

Memorial Windows of Camberwell Uniting (Methodist) Church

Clement Herbert Derrick and Elizabeth Mary Derrick – Part 1

❖ *The Family tree (the Derricks arrive in Australia)*

According to family records, Jehu Derrick and his wife Mary, and their four children (Enoch, Elijah, Joseph, Mary) migrated to Victoria on three different ships between 1852 and 1855.

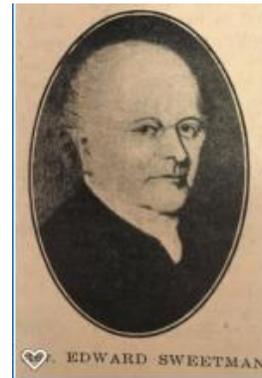
Joseph Derrick was subsequently to marry Miss Brunette Chancellor. Joseph and Brunette went on to have eleven children, born between 1861 and 1878. Their 10th child Eva was the only girl. Of the others, there was one set of twins (Joseph and Henry), who only lived for 10 and 20 days respectively, and one (Augustine) who died aged 5 years.

The 11th and youngest, Cecil, (pictured) served as a Major in the 22nd AIF Battalion in World War 1. He embarked for the Dardanelles on 10 May 1915, serving in Egypt and at Gallipoli. Cecil died of his wounds on 20 September 1915 – he is one of the 4,983 Australians buried at the Lone Pine Memorial.



Joseph and Brunette's fourth child was Clement Herbert Derrick, one of the subjects of this article, who was born on 27 July 1864, and lived until April 1945.

Separate to the above, the Reverend Edward Sweetman had settled in Melbourne as a Wesleyan minister in 1840. He and his wife had a son John who grew up to become a chemist. He subsequently married and had three children, the oldest of whom was Elizabeth Mary Sweetman, who was born in 1871 (and lived until September 1946, aged 75 years).



According to official records, Clement Derrick and Elizabeth Sweetman were married on 3 January 1895:

DERRICK—SWEETMAN - On the 3rd January, at Wesleyan Church, Richmond, by Rev. Dr. Watkin, assisted by Rev. Ralph Brown, Clement Herbert Derrick, Callawadda South, eldest son of late J. H. Derrick, Brighton (late head teacher Cremorne School, Richmond), to Elizabeth Mary, eldest daughter of John M. Sweetman, chemist, Richmond, and grand-daughter of the late Rev. Edward Sweetman.

❖ ***The Family tree (the newlyweds early days)***



At left is the only photo found of Clement Herbert Derrick, taken, it is imagined at age about 30, in about 1894.

“In 1895, (soon after they were married), Clement Derrick brought his bride to Blackwood, a dying gold-mining town 65km from Melbourne, where he had been appointed head teacher. Their four children (Herbert, Edward, Edith, Kate – more will be said about them later) were born there and spent their early years surrounded by wild bush-clad hills, and in a more immediate environment of old mullock heaps, rusty machinery, poor sanitation, and general decay, and among people who suffered, directly and indirectly, from the effects of miners' phthisis”. *

Phthisis is a Greek word meaning "a dwindling or wasting away." Pronounced TIE-sis, it is an archaic name for tuberculosis. A person afflicted with tuberculosis in the old days was destined to slowly waste away like Mimi, the heroine of Puccini's 1896 opera "*La Boheme*". "The Blackwood school had about 100 pupils in 1895, but the numbers had declined considerably by the time the Derrick children finished their primary education". *

(Today, the historic village of Blackwood is located in the Macedon Ranges between Ballan and Trentham. Blackwood was a thriving goldmining town during the 1850s when gold was discovered at nearby Golden Point. These days, it is a peaceful village, situated on the Lerderberg River and surrounded by the native forests of the Lerderberg State Park and Wombat State Forest).

Records indicate that the Derricks moved to Kasouka Road in Camberwell sometime in 1917. Clement and Elizabeth, and their two daughters lived there the rest of their lives.



The family house at 13 Kasouka St, Camberwell, today

❖ **The Church legacy of Clement Derrick**

The contribution of this couple to the church and its life can be gauged now from a reading of the powerful words which accompanied their respective passing, some 50 years after their marriage.

As mentioned earlier, Clement Herbert Derrick, lived until April 1945, and died aged 80 years. Below are two of several family Notices in the newspapers:

DERRICK - On April 9, at 13 Kassouka Road, Camberwell, Clement Herbert, loved husband of Elizabeth M., and loving father of Bert (deceased), Edward (Brisbane), Edith, and Katie, brother of Theo and Phil (W.A.).

- A faithful follower of Jesus Christ.
"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

DERRICK - A tribute of esteem to the memory of Clement Herbert, our brother-in law. (Inserted by Kate, Edward, and Edith Sweetman).

Immediately following his death, in 'The Methodist Spectator' of 25 April, 1945, was a brief 'note' from "The President's Diary":

"The passing of Mr C.H. Derrick of Kasouka Road, Camberwell, will be greatly regretted by very many of our people. He has done great service for our Church in many places, and especially latterly at Camberwell, where he showed great devotion to the local cause and the overseas cause as leader of the L.M.M. Not only was he liberal in the gift of his time, but also of his money. He was a man of great devotion to his Lord, and a spiritual force in any Church he was connected with. To Mrs Derrick and the other members of family we tender our sincere sympathy."

The president of the Conference recorded a more detailed and personal 'eulogy' in *The Spectator* of 9 May, 1945:

**In Memoriam
Clement Herbert Derrick**

"When I was told that Clement Derrick had passed to be with our Lord my mind roved over the long years on unmarred friendship. I found myself, as I thought of his devoted life of Christian conduct and service, repeating words which so aptly expressed my thought;

*"As some rare perfume in a vase of clay,
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own fragrance seems around it thrown."*

Those who were privileged to know him, and particularly those who came within the circle of his friends, will remember his unstinted, unsparring and untiring service for Christ and his Church. Having put his hand to the plough in early life, he looked not back.

Born at Richmond in 1864, eldest son of the late Joseph H Derrick, he there began his career as a teacher in his father's school. He held appointments as head teacher in several places, and from the school in West Melbourne he retired in 1929. Through all those years he engaged also in in the work of the Church.

At an early age he became a local preacher and in that capacity he rendered splendid service in all places in which he lived. He was equally useful and faithful in the various offices in the church. He counted it an honour to have filled all the offices open to laymen in the Methodist Church.

The years of retirement were devoted to Christian service, and his interests in that realm were wide. While he had a special interest in overseas missions – for many years he was leader of the Laymen's Missionary Movement in Camberwell – every department of the Church's work shared in his prayer, service and liberality.

Fifty years ago his life was linked with that of Elizabeth Sweetman, daughter of the late John Sweetman, and grand-daughter of the late Rev. Edward Sweetman, one of the pioneer Wesleyan ministers of this State. Thus began a Christian home of rich quality.

At the home, in the quiet of the morning, the President (Rev. Wesley Amos), Revs. T.C. Carne and G.A. Judkins shared in a service in company with a few friends. Thus we said goodbye to a disciple whom Jesus loved, and who gave to his lord his life's love in glad and grateful response."

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In addition to his commitment to the church, as indicated in the above tribute, Clement Derrick had a long and distinguished career as a teacher and headmaster. *The Spectator* announced in July 1929, that, "after 51 years of service with the Education Department, Mr Clement Derrick, headmaster of the King Street Higher Elementary School, has retired. A number of presentations were made to Mr and Mrs Derrick. Mr Derrick is a local preacher in the Auburn circuit."

The couple then, in November 1933, did what many newly-retired people still do today – they travelled overseas. The reception on their return, partly reproduced below, indicates how popular and well regarded they were:

"The return of Mr and Mrs C. H. Derrick from overseas created a welcome note at Camberwell, and on Thursday (Show Day) a welcome home was tendered to them in the School Hall by the various ladies organisations of the church, and the Rev. J.A. Gault in the chair. Words of welcome were spoken by the Ladies' Guild, the W.C.T.U. and other friends."

The presentation to Mrs Derrick of a beautiful posy was made, and both Mr and Mrs Derrick made very fine responses. The attendance was large, the decorations very choice, and the refreshments were all that could be desired.

These folk came back to us enriched in mind and heart, which will be of much value to us."

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❖ ***The Church legacy of Elizabeth Derrick***

Elizabeth Derrick lived until September 1946, outliving her husband by some seventeen months. Below are two of several family Notices in the newspapers:

DERRICK - On September 1, at 13 Kassouka Road, Camberwell, Elizabeth Mary, beloved wife of the late Clement Herbert, and loved mother of Herbert (deceased), Edward, Edith and Katie, aged 75 years.

Yes. I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me;
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea.

DERRICK - A tribute of thankful remembrance for the inspiring companionship of our beloved sister, Elizabeth Mary, whose spirit returned to God on September 1.

"It is not that our service to Thee and to one another may cease, but that it may begin anew, through Him who maketh all things new."

Inserted by her sisters and brother, Kate, Edward and Edith Sweetman.

The president of the Conference recorded a moving 'eulogy' of a devout Christian in *The Spectator* of 2 October, 1946:

**In Memoriam
Elizabeth Mary Derrick**

"The whole Church is moved by the passing of Mrs C.H. Derrick. Camberwell especially feels the loss, as so much was done by this gracious, talented servant of God in our midst.

Elizabeth Mary Derrick was born at Wigan, Lancashire, in 1871, and was the eldest daughter of John and Elizabeth Sweetman, and grand-daughter of the Rev. Edward Sweetman, who was in Australia in the early 19th century. When about twelve years of age she came to Australia and lived in Richmond. After teaching in the State Education Department for some time, she married Mr Clement Derrick, who was a teacher.

Wherever they went, their time and talents were given to the Methodist Church. Mrs Derrick taught in the Sunday School, and many from Blackwood, Campbell's Creek, Horsham, Hampton and Camberwell, over a period of 30 years will remember her, and value the Book which she helped them to understand.

In 1924, Mrs Derrick began a women's Bible class on Tuesday afternoons and carried on for eighteen years, her teaching attracting hundreds of visitors in addition to a large number of members. Ill-health was the reason for her resignation as leader, but her intense interest in the class remained until the end.

Her firm belief in the teachings of the British Israel Federation was an inspiration, and to this movement she owed her interest in the Bible in relation to world affairs, and as a guide for daily life. Her work for the Kingdom of God overseas was reflected in her generosity to the W.A.O.M. (Women's Auxiliary to Overseas Missions) and the Sudan United Mission. She regarded the W.C.T.U. (Woman's Christian Temperance Union) as vital.

Her faith in the truth of the Word of God in history, prophecy, and in the Gospel message was pure and steadfast. This certainty and the personal interest she took in all with whom she came in touch were the secrets of her success. Hers was a life of deep devotion, of loving service, and the faithful use of ten talents. She passed to her reward on 1 September 1946.

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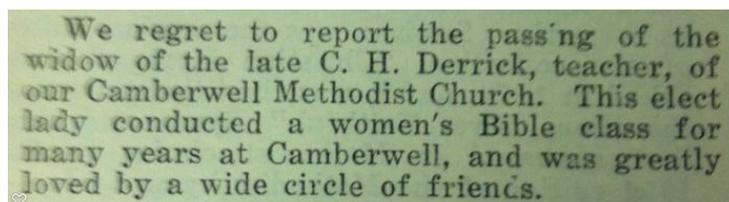
In addition to her lifelong commitment to the church, as indicated in the eulogy above, Elizabeth Derrick was renowned for her Bible classes on Tuesday afternoons. These were started by an initial group of seventeen (17) members.

As early as June 1925 (only a year after she started), it was reported in the Methodist press that:

"Among the most prominent week-day activities of the Camberwell Church is the ladies' Bible class, held on Tuesday afternoons. This class is fortunate in having a very gifted leader in Mrs. C. H. Derrick. Mrs Derrick's ability as a Bible class leader is largely responsible for the marked success that attends these gatherings, the attendance at which frequently reaches as many as 40 members. The class is held from 3 to 4pm, and every effort is made to adhere strictly to this time, so that the private responsibilities of members are not interfered with." (The Spectator)

She lead these lessons continuously and weekly for over 18 years. And as you will note below, her numbers grew from 40 per week to 60-70 ladies. So it was not surprising when it was reported on 20 May 1942 that: *"We regret to learn that the Bible Class conducted by Mrs. C. H. Derrick at Camberwell, with an average attendance of between 60 and 70 ladies, and which has provided a rich means of grace, now loses Mrs Derrick's leadership. She has been compelled to relinquish this work for health reasons. She has left a splendid record of service."*

Ultimately, and unfortunately, in September 1946, the women's Bible class lost its founder and most dedicated, committed and talented leader:



We regret to report the passing of the widow of the late C. H. Derrick, teacher, of our Camberwell Methodist Church. This elect lady conducted a women's Bible class for many years at Camberwell, and was greatly loved by a wide circle of friends.

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❖ ***The Memorial Window to Clement Herbert, and Elizabeth Mary Derrick***

In its edition of 30 April 1947, *The Spectator* announced that “a stained glass window is to be placed in the (Camberwell Methodist) Church as a memorial to the life and witness of Mr and Mrs C. H. Derrick.”

As events transpired, the window (pictured below), erected by members of the congregation and friends, was dedicated on 7 November 1948.



Within the window, which unfortunately cannot be seen clearly in the attached photo, in the ‘halo’ component, are the words “*If ye love me, keep my commandments*”.

It is strong on red (representing the blood of Christ, it indicates courage and self-sacrifice, serving as a reminder of Jesus’ suffering and sacrifice), violet (the union of wisdom and love), and gold (a symbol of God, and meaning spiritual achievement and all that is good).

Complementing the above quotation, immediately above the open book towards the bottom of the window is the matching biblical reference, ie. “*Gospel of St John 14Ch 15V*”.

It is, having read of their lives, a most fitting tribute.

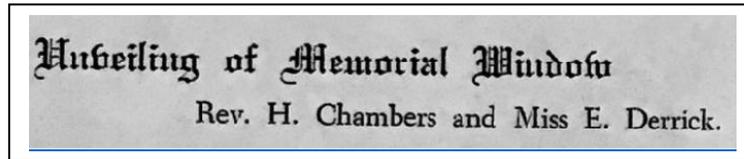
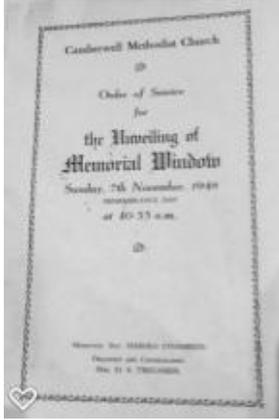
Immediately beneath the image is the inscription accompanying the window.



The Inscription reads: “*In Memory of CLEMENT HERBERT DERRICK Died 9th April 1945. Age 81 years, And his wife ELIZABETH MARY Died 1st Sept. 1946. Age 75 years. Erected by members of the congregation and friends.*”

As was usual, an Order of Service was issued to provide a record of the Unveiling event. It is reproduced in part below.

Readers might note that the official unveiling was undertaken by the Minister of the Church at the time, Rev. Harold Chambers, and Miss E Derrick. I am presuming (but am by no means certain, for reasons which will become apparent later), it is older daughter Edith, who had the honour.



❖ *A Temporary Pause in the ‘Derrick’ Story*

Clement Derrick died on 9 April 1945. His wife Elizabeth survived him by some 17 months, until she died on 1 September 1946.

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 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.

However, dear Reader, for the conclusion to the Derrick family history, I will have to ask for your for patience, as it will be the subject of a separate document attached to the upcoming edition of Kairos. I trust that the story outlining lives of the descendants of such an outstanding Church family will be worth your wait.

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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*.