

## **ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD**, Daughter

Birth: 6 Aug 1836 Place: Norfolk Plains  
Baptism: 30 Oct 1836 Place: Longford, C.E.  
Death: 20 Jan 1909 Place: Westbury Age: 72  
Burial: 22 Jan 1909 Place: Westbury Cemetery,  
C.E. [No Headstone]  
Occupation: Domestic duties  
Residence: Marsh Paddock; Westbury  
Father: GEORGE McDONALD (~1801-1878)  
Mother: DELIA FURNER [ALIAS GILLAM] (~1815-1900)

Also called Betsy.

Witnesses to marriage were Moore Simmons [brother-in-law] and Benjamin Laws. Marriage not in Tasmanian Pioneers Index. Refer C.E. register at Westbury Church.

"Betsy sinking slowly. Will be home on Thursday if things are the same. Alice better coming home this week. John and Ada quite well also myself. Yours etc. F. Sturzaker. Westbury 24/11/08" [Post Card addressed to Mr John Sturzaker, Stowport, Via Burnie.] Cause of death was Cerebral Haemorrhage and Hemiplegia. Dr Anderson, Westbury. Informant of death was L. Jordan, Undertaker's son, Westbury. [RGD 843] See Examiner 22/26 January 1909 for death and obit. Wrote Will 8 November 1908. Left all her estate to her daughter Delia Katherine Sands. [1929 AD960/1/54 407 17774]

**Spouses:** **JOHN LEITH**, 5G Uncle  
Birth: 15 Jul 1824 Place: Westbury  
Baptism: 18 Feb 1832 Place: Norfolk Plains, C.E. Age: 7  
Death: 18 Jul 1894 Place: Westbury Age: 70  
Burial: 20 Jul 1894 Place: Westbury Cemetery, C.E. [No Headstone]  
Occupation: Labourer (1855 1894) Farmer  
Father: WILLIAM ELLIOTT LEITH (~1773-1852)  
Mother: ALICE ROBSON (~1797-1889)  
Marriage: 29 Mar 1853 Place: St Andrew's, C.E., Westbury, by Lic.

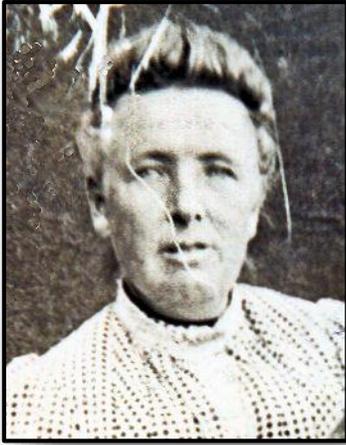
Birth date taken from C.E. Parish of Norfolk Plains Baptism Register entry No. 65. Parents were William Elliott Leith and Alice Blackstone, Westbury, Settler.

Signatures to Westbury Church of England subscriptions 1838: John Leith, Westbury, one and a half miles. Shipping Intelligence: Arrivals 17 April 1852 Steamer *Warrata*, 300 tons, J.K. Freyer, master from Melbourne...J. Murray, J. Leith... [Examiner Saturday 17 April 1852]

Cause of death was senile decay. Informant of death was H. Jordan, Undertaker, Westbury. [RGD 893]  
See Examiner 19 July 1894 for death notice. Will dated 26 June 1893.

Children: WILLIAM GEORGE (Did not marry) (1854-1916)  
HARRIETT (1855-1913)  
THOMAS (Did not marry) (1857-1900)  
CHARLES (Died as infant) (1859-1860)  
ANNIE ELIZABETH (1861-1921)  
MARIA (Did not marry) (~1864-1920)  
ELIZABETH (Did not marry) (1865-1935)  
DELIA KATHERINE (1868-1948)  
ELIZA (Died as infant) (1871-1871)

**E**lizabeth McDonald was born at Norfolk Plains in 1836, the third child and second daughter of George and Delia McDonald. She was *Betsy* or *Bessie* to the family and known to her coastal nieces and nephews despite becoming isolated from them by remaining in Westbury when the rest of the family moved to the Leven.



When about twelve years of age she went into the Westbury district with her parents who took up their residence at Exton, on a farm through which the railway line runs, and which was later owned (1909) by Mr H. Martin.<sup>1</sup>

She married John Leith in the parish church Westbury on 29 March 1853. John Leith was a brother of Jane Sturzaker (who was mother-in-law to her sister Frances), and a son of William Elliott Leith.

John's father, W.E. Leith, settled on his land grant in 1824. He was only half a mile from the township of Westbury which was officially founded as a convict depot in 1828. A detachment of troops of the 63rd Regiment of Foot, commanded by Lieutenant H. Dexter, were garrisoned there to keep law and order.

John Leith was one of the many tenant farmers on the *Quamby* estate who signed the address presented to Lady Dry in the year 1875,

on her departure from *Quamby*.<sup>2</sup>

He is listed in the first of the Valuation Rolls (1858) as occupying a hundred-acre farm at Quamby Bend, the property of Richard Dry. From 1860 to 1868 he farmed one hundred and thirty eight acres at *Quamby*. The acreage increased slightly to one hundred and forty six acres in 1869.

*Quamby*, on the Meander River, was first settled by Richard Dry (senior) in 1828 and it was he who commissioned the building of *Quamby House* which was constructed over the next eight years.

Richard Dry (junior), son of the first owner, and the first native-born knight of the Australian colonies, was landlord to John Leith.

John would have known *Quamby* in its hey-day when 'peacocks strutted the front lawns and deer roamed the parklands'. (Sir Richard was also the first native-born Premier of Tasmania.) John's sister Mrs Jane Sturzaker was first married to Charles Dry, a kinsman of Richard Dry senior, and the two brothers-in-law may well have been familiar with the property.

In Sir Richard's day a large part of the estate was leased to tenant farmers who would have assembled each quarter day to pay their rents and their respects to their illustrious landlord.

With the death of Sir Richard, without heirs, in 1869 the property was gradually broken up and dispersed to absentee landlords who no longer leased to the old tenants, turning the property into sheep and cattle runs. In Sir Richard's time the estate directly and indirectly employed and maintained about a thousand people.<sup>3</sup>

J. & J. Phelps of New South Wales owned John's farm in 1876 and the following year the family moved into Westbury, to a cottage in William Street which they rented from Benjamin Laws.

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<sup>1</sup> Examiner: 26 January 1909 pg5. Obituary.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Mercury: 17 November 1883 pg 3. *Through Tasmania* No. 13.

John purchased the cottage sometime between January 1884 and January 1885 and it remained in the family long after his death in 1894.

By the early 1880s Westbury was in the doldrums because of this trend towards cattle and sheep at the cost of people. Houses and stores in the once flourishing town were empty and the by-roads overgrown with briar and gorse.

A visitor to Westbury in 1885 said of the town:

*It is very pretty, but alas very quiet...the clearing of tenants from 3 or 4 estates in the vicinity of the township, and converting these grand tracts of land which were made by god for man to live and thrive upon into sheepwalks and cattle runs, have alas! brought this change for the worse on once prosperous Westbury.*<sup>4</sup>

Elizabeth and John were unfortunate in that three of their children, the two unmarried daughters and one of their sons, were committed to the Asylum for the Insane. A son, Charles, died in infancy and their youngest child, Eliza, died at the age of three weeks.

Elizabeth was widowed in 1894 and died 20 January 1909 at the age of 72 years.<sup>5</sup>

*WESTBURY. The funeral of the late Mrs. John Leith, a resident of 60 years, which took place at Westbury, was well attended, considering the inclement state of the weather. The funeral service was conducted in the church and at the grave by the Rev. R. Weld-Thomas (Anglican). The deceased, who was 72 years of age, had resided in the Westbury district upwards of 60 years. She was the second eldest daughter of the late Mr. George McDonald, and was born in the Longford district in the year 1837. When about 12 years of age she came into the Westbury district with her parents, who took up their residence at Exton, on the farm through which the railway line runs now. The deceased was married to Mr. John Leith on March 24, 1853. Her husband, the late Mr. John Leith, who pre-deceased her 14 years ago, was one of the many tenant farmers of Quamby who signed the address presented to Lady Dry in the year 1875 on her departure from Quamby. During her widowhood, the deceased lady lived a very retired life. She was well-known throughout the Westbury district, and highly respected. She leaves a family of one son and five daughters, three of whom are married, viz.; Mrs. Breward, Mrs. Purton, and Mrs. Sands.*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Examiner: 3 April 1885 pg 3.

<sup>5</sup> When Bessie died the family received a condolence card from Capt T.W. McDonald of New Zealand.

<sup>6</sup> Mercury: Wednesday 27 January 1909 pg 2.

## **WILLIAM GEORGE LEITH**, Grandson

Birth:	13 Feb 1854	Place: Westbury
Baptism:	12 Mar 1854	Place: St Andrew's C.E., Westbury
Death:	8 Sep 1916	Place: New Norfolk Asylum Age: 62
Burial:	11 Sep 1916	Place: Old Cemetery, New Norfolk
Occupation:	Labourer (1913) Prospector (1916)	
Residence:	Westbury	
Father:	JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)	
Mother:	ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD (1836-1909)	

Informant of birth was father, John Leith, farmer, Westbury. [RGD 1247]

Declared to be of unsound mind 11 August 1913 at the age of 59 years. Was single and a labourer in destitute circumstances. Was of Black Sugar Loaf but formerly at Stowport. His nearest relatives were named as Delia Sands (Mt Farrell), Annie Purton (Frankford), both sisters, and Charles Breward, brother-in-law (Frankford). The cause of his affliction was supposed to be hereditary. He was not subject to Epilepsy, was not suicidal, nor was he dangerous to others. His manner and conversation were deemed to be not those of a sane person and he had delusions. Two sisters were inmates at New Norfolk at the time he was admitted. He was in poor bodily condition when admitted.

Cause of death was broncho-pneumonia at age 62. Informant of death was A. Reggett, Messenger, Mental Diseases Hospital, New Norfolk. [RGD 605]

Did not marry. No known issue.

**W**illiam George was the eldest son of Elizabeth and John Leith and would no doubt have been named for his paternal and maternal grandfathers. He was born at Westbury on 13 February 1854.

Very little is known about the life of Willie. Like his brother Thomas he never married and tended to wander all over the north of the state, working as a farmer, bushman, contractor, labourer, and prospector, at various times.

Between 1886 and 1893 he appears in the Electoral Rolls as a farmer-owner and occupier of fifty acres of land at the Black Sugar Loaf (now Birralelee).

After 1893 he seems to have moved on to other areas, showing up in the Electoral Rolls of 1910 as a labourer in the Central Castra district. In the early 1900s he competed in chopping carnivals.

In 1913 he was living with his sister and brother-in-law at Birralelee and working as a contractor.

He was committed to the Asylum at New Norfolk on 11 August 1913 suffering from a dementia condition; he was aged 59 years, a labourer, formerly of Stowport, and in destitute circumstances. He suffered from the delusion that he had sent a regiment to the South African War and stationed them five miles apart in such a way as to overcome the enemy. His brother-in-law, Charles Breward, stated that he was continually picking up useless pieces of metal believing he had discovered a gold mine.<sup>7</sup>

At first there was an improvement in his condition but the delusions returned and he became suicidal, his condition becoming progressively worse until his death.

He died at the Asylum on 8 September 1916, and is buried with his two sisters at the old New Norfolk Cemetery.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Patient Records New Norfolk Hospital for the Insane: HSD285/1/1578-1698

<sup>8</sup> AOT: Asylum Records Register No. 3338.

## **HARRIETT LEITH**, Granddaughter

Birth: 11 Jul 1855 Place: Westbury  
Death: 20 Jul 1913 Place: Black Sugar Loaf Age: 58  
Burial: 22 Jul 1913 Place: Westbury Cemetery, C.E. [No Headstone]  
Occupation: Domestic Servant (1881)  
Residence: Westbury; Calstock, Deloraine; Exton; Deloraine; Black Sugar Loaf  
Father: JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)  
Mother: ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD (1836-1909)

Informant of birth was father, John Leith, labourer, Westbury. Mother was Harriett Leith, formerly McDonald. [RGD 1595] Register entries missing for period when may have been baptised at St Andrew's, Westbury. Witnesses to marriage were William George Leith [brother] and Maria Leith [sister]. Death not found. Possibly not registered. Reason for this not known.

Suffered from Rheumatoid Arthritis. Confined to wheelchair for many years.

### **Spouses: CHARLES WILLIAM BREWARD**

Birth: 4 Dec 1856 Place: Marsh Paddock  
Baptism: 6 Feb 1857 Place: Methodist Chapel, Westbury  
Death: 26 Oct 1948 Place: St John's Park Home for the Aged, Hobart Age: 91  
Burial: 28 Oct 1948 Place: Westbury Cemetery, C.E. [No Headstone]  
Occupation: Labourer (1881 1882 1885 1891) Farmer (1888 1890 1891 1892 1896)  
Pensioner (1948)  
Father: WILLIAM BREWARD  
Mother: MARY ANN SMITH (MOORE)  
Marriage: 23 Feb 1881 Place: St Andrew's C.E., Westbury, by Lic.

Birth not registered. See Baptism Westbury Methodist for details of birth. Father came from Derbyshire and mother came from Hull, England. [Judy Hall]

Married as Charles "Brewer". Informant of death was C.I. Millington, Funeral Director.

Cause of death was chronic bronchitis and broncho-pneumonia. [RGD 947]

"DEATHS BREWARD-On October 26, 1948, at St. John's Park, Charles, loving husband of Harriett Breward (deceased) and loving father of Tom (deceased), Leslie (Birrlee), May (Mrs. Reed, Frank-ford), Louisa (Mrs. Donald, Exton), Elizabeth, Ada and Willie (deceased), and late of Birrlee. In his 93rd year. (Suddenly).

FUNERAL NOTICES BREWARD-The funeral of the late Charles Breward, late of Birrlee, will arrive at St. Andrew's Church, Westbury, on Thursday at 2 o'clock, when, after a short service, interment will take place in the English Cemetery." [Examiner 27 October 1948 p10 c1]

For more details on this family refer to "Our Little Piece of Birrlee" by Judy Hall.

Children: SABINA ELIZABETH [Tot] (Did not marry) (1881-1944)  
MARGARET ANN [MARIA LOUISA] [Loui] (1882-1955)  
LINDA MAY [May] (1885-1959)  
ADA ANNIE (1888-1933)  
WILLIAM HENRY CHARLES (Died as infant) (1890-1891)  
THOMAS JOHN [Tom] (Did not marry) (1892-1945)  
ALBERT LESLIE [Les] (1896-1972)

**A**n unnamed female child was registered at Westbury in July 1855. Unfortunately the baptism records of the Church of England have been vandalised for this period and so it must be a matter of deduction that this eldest daughter is Harriet.

Harriet married Charles Brewer (later Breward at St Andrew's Church, Westbury on 23 February 1881 in the presence of her brother William George and her sister Maria. Harriet and Charles had seven children. At the time of their marriage Charles was working at *Calstock*, the Deloraine property of John Field. Their first child, Sabina Elizabeth, was born there later in the same year.

There were many moves between 1881 and 1891 when the family took up their own selection at Black Sugar Loaf where they lived in a tiny cottage with their ever-growing family. They led a hard life with Charles working for others by day and labouring well into the night to develop his own land.

Sadly there were many tragic moments in the lives of Harriet and Charles. Sabina, at the age of three, fell into a fire and was severely burnt and was unable to hear or speak for the rest of her life. Baby Ada was accidentally thrown from her pram and suffered head injuries from which she never fully recovered. The eldest son, who was born in 1890, died two months later from Whooping cough.

Harriett was crippled with arthritis and for the last few years of her life was bedridden. The only record of her death is an entry in her daughter-in-law's Bible, stating she died on 20 July 1913, and the burial record of St Andrews Church at Westbury.

After suffering several strokes Charles could no longer be cared for at home and was admitted to St John's Park Infirmary in 1943 where he lived until his death in 1948 at the age of 91 years.

## THOMAS LEITH, Grandson

Birth:	18 Jun 1857	Place: Westbury
Baptism:	10 Aug 1857	Place: St Andrew's C.E., Westbury
Death:	3 Oct 1900	Place: Black Sugar Loaf Age: 43
Burial:	5 Oct 1900	Place: Westbury, C.E. [No Headstone]
Occupation:	Prospector; Labourer (1900)	
Residence:	Black Sugar Loaf (1899/1900)	
Father:	JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)	
Mother:	ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD (1836-1909)	

Informant of birth [as unnamed male child] was father, John Leith, farmer, Westbury. Mother was Elizabeth Leith, formerly McDonald. [RGD 2089]

Accidentally killed while felling a tree. Inquest. "Sad Fatality. Inquest held at Berridale Hotel today touching the death of Thomas Leith, Black Sugar Loaf... Killed by tree falling on him...Axe fell out of handle and was accidentally killed while felling a tree at the Black Sugar Loaf on the 3rd October 1900... Check Examiner 05 October 1900 and Westbury Council Register]

Did not marry. No known children

**T**he third child born to the Leith's was born on 18 June 1857 and christened Thomas. Like his father he led a very quiet life, working at various times as a farmer, labourer, and prospector.

Early in 1880 he contracted to purchase fifty acres of crown land at Black Sugar Loaf but does not appear to have completed the purchase.

Tom lived on the property for the next twenty years working with his brother-in-law Charles Breward, farming and working as a bushman.

He was actively engaged in the search for gold and on one occasion he hurried into the house at Birralee holding up a small glass bottle as he came. 'I found it Harriet, I found it', he said, showing her the gold pieces inside the bottle.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately Tom never lived to show anyone else where he found the gold. He left the bottle at the house and some days later went out alone to split a tree for palings and was accidentally killed, being found much later by young Jimmy Ginn.<sup>10</sup>

An inquest was held and at the time a policeman from Glengarry came to the house and collected the bottle of gold. That was the last the family ever saw of Tom's gold discovery.<sup>11</sup>

*SAD FATALITY. WESTBURY, Thursday. An inquest was held at the Berriedale Hotel at 3 p.m. to-day, before Mr. J. M. Griffin, Coroner, and a jury of seven, of whom Mr. H. Barrett was foreman, touching the death of Thomas Leith, of Black Sugar Loaf. Edward Maley gave evidence to the effect that he, in company with the deceased and James Ginn, went into the bush to a tree the deceased was going to fell. Deceased started cutting the tree down, and witness and James Ginn left him there at about half-past 9 o'clock. Witness returned at about half-past 1 o'clock, and found deceased lying partly on his left side. He was bleeding from the mouth and nose, and*

<sup>9</sup> Hearsay: Harry Sands, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> Examiner: Friday 5 October 1900 pg 5.

<sup>11</sup> Hearsay: Judy Hall.

*his shoulder appeared to be knocked out. He was quiet dead. James Ginn corroborated the former part of the statement made by the previous witness. Witness did not return to the tree after leaving at half past 9, but came to Westbury. Trooper M. Lynch said he received a report that a fatal accident had happened to Thomas Leith. He visited the scene of the accident, and saw deceased lying partly on his left side with a wound over the left eye, his shoulder injured, and a large bruise across the left thigh. The axe he had been using was stained with blood, and lying on the opposite side of the tree. The tree had fallen into the fork of another tree, and one of the forks had evidently struck the deceased. Dr. B. Anderson said he had examined the body of deceased. There were several wounds, amongst which was a contused wound over the left eye, which extended across the left side of the head, and a large bruise across the thigh. The wounds were such as would be produced by a blow from a heavy piece of timber, and were sufficient to cause death. The finding of the jury was that deceased, Thomas Leith, was accidentally killed while felling a tree at the Black Sugar Loaf on the third day of October, 1900.<sup>12</sup>*

Harry Sands remembers his mother talking about the gold found by his Uncle Tom. She said he found the gold at the Paling Flats, which are at the junction of Westbury Road and the road to Launceston.

Thomas was 43 years of age at the time of his death, never married, and had no known issue.

**CHARLES LEITH**, Grandson

Birth:	26 Oct 1859	Place: Westbury
Death:	7 May 1860	Place: Quamby
Father:	JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)	
Mother:	ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD (1836-1909)	

Informant of birth was Josh Jackson, friend, Westbury. [RGD 2256] Informant of death was father, John Leith, Quamby. [RGD 1026 Died in infancy of "weakness."

**C**harles the third son of John and Elizabeth was born on 26 October 1859. He was a sickly baby and died of 'weakness' at the age of six months and eleven days.

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<sup>12</sup> *Examiner: Friday 5 October 1900 pg 5:*

## **ANNIE ELIZABETH LEITH**, Granddaughter



Birth: 18 Feb 1861  
Place: Quamby  
Death: 18 Oct 1921  
Place: Hospital, Launceston Age: 60  
Burial: 20 Oct 1921  
Place: Carr Villa Cemetery, Launceston  
Occupation: Daughter of a Labourer (1882)  
Domestic Duties (1912)  
Residence: Westbury; Exton; Sheffield  
(1893)  
Frankford (1912)  
Father: JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)  
Mother: ELIZABETH [Bessie]  
McDONALD (1836-1909)

Informant of birth was father, John (x) Leith, Quamby. [RGD 2182]

Witnesses to marriage were W.G. Leith [brother],  
E. Leith [mother?], and M.A. Donahue. [RGD 969]

See Examiner 20/27 October 1921 and Weekly Courier 27

October 1921 for death.

"The funeral of the late Mrs Alfred Purton took place at Carr Villa on Tuesday. Deceased was an old and respected resident for many years of Frankford. She was a member of the Anglican Church, and a willing and cheerful giver. Her bright presence will be much missed."

**Spouse:** **ALFRED HENRY PHILLIP PURTON**  
Birth: 17 Oct 1861 Place: Cheshunt, Deloraine District  
Baptism: 19 Jan 1862 Place: Dairy Plains, Wesleyan  
Death: 16 Dec 1927 Place: Public Hospital, Launceston Age: 66  
Burial: 18 Dec 1927 Place: Carr Villa Cemetery, Launceston  
Occupation: Labourer (1882 1884 1893) Blacksmith (1912)  
Father: WILLIAM PURTON  
Mother: ELIZABETH ELMORE [ELMER]  
Marriage: 26 Apr 1882 Place: St Andrew's C.E., Westbury, by Lic.

Informant of birth was father, William Purton, farmer, Cheshunt. Mother was Elizabeth Purton, formerly Elmore [sic]. [RGD 858]

For baptism see Deloraine Wesleyan Circuit Baptism Register entry 79.

No obituary found Examiner 19 December - 31 December 1927.

No obituary found Advocate.

Children: DONALD EDWIN (1884-1964)  
ALFRED ERNEST (Died as a child) (1893-1908)  
?? ELLEN LENANDA [sic] (Did not marry) (~1895-1912)

**B**orn at Quamby on 18 February 1861, the fifth child of John and Elizabeth Leith, Annie was probably named for her aunt Annie Leith and for her mother. Her birth was registered at Westbury by her father.

Annie's early years would have revolved around the farm her father rented at Quamby. About 1876–1877 the family moved into Westbury and on 26 April 1882 Annie married Alfred Henry Phillip Purton, son of William and Elizabeth Purton of *Cheshunt*, at the parish church.

Her father was shown as a labourer on the marriage certificate and the witnesses were her brother William George Leith, E. Leith, and M.A. Donahue. Annie was twenty-one years old and Alfred was twenty.

They moved to Exton soon after their marriage and spent several years in Westbury before moving to Sheffield. By the 1900s they had moved to Frankford where Alfred became the local blacksmith. They lived for many years on the hill behind the home of Annie's niece, Linda Mae Reed. By 1932 they had moved to Harford to live with their son Don.

Annie's great niece Joyce Reed, and Gladys Campbell, cycled up to visit them at Harford on several occasions about 1931 or 1932.

A son, Donald Edwin, was born 16 March 1884 at Exton, and their second child, Alfred Ernest, was born at Westbury 18 September 1893, although the family were living at Sheffield at that time. A daughter is believed to have died as a baby but no records have been found.

Alfred Ernest died around the age of fourteen years of appendicitis.

Annie Elizabeth died in October 1921 at the Launceston general Hospital and was buried at Carr Villa Cemetery. She was sixty years of age.

Her husband Alf died six years later on 18 December 1927 and was buried with his wife.

Donald Edwin married Edith Ellen Thomas, daughter of William John and Elizabeth Thomas on 27 September 1909 at the Frankford Methodist Church.

His cousin Linda Mae Reed and his mother Annie Elizabeth Purton witnessed the marriage. Donald was twenty five years of age.

Two daughters were born at Beaconsfield in the next two years: Alma Edith Elizabeth on 27 May 1910, and Amelia Eleanor on 21 July 1911.

A few years later Donald purchased some property in the Harford area and lived there for many years.

## MARIA LEITH, Granddaughter

Birth: ca 1864 Place: Quamby Brook  
Death: 21 Jan 1920 Place: Asylum, New Norfolk Age: 56  
Burial: 24 Jan 1920 Place: Old  
Cemetery, New Norfolk [No Headstone]  
Occupation: Dressmaker (1902)  
Residence: Westbury; New Norfolk  
Father: JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)  
Mother: ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD  
(1836-1909)



No birth registration found for Maria but committal papers confirm her as the daughter of Elizabeth Leith, Westbury. Baptism register entries missing for period may have been baptised at St Andrew's, Westbury.

Committed to the New Norfolk Asylum 13 October 1902, aged 39 years. Cause of death was Colitis and exhaustion. Informant of death was C. Pye, Messenger, Mental Hospital, New Norfolk. [RGD 575]

Did not marry. No known issue.

**A**lthough Maria's birth appears not to have been registered she would have been born about 1863. Like her sister Elizabeth she was a dressmaker. She was committed to the Asylum at New Norfolk on 12 October 1902.<sup>13</sup> The committal papers identify her as the 39 year-old, unmarried daughter of Elizabeth Leith, of Westbury. Her condition was also described as hereditary. She 'suffered delusions that she sees people or hears things which are not visible or have not occurred'. The local doctor, Bruce Anderson, considered "her facial expression is not that of a sane person."

Her mother thought she had become unreasonably obstinate in the preceding months and was afraid when Maria threatened to set fire to one of the rooms of their cottage. During the eighteen years she spent at the Asylum she constantly refused food, refused to employ herself, and often did not speak for days on end.

She became increasingly violent and destructive and completely demented. She died of colitis and exhaustion on 21 January 1920, and was buried in a pauper's grave in the old New Norfolk Cemetery.

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<sup>13</sup> AOT: Asylum Records Register No. 2465.

**ELIZABETH LEITH**, Granddaughter

Birth: 4 Dec 1865 Place: Quamby  
Death: 4 Jun 1935 Place: Asylum, New Norfolk Age: 69  
Burial: 6 Jun 1935 Place: Old Cemetery, New Norfolk [No Headstone]  
Occupation: Dressmaker (1900)  
Residence: Westbury; New Norfolk  
Father: JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)  
Mother: ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD (1836-1909)

Informant of birth was father, John Leith, Quamby. [RGD 1797]

Register entries missing for period when may have been baptised at St Andrew's, Westbury.

Informant of death was W.E. Maxfield, messenger, Mental Hospital, New Norfolk. [RGD 618]

Cause of death was empyema of gall bladder, chronic myocarditis, and chronic endocarditis.

Did not marry. No known issue.

Elizabeth was the seventh child and was born on the *Quamby* estate in 1865. She worked as a dressmaker until a dementia condition also caused her to be committed to the Asylum on 8 January 1900 at the age of 34 years.<sup>14</sup>

Her first attack had occurred at the age of 30 and her illness was supposed to be of an hereditary nature but she was not epileptic, suicidal, or dangerous. She heard voices of people who were dead and 'receives messages from and talks to angels in paradise'.

One of her sisters stated that Elizabeth had threatened to hit her and others with a stick, and that she complained of people constantly annoying her and maligning her character.

On admission she was assigned to the Main Building and employed herself well, though she was unable to go to needlework as the stairs made her giddy. She seldom spoke.

Her hospital record constantly shows 'no mental improvement' and by 1915 she was described as 'dull and demented, rarely speaks, walks about aimlessly'.

An entry on 16 December 1918 reads:

*Quiet and tractable—takes no interest in her surroundings. Will not occupy herself—clean and tidy—also sleeps well—she is a Sister of Maria Leith in T Building—her General Health is frail.*

Elizabeth seems to have been much quieter than her sister but her mental state declined over the years. By July 1929 she is:

*spending long periods sitting in front of the fire in her room, never speaking but answering in monosyllables. Resenting interference but giving no trouble. Clean and tidy but appears depressed.*

She remained depressed and reclusive until her health started to deteriorate about 1934 and slowly declined until her death on 4 June 1935. She had been suffering from myocarditis<sup>15</sup> but her death was due to cancer. She was 69 years old.

She too was buried and forgotten in the New Norfolk Cemetery along with her brother and sister. It is not known if anyone ever visited the sisters or their brother during their time at New Norfolk but poor Elizabeth spent thirty five long lonely years there, outliving all but her sister Delia Sands.

<sup>14</sup> AOT: Asylum Records Register No. 2262.

<sup>15</sup> Inflammation of the heart muscle.

**DELIA KATHERINE LEITH**, Granddaughter

Birth: 22 Dec 1868 Place: Quamby Bend  
Death: 14 Sep 1948 Place: Launceston, Tasmania Age: 79  
Burial: 16 Sep 1948 Place: Carr Villa Cemetery, Launceston  
Occupation: Home Duties (1908) Domestic Duties (1912)  
Residence: Westbury (1908)  
Father: JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)  
Mother: ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD (1836-1909)

Informant of birth as Katherine Leith, was father, John Leith, farmer, Quamby. Mother was Elizabeth Leith, formerly McDonald. [RGD 1774 and C.E. 26]

Stated she was a spinster aged 39 years at time of marriage. Gave her occupation as home duties. Gave her birthplace as Quamby Bend and her parents as John Leith (deceased), farmer, and Elizabeth McDonald. Witnesses to marriage were Clement H. Byard and Clement Byard. [C.E. 26]

For death notice see Examiner Wednesday 15 September 1948. Mother of Henry, and grandmother of David, Peter, and Nancy.

**Spouse: HENRY ALFRED SANDS**

Birth: 6 Aug 1855 Place: Melville Street, Hobart  
Death: 10 Aug 1917 Place: Residence, William Street, Westbury Age: 62  
Burial: 12 Aug 1917 Place: Westbury, C.E.  
Occupation: Mining Engineer (1908) Carpenter; Labourer (1917)  
Father: WILLIAM SANDS  
Mother: CLARA SOPHIA HART  
Marriage: 28 Jan 1908 Place: St Andrew's Church, C.E., Westbury, by Lic.

Informant of birth was mother, Clara (x) Sophia Sands, Melville Street, Hobart. [RGD 405]

Married firstly Louisa Cook at the residence of George Martin, Adelphi 1 March 1876. [RGD 735] Was a widower at the time of his marriage to Delia Catherine Leith. Wife had died 21 March 1901. There were no children of this first marriage. Stated he was a widower aged 51 years. Gave his occupation as mining engineer. Stated he was born at Hobart and his parents were William Sands (deceased), civil engineer, and Clara, nee Hart (deceased). [C.E. 26] Brother of Mrs G.B. Hefferon, 52 Tamar-street, Launceston. Not on Westbury Electoral Roll 1912.

Died of pneumonia, aged 62 years. [Examiner 11 August 1917 - "short but painful illness".] No obituary found Examiner to 20 August 1917.

Children: HENRY GRANVILLE LEITH (1910-1997)

**D**elia was born on 22 December 1868 on the *Quamby* Estate, her father still being a tenant of Sir Richard Dry at this time. She was the eighth child and was originally given the name Katherine.

Little is known of her early life, most of which would have been spent on her father's farm, but she did attend a school in Westbury for some time.

She would have witnessed the birth of a sister and felt the sadness of her parents when the baby died three weeks later; would have attended the weddings of two elder sisters; and experienced the fear of seeing three siblings committed to the Asylum.

Living at home as she did she would have sorely felt the death of her father in 1894 and the tragic death of her brother Tom in 1900. She alone remained to care for her aging mother.

Delia continued to live with her mother in the William Street house purchased in 1884–1885 until she married Henry Alfred Sands at St Andrews Church on 28 January 1908. Henry was a widowed mining engineer; Delia was thirty nine years of age. The wedding was written up as follows:

*A wedding was celebrated at St. Andrew's Church (Anglican), Westbury, recently, the contracting parties being Miss Delia C. Leith, youngest daughter of the late Mr. John Leith, and Mr. H. A. Sands, both of Westbury. The church was decorated for the occasion by friends of the bride. The officiating minister was the Rev. Weld Thomas. The church was filled with spectators some time before the ceremony commenced. The bride, who was given away by her cousin, Mr. H. Turnbull, was attired in a gown of cream fancy striped, voile, tucked skirt, and bodice, trimmed with silk lace and applique. She also wore a gold brooch, the gift of the bridegroom. The bridesmaids were Miss Ada Turnbull (cousin of the bride), who wore a gown of blue floral muslin, trimmed with Valenciennes lace and insertion, and Miss Reiva and Miss Ila Heffron (nieces of the bridegroom), who wore pink floral muslin frocks trimmed with Valenciennes lace. The duties of best man were carried out by Mr. C. Byard, of Chudleigh. Miss Drew, who presided at the organ, played "The Voice that Breathed o'er Eden" as the bride entered the church, and as the happy couple were leaving the altar the organ pealed out the "Wedding March." At the conclusion of the ceremony a reception was held at the residence of the bride's mother, when about 30 relatives and friends were present. Amongst the many valuable and useful presents received by the bride were those from the members of the choir of St. Andrew's Church, of which she was a member.<sup>16</sup>*

*... Amongst the presents, which were numerous and useful, were a bread board and knife and fork, from the members of the choir; also several cheques, from the relatives of the bride; and a very handsome Bible from the bridegroom. The Rev. Weld Thomas, in proposing the health of the bride and bridegroom, said he had not been acquainted with the happy couple very long, having had charge of the Westbury parish only a few months, but during his residence here he had noticed that Mrs Sands was a good worker in all matters connected with the church. In the choir her services were in valuable, and he hoped she would continue her good work in and out of the church. He spoke of the many presents made to the bride on the occasion of her marriage, all of which went to show the esteem in which she was held. With reference to the bridegroom he had first heard his name in connection with the Westbury Men's Club, of which he understood he was a vice-president. Mr Thomas referred in the highest terms to their usefulness as citizens, and hoped they would be long spared to enjoy a happy and useful life. The bridegroom, in responding, thanked Mr Thomas for the many nice things he had said about his bride and himself. He referred to church work, in which Mrs Sands had for many years been associated, and said he would be always willing to make any sacrifice in order that she might continue her work. After other compliments had been exchanged, the company dispersed. In the evening, at the invitation of the bridegroom, the members of the Westbury Men's Club met, and drank the health of the bride and bridegroom.<sup>17</sup>*

Henry Sands was the son of William and Clara (Hart) Sands. He was born in Hobart in 1855. Widowed in 1901 he had no children by his first wife.

It is probable that Delia continued to live with her mother Elizabeth after her marriage as Henry's work took him away on many occasions. Elizabeth died a year after Delia's marriage.

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<sup>16</sup> Examiner: Friday 7 February 1908 pg 2.

<sup>17</sup> Daily Telegraph: Saturday 1 February 1908 pg 3.

Delia's only child was a son born at Westbury, 19 December 1910. He was named Henry Granville Leith Sands.

Young Harry attended the old Westbury State School in Dexter Street, an old blue stone and sandstone building, long since demolished. He [Harry junr] remembers that his father was a carpenter when he was a child and that he worked away from home for weeks at a time, at Tullah, on the Kings Wharf in Launceston, and at the mine at Beaconsfield.

It appears that Delia did not get on well with her brother-in-law Charlie Breward, blaming him for the death of his baby son in 1891, for which she never forgave him. She did, however, have some contact with her niece May, and Harry remembers his cousin Leslie visiting Delia soon after his return from the war.

She was also quite close to her sister Annie Purton who lived with her husband at Frankford. Harry would often visit his Aunt Annie during school holidays.

The Sands' lived in William Street, Westbury, third house from the end of the street, (then a dead end street), and on the left-hand side of the street. Delia had inherited the house on the death of her mother but the deed was not cleared until 1931.

In August 1917 Henry Sands was confined to bed with a bout of bronchitis. During this enforced rest a load of garden manure was delivered and Henry felt it necessary to go out and deal with it. The soaking he received as a result caused his death from double pneumonia that same night, 10 August 1917. He was 62.<sup>18</sup>

*AN ODDFELLOWS' FUNERAL. On Sunday afternoon the funeral took place at Westbury of the late Mr. H. A. Sands, who died on Friday after a short and painful illness, Mr. Sands was an old Devonport resident, and a P.G. of the Mersey Lodge, I.O.O.F., M.U. The Anglican service was conducted by the Rev. F. R. Morse, while the Oddfellows' burial service was read by Mr. C. J. Harrison, chaplain of the Devonport Lodge. The bearers were Messrs. H. C. Clayton, C. J. Harrison, F. Philpot and C. Layton, of the Mersey Lodge.*<sup>19</sup>

Delia had only been married nine years and was now left with an eight-year-old son to rear on her own.

Around 1919 or 1920 Delia and her son moved from Westbury to live with her sister-in-law, Nan Hefferon in Launceston. Delia lived quietly, keeping to herself. She was expert at crochet and filled many an hour with hook and cotton. She lived with Nan Hefferon until her death in September 1948, having outlived all her brothers and sisters. She was buried at Carr Villa Cemetery.

Delia's son Harry had married, at the age of twenty, Joyce Ellen Adeline Breward, daughter of Edwin James and Mary Breward. Joyce was a great niece of his Uncle Charlie Breward. They were married at St George's Church of England in Launceston on 17 April 1930.

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<sup>18</sup> Examiner: 11 August 1917 p1 c1.

<sup>19</sup> Examiner: Tuesday 14 August 1917 pg 2.

**ELIZA LEITH**, Granddaughter

Birth: 2 Sep 1871 Place: Quamby  
Death: 16 Sep 1871 Place: Quamby  
Burial: 20 Sep 1871 Place: Westbury, C.E.  
Father: JOHN LEITH (1824-1894)  
Mother: ELIZABETH [Bessie] McDONALD (1836-1909)

Informant of birth and death was father, John Leith, Quamby. [RGD 1805 and RGD 542]  
Died in infancy, aged 14 days. Cause of death was influenza.  
For burial see C.E. Burial Register entry 401.

The last child born to John and Elizabeth arrived on 2 September 1871 when her mother was 35 years old. Sixteen days later John went into Westbury to record the birth and the death of the baby, the little girl having died of influenza at the age of fourteen days.

Below is a table showing the complicated full and half family relationships between my Leith, Gillam, Furner, and McDonald families.

**THE LEITH, McDONALD, GILLAM & FURNER CONNECTIONS**

