.B.E. (1961). In 1939 he had shared the Commonwealth Department of Health's Cilento medal with Sir Macfarlane Burnet; he also received the Britannica Australia Award for Medicine (1965) and the medal of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (1969). In 1948 he was Bancroft orator of

the Queensland branch of the British Medical Association and in 1962 he was the Elkington orator of the Queensland Society of Health.

In 1966 he received an honorary doctorate of science from the University of Queensland. He was a fellow of the Australian Academy of Science (1955), the Australian Medical Association (1968) and the Australian Postgraduate Federation in Medicine (1971). Almost half of his 126 scientific papers were published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, including his classic paper (1937) on the discovery of Q fever. His last published work - on his own experience with angina pectoris - appeared in 1976." (ADB)

Though his physical capacity declined, his mental activity did not, and he was still making notes within a few hours of his death.



"Survived by his wife and two sons, Derrick died on 15 June 1976 in Brisbane. Much of his career and his studies were identified with Queensland, and he had a great influence on two generations of researchers there.

Modest, gentle and deeply religious, he was a meticulous scientist and a dedicated medical practitioner. His portrait by Graeme Inson hangs in the foyer of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Brisbane." (ADB)

Professor Derrick "had gone to England 'in search of knowledge,' and the same tuberculosis that had deprived him of his missionary ambition led him in the end to the laboratory in Brisbane where he had ample opportunities to continue the search. This he did, with results that gave him great satisfaction and brought him world-wide recognition as a distinguished Australian scientist." (AAS)

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Edith Elizabeth Mary Derrick was born in Blackwood in 1900.

Edith, as mentioned earlier was described as (along with her sister) "*following in the way of Christ.*" And they did most of that at the Camberwell Methodist Church.

In his partially completed draft of his book entitled "*The Church Near The Junction*", David Street (who had been a member of the Camberwell Methodist Church as a young man, and remained a member of Camberwell Uniting) wrote of service provided by so many people at the Church who influenced his life, and also of others in the Church who were involved in and who made great contributions to other aspects of Church life.

In the later part of his proposed book, devoted to "People of the Church", he highlights "*Eddie and Katie Derrick*". I initially thought this related to Kate and older brother Edward, however, the 'gender' words in the text and the 'incorrect' dates of Eddie's death made me realise that he was referring to the two sisters (Edith, apparently known to some as 'Eddie', and Katie, not born Katie, but universally known as such). More about that later.

In David's words, "you know sometimes in life you meet special people and there were lots of them at Camberwell Methodist. Eddie and Katie certainly fitted in there.

Eddie had a squat figure and she was shorter than her sister Katie. Both of them taught in the Primary Department of the Sunday School for years – and did a great job. Both trained as teachers. They both had a great love of the scriptures – handed down to them from their parents.

Apparently the Bible studies at the Derricks, which Eddie and Katie's parents ran, were something very special to attend. Years later, my (David's) parents were involved in a Bible Study Group at the same address (Kasouka St) which Eddie and Kate ran.



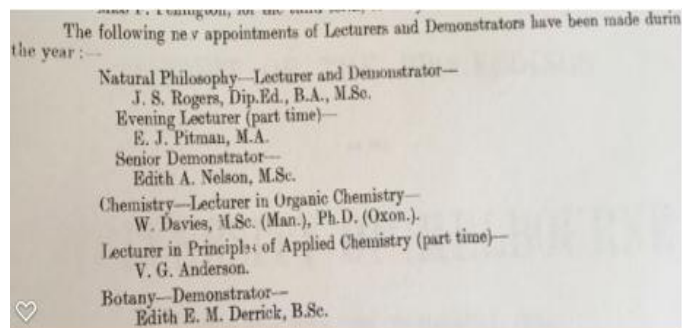
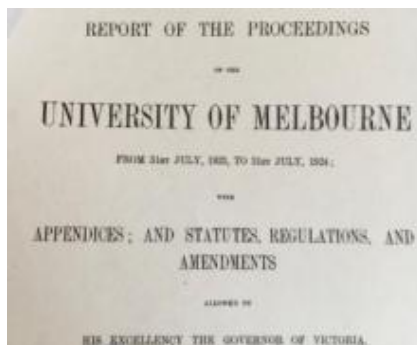
When I was doing Sunday School Bible Examinations, it was Eddie who willingly gave of her time to tutor me and prepare me for them. I think she was very pleased that I wanted to do those examinations."

At left is a photo of Edith Derrick, taken in 1934 (at age 34 years), as part of a larger photograph of the Camberwell Methodist Choir. The larger photo showed nearly 50 people constituted the choir at the time.

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David Street's manuscript mentioned that Edith trained as a teacher. In fact, in keeping with her family's long and distinguished involvement in teaching and advanced education, I discovered that Edith graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from Melbourne University (exact date not verified but believed to be in 1920 or 1921). Quite an achievement.

In 1923, she was appointed as a Demonstrator in Botany at Melbourne University. ****



In the early 1920's Botany was "a subject thought particularly suitable for women".

Around Botany, according to Professor Richard Selleck in his detailed history of Melbourne University, *** *“battles were fought in the 1920’s and 30’s from which the women teachers emerged with little satisfaction. Alfred Ewart was part of the problem. As Professor of Botany and the Government Botanist as well, he had two masters when, being quick-tempered, obstinate and independent, he found one master trouble enough.”*

The other issue stressing Ewart was the status and accommodation for Botany students. The number of botany students rose from 6 in 1906 to 229 by 1929 with an accompanying increase in staff. Young Edith Derrick was in the thick of momentous change at the University.

And throughout much of her time there, her boss, Alfred Ewart, *“was fighting battles with the women staff he employed.”*

Late in 1923 Ewart went on extended leave to England. On his return, Ewart had a further number of personal clashes in late 1924 – with none other than Edith Derrick, over her re-appointment.

Without going into detail, the committee set up to investigate these incidents twice rejected Ewart’s version of events when it conflicted with the evidence of others, and concluded that they had *“produced in her ‘... a condition of nervousness and sense of injustice, and a feeling that she was being subjected to what amounted almost to persecution.’ It expressed its very great regret that a member of staff, more particularly a woman, should have some justification for these feelings. In the context of the time, supporting a junior staff member against a professor was unusual....”* ***

Edith Derrick was re-appointed, and advice from Student Records at Melbourne University is that Edith went on to obtain her Master of Science at the end of 1923.

Edith did not marry, and remained at the family residence in Kasouka Street, Camberwell, until her death in 1973, aged 72 years.

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Finally, we come to the fourth and youngest member of this Branch of the Derrick family. In all family writings, she is referred to as [Kate](#) (or Katie).

Readers who are long-term members of the Camberwell congregation may have even been fortunate enough to know Kate. However there is no official record of any Kate Derrick born in Victoria. After searching all ‘Derricks’ in the Victoria Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) from 1900 forward, I finally stumbled upon an “Eva Kleen” Derrick born in 1907. Strange name I thought, until I remembered that the sole daughter among the ten sons of Joseph Derrick (Kate’s grandfather) was named Eva.

After much further searching (her death is not recorded in the BDM Registry either), I finally located a cemetery reference for an *‘Eva Kathleen Derrick’*, which I know now is the person we all know as Kate Derrick. (‘Kleen’ was obviously a shortened version of her middle name – more experienced researchers might have figured that out earlier than me). Kate’s birth date is recorded as 20 July 1907, at Blackwood. Perhaps she really did not like the name Eva, for she only ever referred to herself as ‘Kate’. And so shall I.

Kate's commitment to the work of the (Camberwell and broader) church from a young age can be gauged via reports in the Methodist press. She was regularly mentioned for her fundraising achievements for various causes, for her successful running of the church's annual fairs, and for bringing interesting speakers along to the church to supplement fundraising events. She managed this over a 40 year period.

In the 1971 Centenary brochure, it was highlighted that "Miss K. Derrick has just resigned from the Primary (Sunday School) Leadership after many faithful years." She was 64 years old, and had headed the Primary Sunday School for over 20 years.

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Outside of her full Church commitments, it was difficult to find information from any sources on Kate's life. The recent losses of several of our much loved and long serving members of the congregation appears to have left a vacuum equating to a form of 'loss of corporate memory'. I thank those in the congregation who thought long and hard, and gave me some options to pursue. She had obviously done some teacher training, but this seems to have not been pursued. But another one of the options eventually bore fruit.

In the early part of my search process to find 'Kate', I took to looking at cemetery records on line, and I came across the PROV (the Public Records Office, Victoria), based in North Melbourne. The PROV is the archive of the State Government of Victoria. It holds hundreds of thousands of records dating from the mid-1830s to the present day. Its impressive collection includes records of immigration, criminal trials and prisons, premiers and governors, royal commissions, boards of inquiry, wills and probates and much more.

Records are held digitally on site and a wide range of older hard copy records are stored at an off site archive facility. It turns out that, after the appropriate legal time delay) many of these records can be viewed by any member of the public, if you know what you are looking for.

After some searching, I found a reference to some papers connected to Kate's death and her Will, which were stored in hard copy. So I duly ordered the papers and subsequently trekked into North Melbourne. Near the top of the small bundle of documents was Kate's Death Certificate, and beneath the name and significant birth and death dates was the question, "Usual Occupation". The printed answer was "Nurse". A clue at last!

So my next step (I had already emailed several 'Nursing'-related websites and received no replies) was to find out if she completed training, and where and how were such trainee nurses details recorded.

After more searching through the PROV records, I found references to the General Nurses Register, which commenced in 1925, and still continues today. I ordered a set of records and another trip to North Melbourne ensued. Unfortunately there was some confusion in what I had ordered and I was greeted with a huge box of computer records of nurses who were registered from 1990 onwards. As Kate was born in 1907, it was a somewhat wasted trip, however I was able to better focus my query with some assistance, and I was able to order the Nurses Registers from 1925 up until 1965.

Yet another trip to North Melbourne ensued – I have become an almost familiar sight at the PROV. Five Registers arrived, and they are large, hand written documents as you can see below:



And there, in the Fourth Register, dated 1941, on page reference 149, was the prize:

149		Name		Address
Number of Certificate	Date of Registration	Surname	Christian	
7706	17-3-38	Derrick	Eva Kathleen	13 Kasanka Road, Camberwell. S. 6.

Not as Kate, but registered under her 'given' names. Without finding out her real name at the start, I may never have been able to track her down.

Section	Hospital or Training Establishment
sect. 10	Epworths Hospital - January 1938

Employment records for the period we are speaking about are notoriously difficult to track down – they can be kept for up to 70 years, or they can be destroyed after 7 years.

At the time of writing, and despite exploring several avenues, disappointingly I have had no replies to my enquiries, so I have not been able to ascertain how long Kate worked at the Epworth Hospital, or how long she worked as a nurse at all.

I remain hopeful I will eventually be able to find out 'What Katie Did Next', to quote the children's author Susan Coolidge in her 1886 book.

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On a personal level, Kate was remembered for:

- * her dog named Peter, which used to follow her to Church each Sunday;
- * the huge raspberry patch at the back of her property – she gave jam to everyone at Church when she went into full production;
- * her famous drop scones – a favourite at every Morning Tea when they were served up fresh; and
- * her devotion to duty as a welcoming elder.

In summary, she is remembered as a vital, generous, caring person, with a quick and occasionally quirky wit, but a true and devoted member of our congregation and devoted Christian soul.



A few people I spoke to also mentioned the “Glastonbury Thorn”, planted by Kate in memory of her parents in the garden just on the left if you are departing via the door leading to Reserve Road.

By all accounts it was memorable for all the wrong reasons – it was big and yellow, it was covered in thorns, and when in bloom it exuded a most pungent and unpleasant aroma! (It is no longer there – rumour has it that it was somewhat unappreciated, and was quietly removed after a suitable interval following Kate’s death).

Above is the only picture I have been able to locate of Kate, taken in the early 1980’s.

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After her death on 10 May 1995 at the age of 87 years old, Kate Derrick was first cremated at Altona Memorial Park, and her cremated remains were later interred at Fawkner Memorial Park on 8 February 2000, in the same plot as her beloved sister Edith (Eddie).

Notes and Acknowledgements:

1. Information on the early life of the Derrick family, as well as details of the life and achievements of Edward Holbrook Derrick have been taken from two main biographical pieces, namely:

- * Quotations taken from a memoir published on-line by the Australian Academy of Science. This memoir was originally published in *Records of*

the Australian Academy of Science, vol.4, no. 1, 1978. It was written by I.M. Mackerras, DSc, former Director of The Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Brisbane (1947–1961). The memoir has been used with permission of Robyn Diamond, Digital and Publishing Manager, *Australian Academy of Science*.

** Quotations taken from an article published on-line by the Australian Dictionary of Biography. The article was authored by Professor Ralph Doherty, Director of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research from 1966 to 1978. It was first published in hardcopy in 1993. The article has been used with permission of Dr Malcolm Allbrook, Managing Editor, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, ANU.

2. Information on the professional life of Edith Derrick have been taken from two main sources, namely:

*** A book entitled “*The Shop*”, a history of the University of Melbourne 1850-1939 (“The Shop” being its colloquial name). The book is authored by Richard Selleck, Emeritus Professor in the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne, first published in 2003.

**** Original hard copies of student records maintained by the University, and sought out by helpful and knowledgeable staff successfully searching through archives for me. (I found it amusing that I spent more time on hold waiting to get through on the phone, than the helpful researchers spent finding out information from records created and stored over 90 years ago).

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