

THE SHIELD FAMILY - TIME TO REMEMBER

As told by W. John & Barbara Shield

This is a short history of the Shield family beginning with James and Isabella Shield of Moggill which spans almost 170 years.



James and Isabella Shield and young boy on verandah of Rosehill, the family property at Moggill (SLQ neg. 124309)

The Shield family story begins with the hand-written memories of Mary Ann Wright, second daughter of James and Isabella Shield. These have kindly been shared with the Shield Family. These memories are the most detailed information I have of James and Isabella Shield's life before and immediately after coming to Australia in 1854.

The Shield Family lived at Gosforth, a village near Newcastle on Tyne, where coal mining was the main industry.

"There was a noble man who had an estate near us, and he had a very large orchard and the village children used to be allowed to take baskets and go and bring home as many rosie cheeked apples as we could carry. We used to have to walk a good distance to school. My mother had six of us then two girls and four boys, Tom (1841) was the eldest and a very clever boy." Ann born 1843, Mary Ann born 1846, James born 1848 Michael born 1851 and William Leonard born 1852 (this is our line).

The Shield family departed England on the vessel *Stambool* in 1854. After a rough three-month passage, they arrived in Sydney on 3 November 1854.¹ Isabella Shield's parents, Thomas, and Mary Ann Fryar (nee Young) had already travelled to Australia and settled in Newcastle, NSW. Thomas Fryar was an overseer at the mines in Newcastle, but sadly died in 1855 soon after the arrival of James and Isabella and their family.

After about three years in Newcastle James and Isabella and their children followed William Fryar (eldest son of Thomas and Mary Ann Fryar) to Moggill in Brisbane where William Fryar managed the mines.

So here begins the Shield family of Moggill memories.

James and Isabella arrival at Moggill in about 1856 saw a change of occupation. They bought a farm (possibly portion 95). There was a need for a store at Moggill, so James and Isabella started the first store in Moggill. *"Kept everything you could want both drapery and general stores"*. Soon after that they began to operate a Post Office here. Records show the Post Office work in 1867 earned them £12 per year. Mary Ann and one of her brothers would deliver the mail on horseback, twice weekly.

In the ten years after their arrival in Australia, James and Isabella had added a further three children to their family. Mark was born on 10 December 1857²; Leonard was born on 14 April 1861³ and Isabella on 11 September 1864.⁴

"There was very little furniture about then and our sitting room table was a large case covered with a tablecloth. When we got a few chairs, we thought we were just the thing". Mary Ann "never forgot when the first Governor was to arrive, Sir George Bowen, father and all his men had gone to the city to see him arrive, there was only mother and the children left. It was just dusk when we saw about one hundred Aborigines marching up at a little distance from the house they squatted down and the chief came up and asked mother for the boss. She said boss in bed, not wanting them to know he was not at home, so he said you give me flour, tea, sugar, beef. So, mother gave him flour, tea sugar and beef of which we had plenty as we used to kill our own. That night after the children were put to bed, we three, mother, my sister and myself sat up all

night. I can remember what a bright moonlight night it was. Early next morning the chief aboriginal came up to the house and said to mother, misses you want any stalk cut down, that was a field where corn had been grown. The corn was in the barn but the stalks were there, Mother said yes, they all set to pull them up by the roots and pile them into heaps ready to burn. Then the chief aboriginal came up thanked mother and they took their departure much to our relief.”

There was no school back then but plenty of work in the fields. *“We used to work hard all day then the whole family except mother and my elder sister would go into the barn and either husk corn cut potatoes for planting or if it was picking time we sorted out the little ones and the men bagged, and saleable ones, sewed them up ready to be taken to the wharf and be shipped to town. As we grew up our chief amusement, if it was a nice moonlight night we would ride to town to one of the chapels. The first Chapel at Moggill was made from slabs split from a tree. Any denomination could preach in it. Later my eldest brother would supply the pulpit, he was a very good preacher, and always got a crowded house.”*

A regular visitor to James and Isabella’s home was William Robert Twine. He *“used to come up to our house once a fortnight, the first break in our family came he married my elder sister Ann and they moved to Ipswich. William had a younger brother who was fond of me, but mother (Isabella) said ‘she did not want two loaves out of the one baking’.* Mary Ann eventually married Harry Wright in 1865. These memories written by Mary Ann Wright (nee Shield) were compiled in her 73rd year in 1918 and Mary Ann died 12 February aged 74 in 1919.⁵

James lived to 80 years of age and Isabella 85 years. They celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, 1 January 1891, and their diamond wedding anniversary on 1 January 1901. Both were memorable events, especially in that era.

The story continues with memories written by Dora Wright Purdon (granddaughter of James and Isabella) of Grandpa and Grandma’s (James and Isabella Shield) farm at Moggill

“These are my memories of holidays spent at the farm when I was five-year-old – 1896. My Grandparents would arise at daybreak, and it did not take long for the horse and buggy to be ready to set off for Brisbane. We loved that drive – little running creeks to cross and wallabies hopping across the road, the birds all awakening to sing to us, then the drive along the riverbank, just a dirt track, where Coronation Drive is today. Grandpa and Uncle Willie (William Leonard) in later years drove to the livery stables where the groom took charge, feeding and watering the horse. A cup of tea at Mcleods in Queen Street was first on the list before shopping”.

Mary Ann, Dora and the girls met Isabella at the station after they had travelled from Bald Hills by train. The Shield family would collect the horse and buggy and drive home to the farm, leaving town about mid-day. *“Sometimes we would visit Grandma and Grandpa by going to Riverview on the train, walk a short distance to the river bank, then mother (Mary Ann) would coo-ee across the river. The coo-ee brought an old man in a rowing boat from the house across the river.”* Uncle met us on the other side, and we drove a few miles to the farm.”

Dora’s memories span over two properties. The first at Portion 95 where James and Isabella lived and conducted the Post Office and general store and the second property from where the dairy operated, on portion 11 which was purchased in 1877.

“I thought my grandparents had a lovely farm home; it was built of slabs with quite a space left between each. The first fireplace consisted of an open fire with bars across and a large kettle suspended by a chain. Two tanks outside provided water. The shop was attached to the side of the house where large quantities of sugar, flour etc. were kept. Grandma loved to read and would sit in a chair with a window at her back. No daily newspapers. ‘The Queenslander’ contained the weekly news. The home was covered with a shingle roof. The kitchen was detached with a landing leading to the home in later years. A very large fig tree a short distance away was very handy for the fowls to roost.”

“Uncle Bill milked a herd of cows even though he only had one arm. His arm was severed at the elbow when he was cutting chaff. The dairy had shelves and they held flat tin dishes into which the milk was poured. The cream arose to the top and was then skimmed and put into a large wooden churn which was turned by Grandma until butter arrived, it was washed well and salted, then put into as cool a place as possible. The surplus butter and eggs were sold to a shop at Taringa”. The outbuildings, hayshed and barn were all whitewashed. The home farm used chiefly for grazing and dairying and the river farm being used for cultivation. The farm was about three miles away.” (This was possibly portions 83 and 84, close to the Ferry)

“Grandpa and Uncle Bill would be away all-day farming. My cousins and I would walk to meet them and climb onto the load of hay. The soil on the farm must have been very fertile, they always had good lucerne and crops. Grandpa fell off a load of hay at 81 years of age. He lived for some time sadly he passed away 19 January 1901.”

The story of the Shield Family of *Rosehill* Moggill continues with new chapters written by William John (known as John) and wife Barbara Rose Shield nee Clissold.



Eva Shield nee Beard, wife of William Leonard Shield (John & Barbara Shield private collection)



Eva with sons (from left) William Henry, Stanley James, Eric, Albert & Ian

William Leonard Shield, 4th son of James and Isabella, married Eva Beard from Bald Hills, Brisbane, May 1907. William Leonard had continued on the Moggill farm after his father's death in 1901. He was an energetic robust gentleman who was also a good farmer and was known to be a worthy timber getter. When William Leonard and Eva married, he was 55 years of age and Eva 24 years. Life was not easy, after just 11 years of marriage, William Leonard passed away leaving Eva with five boys to raise: -. William Henry was the oldest at just ten years, Stanley James eight, Eric six, Albert four and the youngest Ian just two years old.

As stated in William Leonard's last will, he left the farm to Eva. He also nominated his nephews William Leonard Shield and Arthur Shield as executors and trustees. William Leonard snr. instructs the Trustees as follows, "upon trust to pay to my wife Eva Shield during her life and widowhood the sum of One Hundred and Sixty Pounds per annum by monthly installments."

There is no doubt Eva led a heroic life. She was hard, tough and wiry but a gentle loving mother all the same. A tall lady with beautiful red hair. That wonderful red hair was passed on to some of her boys in varying shades of red/auburn. Eva continued at *Rosehill* farm for a time nevertheless periods were difficult. The house was old with a detached kitchen separated from the house proper with a landing. With an outside wood stove, butter cooler and meat safe.

Sunday morning was always Sunday School and church service. Eva was the Sunday Schol Superintendent.



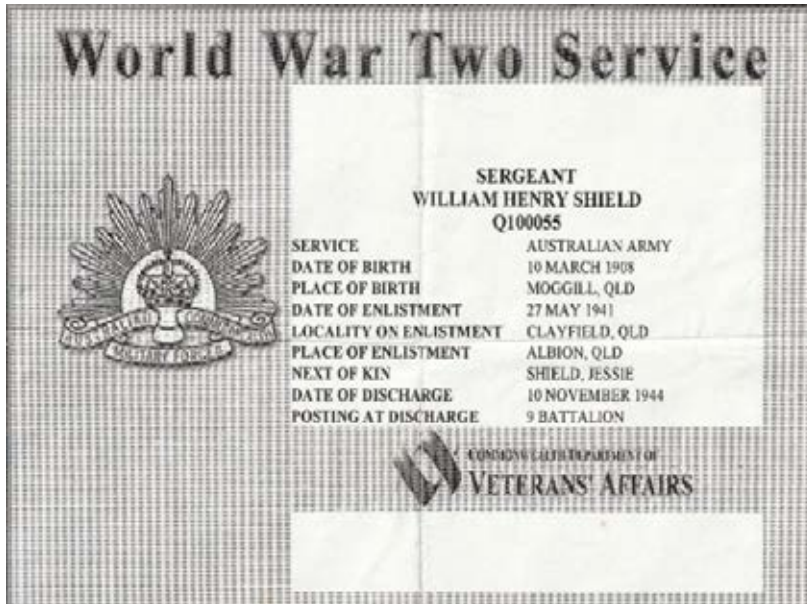
Moggill Methodist Church, c. 1931 (John & Barbara Shield private collection)



William Henry Shield, Sunday School Certificate signed by Eva June 1931 (John & Barbara Shield private collection)

Eva, William Henry and Ian appear to have remained at *Rosehill* Moggill until 1936 by which time Eva was 53 years of age, William Henry was 28 years and Ian 20. By this time Eric would be farming near the Moggill ferry, Albert (Bert) had begun teaching at Bundaberg and Jim (Stanley James) also had a teaching career in Queensland. Eva left the farm in about 1936/1937 and became a storekeeper at 606 Clayfield Road, Clayfield, Brisbane. William Henry and Ian worked with her as storekeepers. It was here in Clayfield and Wooloowin where William Henry met Jessie May Birkett.

The Second World War interrupted their courtship with William Henry joining the Army 27 May 1941. William Henry and Jessie were married on 27 December 1941.⁶ After training he was moved to New Guinea, but sadly, his mother Eva died on 1 February 1943, and William Henry was given compassionate leave. He contracted malaria in New Guinea which eventually saw him discharged 10 November 1944, medically unfit for service. Whilst in the Army he reached the rank of Sergeant, and he successfully completed a baking and bread making course.



William Henry Shield (affectionally known as Will) (John & Barbara Shield private collection)

Will and Jessie moved back to Moggill about 1945 with two children, John and Bronwyn Mary. They rented a house on Moggill Road near the ferry. This was necessary, the farmhouse in which Eva and the boys had lived had remained unoccupied for some considerable time and needed much repair. At this stage Will started a coal mine with Herbert Aitcheson in Priors Pocket Road. Sadly, whilst the Moggill coal was of good quality, the mine was too close to the Brisbane River and there was a cave-in. A story from the Brisbane Sunday Mail on 15 December 1946 stated;

CLAWED WAY FROM PIT: SAVED MATES

Three coal prospectors partially buried for nearly two hours beneath tons of rock and timber when a tunnel collapsed at Moggill yesterday were rescued by a 55-year-old farmer using a shovel and saw. A fourth man (Harold Brown), trapped when the roof caved in, clawed his way through the debris for 45 minutes before he freed himself. Bleeding from injuries he drove a truck 300 yards to get assistance from the farmer, Charles Peters, of Prior's Road, Moggill. The three injured men admitted to Ipswich General Hospital are: —

William Shields, 38, married, farmer, of Moggill, injuries to back, possible internal injuries. Herbert Clifford Aitcheson, 34, married, miner, of Moggill, fractured ribs, injuries to back, possible internal injuries; and James Clive Aitcheson, 39, married, miner, of Moggill, fractured ribs, possible internal injuries, abrasions and contusions to the face. Harold Brown, miner, of North Ipswich, was treated by the ambulance for lacerations to the left hand, abrasions to the face and body.

Roof Caved In

The men were members of a syndicate which has been prospecting each Saturday on Peters' property for about 12 months. They had excavated a drive about 20 yards deep. The roof caved in at about 10 a.m. and huge slabs of rock and heavy timber posts fell on the men. Shields was felled and covered by earth near the mouth of the tunnel and was unable to move. James Aitcheson was struck by falling timber and loose earth, and only his head was free. Herbert Aitcheson was jammed beneath a coal skip which was filled with falling stones and overturned on him.

Only Partly Covered

Brown was knocked down between the Aitcheson brothers but was only partially covered by loose earth. Peters, called from ploughing by Brown who had struggled free, shovelled earth for 30 minutes to free Shields. He slid down the tunnel with a saw to cut away timber three inches thick, which was jammed around James Aitcheson's body. After Aitcheson was rescued, a squad from the nearby Riverside Colliery extricated Herbert Aitcheson.

Mr. Peters said yesterday: 'The men talked to us between moans of pain while we worked to rescue them'.

John Shield can remember his father being in hospital for a very long time. The below photo is believed to be on portion 11 Moggill Road near the intersection with Livesay Road. The stumps were still visible when John was a boy.



Coal mine, possibly located on Portion 11 (SLQ neg. 69071)

When Will and Jessie returned to the farm, they began dairying and grew crops. Jessie helped with the milking and made butter like those before her. John remembers leaving school early to get home to help with the milking. He also remembers helping Will plough the paddocks with the draft horse pulling a walk-behind plough. The cream from the milk was taken to Indooroopilly Railway Station for passage to Brisbane. Cows were milked by hand. Will and Jessie had four boys and two girls. John, Bronwyn, Kay, Malcolm, Ross and Brian Phillip.

The coal mine accident was not Will's only severe accident on the farm. He was drilling for water when part of the drilling rig collapsed and ruthlessly crushed his hand. Once again John remembers that Will was laid up for quite some time.

Whilst working the farm and dairy, Will also worked as a cook at the Kenmore Repatriation Hospital. The morning shift at the hospital meant he had an afternoon shift milking. Will's shifts at the hospital meant Jessie would be milking in the morning with the help of some of the children. Kay was a huge help and Ross filled in before he went off to work as a mechanic at Kenmore. Bronwyn married Ronald Gibson and they had two boys and two girls. After her divorce from Ronald, she re-married Barry Askew and lived many happy years at Mitchelton. Bronwyn died in July 2007 and her ashes are scattered at Moggill Cemetery Memorial Gardens. Kay helped Will and Jessie on the farm until her marriage to Noel Johnston after which she moved to Caloundra; Kay had two boys. Malcolm married Marie Healy and they added a boy and a girl to the family. Ross Frank became a mechanic and married Marjan Snyder and added two boys and a girl. After their marriage Ross and his family turned to farming at Silverdale. Brian Phillip and his wife Elizabeth lived on a section of the farm for a time before moving further afield with their two girls.

John recalls moving from Wooloowin to Moggill. The house was in disrepair, therefore, Will and Jessie rented a house on Moggill Road near the intersection with Hawkesbury Road while the farmhouse was repaired. Bronwyn Mary had been added to the family by this time. After some time, the family eventually moved from the rental back to the Moggill Road/Weekes Road property.

At about five years of age John got appendicitis. Having had severe pain for some time, when Will arrived home, he rushed to Ipswich Hospital. With no Ferry at night, the trip was via Mt. Crosby. On arrival at Hospital, the appendix had burst, and John was rushed to surgery. He was a very sick young man. John remembers his first day at school. Mum (Jessie) walked him to the gate on Moggill Road near Livesay Road intersection and there they met another local, Betty Twine. Betty and John walked up the hill to school together. This was the start of another generation of Shield children attending Moggill School.

Cricket and tennis were the sports to play. The Moggill men were known in the district as keen cricketers, often winning the match. There were also many keen tennis players. Will Shield had an especially good splice to his serve. John notes that the tennis court at the school was made of ant bed which was sourced from the Shield farm. Eventually the school developed a Cricket pitch, again made of ant bed. Termites (white ants) are an awful pest, however their nests made great tennis and cricket pitch. The nests are broken down, crushed and rolled out. This is watered and rolled continuously for many days. The material making a fantastic playing surface. Historically ant bed nests were used as flooring in a house or

shed also used as an oven or ice chest. The ants made a wonderful home strong and well insulated. Mrs. Livesay used an ant bed oven at her farm not far from the Shield property. John was a member of Methodist Youth Group where Will Shield was a leader. John also played tennis and cricket. In his late teenage years, he joined a water-skiing group who used the Goodna reach of the Brisbane River. John was able to join them from the river end of Priors Pocket Road.

John & Barbara Clissold married in 1966 and built their home at 6 Weekes Road Moggill (now 91 Ghost Gum St Bellbowrie), which was a five-acre subdivision of the farm (lot 2 portion 13 part of the dairy farm). The young couple drew up plans for 3-bedroom, 1 bathroom and 1 car garage. A modest home where John carried out the excavations with the old Fergie tractor. With John acting as a laborer, when possible, they built the shell of a house and completed the interior when funds were available. No internal doors, no cupboards and the kitchen sink propped up with timber and a bucket under to catch the water. Just 14 months after their marriage they moved into their own home. Both Bradley and Jenelle became part of the Uniting Church of Moggill and the Moggill State School like their ancestors before them.

Barbara recalls "I remember ... I helped Will and Jessie with the milking. When our first child, Bradley, arrived in 1970, I would push the pram across the paddock to the dairy to help Jessie in the morning or afternoon milking. We made a swing in the dairy for Bradley to sit safely away from the movement of the cows. He had a wonderful time watching the cows come and go. The milk was stored in large milk cans and refrigerated. In the morning the full cans would be taken to the gate at Moggill Road for collection by the milk truck to be transported to the factory in Brisbane."

Daylight saving was introduced whilst I was milking, the cows were more difficult to get into the yard for milking as it was an hour early. Our daughter, Jenelle, arrived in 1972. Bradley and Jenelle had a wonderful life growing up on the farm at Moggill. They safely learned to ride bikes (both push and motorised) on the farm and our old VW was perfect to learn to drive a motor vehicle around the paddocks. Bradley learned to drive the tractor before he could comfortably reach the pedals. Jenelle learned to ride horses and would often ride bare-back around the district with her friends. Bradley and Jenelle attended the Moggill Uniting Church where their father, grandfather, great grandfather, and great-great-grandfather had attended before them.

Will and Jessie continued dairying until 1972 when a large portion of the farm was sold for the Bellbowrie development. Eventually, a new home beside the Fig Tree (of course) was built by Bunny Clissold (Barbara's Father) with all the modern conveniences however it would be sometime before Jessie would allow the alcove of the wooden stove to be demolished. What a blessing that decision became, during the 1974 devastating floods, Jessie used that stove to cook many roast dinners, cakes, pies, and the like for anyone in need. They retired to Caloundra to live next door to daughter Kay and her family.

Will passed away 1988 and Jessie 1993. The ashes of both are at Moggill Cemetery. John placed a sandstone step from the farm for the mounting of the plaques.



W. John & Barbara about 1988 (John & Barbara Shield private collection)



Plaques for William Leonard, William Henry and Jessie May Shield (John & Barbara Shield private collection)

The Bellbowrie development continued to expand. During the late 1990's, John and Barbara regrettably sold the last remaining portion of the old dairy farm and moved to a cattle and cropping property in the South Burnett region.



6 Weeks Road Moggill (John & Barbara's home)
(John & Barbara Shield private collection)



Paddock between 6 & 28 Weeks Road Moggill (John & Barbara Shield private collection)



28 Weekes Road, Moggill (Will & Jessie's home) (John & Barbara Shield private collection)



28 Weekes Road, house paddock during the 1974 Floods (John & Barbara Shield private collection)

¹ New South Wales, Australia, Assisted Immigrant Passenger List 1828-1896

² Birth Deaths & Marriages Qld Reference 1858/B/515

³ Birth Deaths & Marriages Qld Reference 1861/B/585

⁴ Birth Deaths & Marriages Qld Reference 1864/B/3107

⁵ Birth Deaths & Marriages Qld Reference 1919/B/28838

⁶ Birth Deaths & Marriages Qld Reference 1941/B/46741