

Thelma Ruby THYER, nee HEAD & M K (Kenneth) THYER

Biography as published in 1995

Thelma Ruby Head b. 13/9/1908 at Kingston S.A.

Parents : Mary Christina Head (nee McLean) & Edwin H Head

Grandparents : Maryanne McLean (nee McIntyre) & Hughie McLean

G-Grandparents : Christina McLean (nee Black) & Hugh (the elder) McLean

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

Married: M. K. (Kenneth) Thyer of Angaston.

Occupation; Farmer.

Retired to: Nuriootpa, S.A. from Eden Valley,

Death: Thelma died at Adelaide Aged 62 years in 1970.

History: Contributed by her daughter. Jill Hadley.

"Thelma Ruby Head was the second of three girls born to Edwin and Mary Christina Head (nee McLean) on September 13, 1909. The first few years in Kingston, South East, were happy and carefree but this did not last. Edwin died in 1919 of the great influenza epidemic contracted through the kind act of bringing the doctor to the town. Tragedy struck again a few years later when the youngest daughter, Jean, died from a haemorrhage.

Young Thelma was at this time attending Naracoorte High School which was fairly unusual for a young girl who normally would have left school to help her widowed mother provide family support. But Thelma had won a scholarship and so every day travelled the long distance back and forth by train.

1925 saw Thelma boarding at a girls' hostel in Adelaide whilst attending Teachers College. Her older sister, Eileen, was working in Alice Springs and her mother had by this time remarried William Doyle of Kingston.

Thelma's first teaching appointment at the tender age of 18 was to a small one teacher school on the West Coast of South Australia. It took her a while to become adjusted to living in cramped conditions with a family in the wattle and daub structure they called home. Going to the outdoor loo was a hazardous adventure with redbacks under the toilet seat and elsewhere. However, Thelma loved the freedom and autonomy of being able to close the school for the local race day or of being able to take the children on an all day picnic, even though she was required to sign all official correspondence with "I am, Your obedient servant.."

Other teaching appointments included Norton Summit where she lived in the local hotel and became friendly with young Tom Playford and then to Angaston in the Barossa Valley. However, it was the appointment to the small Eden Valley school that was her undoing! There she met the redheaded sportsman and farmer, Ken Thyer. She was attracted by his energy and dashing style and proceeded in due course to marry him. Their five year engagement saw Ken building their home on the property taken over from his parents. Sheep were the main asset on this relatively small but highly productive holding.

As the years went by, three children were born - David, Bruce and Jill. Their mother insisted that they should be well educated and all went on to complete Tertiary courses.

Thelma did not really like life on the land and chose not to work much outside the house. She became very involved in community and school activities and was very well liked and respected. Unfortunately ill health dogged her life and finally she succumbed to heart disease in 1973.

Although this was more than twenty years ago, Thelma is still remembered with great fondness by family and friends for her free thinking spirit, her sense of fun and life, and for her flashing green eyes."

Children:

1. David Hill Thyer b. 1942, Married: Jill Pitcher. Occupation: Earthmoving business at Old Noarlunga, S.A. Residence: Old Noarlunga, S.A. Children – Sara & Michael
2. Carolyn (Jill) Thyer. Married: Peter Hadley. Residence: Mt Osmond, S.A. Children: Jonathon & Louise.
3. Lancelot (Bruce) Thyer b. 1946. Married: Kylie Rofe-Mitchell. His Occupation: Teacher, Urrbrae Agricultural School. Children: Kate & Luke.

- SOURCE : This biography is an extract from "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" which was published in 1995 – page 212.
- 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.