

Maria Mabel (Mary) ASHBY, nee McLEAN & James Edward ASHBY

Biography as published in 1995

Maria Mabel (Mary) McLean born 27/10/1891 at Beulah, Victoria.

Parents : Maria Elizabeth McLean (nee Kruger) & Charles Soward McLean

Grandparents : Anna Soward McLean (nee Janeway) & Archibald McLean

G-Grandparents : Christina McLean (nee McPhee) & Donald McLean

Her early life was at Beulah and she was familiar with Rainbow, Jeparit and Ouyen. Picnics at Lake Albacutya and knowing the late Prime Minister Robert Menzies were amongst her memories, As the 2nd eldest daughter she was involved in much cleaning and cooking for the family. In 1912 (she was aged 21) the family moved to Kongorong in the S.E. of South Australia. Here she met and married

Marriage: to **James Edward Ashby** (b. 30/11/1889) and at first they lived in the old Ashby house at the foot of Mt Schank (now a tourist attraction and tea rooms).

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From Di Facey

"When the family first moved to Kongorong they built two rooms. As the family grew two more and a laundry were added. Once the boys grew older a room was built on at the back for them. At weekends all the boys of the district would camp there and when the door opened in the morning no-one knew how many would come out Hoods and Chants were regulars Maria (Mary) Ashby always had a big breakfast for everyone.

She went away every year (to hospital for the next baby) and Ted's sister Ollie would take over. The kids loved to play in the Swamp and Ollie kept busy running after them to ensure their safety. "Doog" was born at Mt Schank. "Eakie" at home, the remainder at Mt Gambier.

All the boys said you never took a day off from school. If you did, you were half dead. Their mother always kept the castor oil ready and if you saw her coming, you were halfway to school. Not only her own, but Old Schol the schoolmaster would send a sick child to Mrs Ashby. One dose of castor oil and they never returned. She would grab you by the nose with one hand, the spoon in the other and down it would go.

The kids also had to take a laxative called Cent-a-leaves (still available). It smelled like tea with milk and put Viv off milk in his tea for life. Another of Mary's remedies was to burn sulphur on the stove and administer it by mouth. The sulphur drugs came in at the beginning of W.W.2. Herb. said "Sulphur tablets cured anything. As an antibiotic it was the most used drug until penicillin was available"

Maria (Mary) made tasty sheep's head soup in the biggest pot you ever saw and there was always enough for the next day. The Ashbys were better off than most during the Depression. They had their dairy products. rabbits, fish caught by father Ted and the garden. Jean recalls eating carrot tops when greens were scarce. "Warley" remembers rhubarb every day topped up with sago to make it go further. Viv remembers digging potatoes and Chas did the rounds of the rabbit traps every morning that were set around the pumpkins and potatoes and one morning they found him with his toes caught in a trap. Chou moullier was grown for cattle. Rabbiting kept them. sold at 3 pence (3 cents) a pair. Rabbit stews, rabbit pies. and as most of Kongorong, a rabbit diet with pumpkin and potatoes, melon pies and melon jam."

Their two daughters were responsible for minding their younger siblings and daily Harriet had to bake a dripping cake for the boys' tea. The family was well known for its sporting ability and in 1956 there was a cricket team entirely of Ashbys. The 50th wedding anniversary of Maria (Mary) and James Ashby was marked by some verses the family composed concerning the 10 children each of whom had a nickname. These were headed "Best Wishes" from Zeke, Chook, Gin, Dig, Wonky, Dud, Timmer, Eakie, Wylie, and Teaks. No date was appended but it must have been c. 1964.

"May we wish you the best of fifty years,
And say we are sorry if we caused many tears,
We know you remember our mistakes and our games.
but do you remember all our nicknames?
Donald Edward comes first. eldest son of the clan.
he kept his nickname to a grown man.
He started as "Doogy". it sounds rather weak.
now he is Doug, though more often "Old Zeke".
Sit still, here it comes. Hullo Doris Jean.
I bet you wish you could not be seen!
Your first nickname "Ann" not bad, but then.
why in the world did you get "Chook" and "Old Hen"?
"Dimps" is a name that belongs to a fairy,
this title belongs to one Harriet Mary,
Covered in grease from toes up to the chin
so they rechristened her with the name of "Gin".
Colin James is a name of which to be proud.
he was never called so. for crying out loud.
At first it was "Digger" and then he was "Dig",
there's no need to grunt, it could have been Pig.
Now we have come to the one we call "Chas",
Namely Kenneth Charles, it's a nice name he has.
it would be nasty to say he was ever a donkey.
but as a child he was always called "Wonky".
Oh! goodness alive, here comes Herbert Hector,
we consider him our great lord protector.
His nickname was "Dud". a name with a pull,
but we remember him best as the old "Scrubbull".
I'm running in circles, my mind getting dimmer.
has anyone heard of someone called "Trimmer"?
Could it be Bertram Vivian, I feel at a loss.
I am sure I remember another name "Joss".
Hark! listen a while. I hear something creaky,
how silly of me, it is only fat "Eakie".
Meet Murray John, it's his name by the way,
but he's always been "Eakie" and "Eakie" he'll stay
Arthur Maxwell Keith, Mother thought him the lot,
gave him three names like scraping the pot
Oh! what a waste, he might have been Charlie.
the only tag he has got is "Wylie" or "Warley",
I must mention our late brother. Roland Arnold and say.
how we all wish he were with us today.
His nickname was "Teaks". may his soul in peace rest,
but if he were here he would wish you the best.
We have "Doogie" and "Digger", "Ann", "Chook" and "Old Hen".
then "Dimps". "Gin" and "Wonkie". whose real name is Ken.

Here comes "Dud" remember. the old "Scrub~bul|".
and also fat "Eakie" who likes to get lull.
Pitter Patter, it's "Trimmer" who was also named "Joss",
"Teaks", also "Warley" whose three names were a loss
Last but not least. just by a whisker.
remember Dad? how we kids called you Mister
it we don't hold the nickname record. we're near.
I'll wager my lot no one has names so queer,
Theres one more thing and this is a must.
I dare not repeat what the neighbours called usl... . . .

Deaths:

Maria (Mary) Mabel Ashby (nee McLean) in her 90th year on 9/5/1981.
James Edward Ashby aged 77 years on 15/4/1967.
Both interred at Mt Gambier Cemetery

CHILDREN (10):

1. Donald Edward Ashby born 21/5/1915. Married: Gwen Millhouse. [See biographies 5100](#)
2. Doris Jean Ashby born 19/7/1916. Married to Neville Edward Deane Smith. [See biographies 5101](#)
3. Harriet (Mary) Ashby b. 12/7/1917. Married: Rudolph Stephen Milstead. [See biographies 5102](#)
4. Colin James Ashby born 16/12/1918 at Kongorong. Married: Muriel Ethel Keckwick. [See biographies 5103](#)
5. Kenneth Charles Ashby, born 21/9/1920 at Kongorong. Married: Melba Blackmore. [See biographies 5104](#)
6. Herbert Hector Ashby b. 12/10/1921 at Kongorong. Marriage to Olive (Heather) Hancock. [See biographies 5105](#)
7. Bertram Vivien (Viv.) Ashby b. 12/6/1925. Married Betty (Jean) Kerr. [See biographies 5106](#)
8. Murray John Ashby b. 22/2/1927 at Kongorong. Married: Margaret Edge. [See biographies 5107](#)
9. Arthur Maxwell Keith Ashby b. 4/8/1934 at Kongorong. Married: June Elsie Chamberlain. [See biographies 5108](#)
10. Roland Arnold Ashby b. 16/6/1938. Married Erica Dawn Jackway. [See biographies 5109](#)

- SOURCE : This biography is an extract from "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" which was published in 1995 – page 433 to 445.
- COLONIALISTS : Christina and Donald McLean and their ten children migrated from Argyllshire to South Australia in 1837. This was in the earliest years of the colony. The McLeans initially settled near Adelaide where they grew the first wheat crop in SA. Then in about 1840 they pioneered the Strathalbyn area. There are now well over 20,000 descendants spread across Australia and elsewhere.
- CHANGES : Please contact us with additions, corrections or suggestions about any part of this family tree.
- CONTACT : Visit our website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com or Strathalbyn Museum phone 08 8536 2656 to discover more about your family –and about privacy and copyright.