

Helena (Lena) Brayshay

1863-1919

Helena Brayshay was part of the new generation of women who were taking their part and voices in general affairs. She knew Elizabeth Glover who built Kerami and bought it from her in 1914, managing Kerami, with the help of Elsie Bolam, for a short period of time until her early death in 1919.

She was born in 1863 in Buninyong, Ballarat one of ten surviving siblings. Her parents were Maria nee Jowett and David Wright Brayshay who married in Yorkshire, England and arrived in Victoria in 1855. They went to Buninyong goldfields where their children were born. The family moved to Hamilton in the 1870s where David became a sheep grazier and a leader in that community being on the council. Lena was educated at Alexander College for Girls in Hamilton. Her family was an educated one and the activities of the sisters were regular reported in the local paper. The family moved to Studley Park, Kew some time after the death of David Wright Brayshay in 1888.

It was not until she was in her late 20s that she formally trained to be a nurse.

The Argus, 19 May 1892

Miss Helena Brayshay, late of the Training School for Nurses in connection with this hospital [Melbourne Children's Hospital], and who obtained a credit certificate at her final examination, was appointed principal nurse at the Children's Convalescent Cottage, for which there were 13 applicants.

On the Electoral Rolls Helena, nurse, is registered as living at 84 Collins st, Melbourne in 1903 & 1905.

These were the times when women were breaking away from home duties and gentle arts. More were being educated at the University and more were becoming leaders in their professional occupations. The nurses who came to Marysville, to Kerami were amongst these women and knew each other as illustrated in the report below of a farewell dinner given by Elizabeth Glover to Helena Brayshay on her departure for a six months trip to England.

The Australasian, 31 March 1906

Miss Glover, of St. Ives, East Melbourne, gave a dinner at the Vienna Cafe, on Monday evening March 26, to say good-bye to the Misses Brayshay and Burleigh, who are leaving for a six months' holiday trip to England. The affair was a great success, and a pleasant evening was spent by all present. The company was composed mostly of professional women, interested in progressive movements, especially in the nursing vocation, to which the hostess and the principal guests belong. After the toast of "The King" had been honoured, Miss Glover, in warm terms, proposed "Our Guests". Miss Brayshay responded in bright speech, and wound up by promising to give a "home again" dinner on her return. The following toasts were also honoured:--"Our Hostess", "Miss Archer" (superintendent of the District Nursing Society). "Mrs. Malcolm" (secretary R.V.T.N.A.), "Miss Pell"(N.C. Demonstration) and "Miss Thomas"¹.

By 1909 Helena is at 90 Nicholson St, Fitzroy, matron, a few doors down from her brother in law, Dr John McInerny and his wife Margaratta. In 1907 she successfully applied with Mrs Stone to the Fitzroy Council to register her house as 'Uxbridge' private hospital.

HELENA BRAYSHAY, nurse, 90 Nicholson street, Fitzroy, reports stolen from her front gate, on the 17th inst., a brass plate, with the words "Private hospital" on it, value 30s.

Victorian Police Gazette, 19 March 1913.

Helena Brayshay bought the Kerami Guesthouse from Elizabeth Glover in 1914 when Elizabeth returned to Melbourne to be actively involved in the organisation of nurses required in WWI. On 1914 the Electoral Roll Helena Brayshay is in Marysville. She followed Elizabeth Glover as an active member of the Marysville Tourist & Progress Association serving for a time as secretary and then president.

Extract from Riverine Herald (Echuca, Moama), 31 December 1915,

. Miss Glover, so well-known in hospital work in Melbourne, conceived the idea of carving out a paying guest establishment and home in the forest, and succeeded where failure seemed imminent. By dint of perseverance she overcame all difficulties, and founded "Kerami," now carried on by Miss Brayshay, which enjoys a popularity that sometimes threatens to be overtaxed

The Argus, 4 Sep 1916

MARYSVILLE-KERAMI Reopens Sept 1.
First class-Accommodation, hot and cold
baths, sewerred, gas, motor garage, petrol
stocked. Proprietress, H. Brayshay. Tel. 1.

Punch 20 December 1917, page 44

MUSICAL CARNIVAL IN THE MOUNTAINS.

"Kerami," Marysville, was en fete on Saturday, 10th December, when the gifted tenor, Mr. Walter Kirby, having recuperated in the splendid mountain air, under the guardianship of Miss Brayshay, burst forth once more into song on behalf of the British Red Cross, and scored a record for Marysville, collecting £18 towards the fund. Mr. Walter Kirby, even in the country, did not forget the boys at the front, and deserves the congratulations of his many friends and admirers for so soon getting back to patriotic work after his illness. Miss Brayshay was an able chairwoman at the concert, and worked hard to ensure its success. Local artists also assisted. Mr. Archibald Currie helped materially to swell the funds, as he kept the tenor's sweet notes going with paper notes.

Sister Elsie Bolam first came to help Helena Brayshay when she bought Kerami. Elsie Bolam listed her residence as Marysville on the Electoral Rolls from 1914 to 1931 and then from 1949 to 1963. Lesley McGowan was a regular visitor but did not come to Marysville permanently until 1922 after Elsie Bolam bought Kerami.

Helena Brayshay died on 8 August 1919 in *Lancewood* private hospital, Hawthorn from pneumonia after having had a stroke.

She was buried in Brighton Cemetery.

The Age, 9 Aug 1919

BRAYSHAY.—On the 8th August, Helena, third daughter of the late David Wright Brayshay, of "Lilyglen," Young street, Studley Park. (Private interment, Brighton Cemetery.)

BRAYSHAY.—On the 8th August, at "Lancewood," Kew, Helena, the beloved friend of Elsie R. Bolam.

Also a notice in the Argus, 12 Aug 1919 from her sisters.

The Australasian, 16 Aug 1919.

The death of Miss Helena Brayshay which took place on the 8th August at "Lancewood" private hospital Hawthorn, will be deeply regretted by a large circle of friends. During the past six years she was well known as the proprietress of "Kerami", the popular resort for tourists at Marysville. Before taking up residence in Marysville Brayshay was a

member of the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses Association. Though not following her profession at Marysville she rendered valuable aid to those who were sick and in distress. She took a keen interest in all public movements, and was the president of the Marysville Tourist Association for many years, and like her sister Mrs John McInerny² who is president of the National Council of Women, was a capable speaker. The funeral took place on Saturday, August 9, the remains being laid to rest in the Brighton cemetery. The Rev. S. O. Sowards, Church of England, of Toorak (late of Alexandra and Marysville), conducted the solemn service for the dead.

Also in Lilydale Express, 29 August 1919

Healesville & Yarra Glen Guardian, 30 Aug 1919

At the Meeting of the Marysville Tourist & Progress Association held on 3 September 1919 the following motion was moved and accepted and the following minute was made.

Moved by Mr De La Rue that a minute be placed on the books in recognition of the good work performed by our late and highly esteemed President Miss Brayshay. Mr F Barton also a letter of sympathy be written to Miss Bolam and Miss McGowan and Mrs McInerny [sister]. The motion was seconded by Miss Pitman and strongly supported by Mr F Barton and Mr W Elliot.

"It gives me pleasure to write a few words as Secretary of this association to honour the good work done by our late and esteemed President Miss H Brayshay. She was a devoted worker in all aspects, and carried out the duties of the Presidentship in a capable and business-like manner. We as members of Marysville Tourist Association deeply mourn her loss, both as a member and as a private citizen."

Healesville & Yarra Glen Guardian, 4 Oct 1919

Miss Helena Brayshay, of Kerami, Marysville who died on August 8, left by her Will, dated March 19, 1915; real estate valued at £3,030 and personal property valued at £832 to her sisters and relatives and to Elsie Bolam.

Helena's estate at the time of her death³ included Lot 4, Section F on which a 17 roomed weatherboard house and kitchen, scullery and out buildings were erected and the land fenced with post and rail and three rows of barbed wire and Lots 7 & 8 Section F which is 10 acres. She also owned Lot 14, vacant land, which was part of the Kerami Estate sub-division of the original Lots 6 & 6a across the road from Kerami.⁴

It should be noted that in 1933 when Eric Dowdle bought Kerami and its Lots on the south side of the Woods Point Road he 'rebuilt' Kerami further down the Woods Point road passed Lady Talbot Drive. Eric named this guesthouse Mary Lodge and later it would be called Kerami until it burnt down in 1969.

Healesville & Yarra Glen Guardian, 17 July, 1920

Miss Elsie Bolam has purchased "Kerami," Marysville. The home is not new to her, as she was for some years associated there with the late Miss Brayshay.



Section of Survey Map reproduced by the Department of Lands, April 1946. It is an amalgamation of information held over a number of years with a number of omissions, in particular "Kerami Crescent Estate" which occurred prior to 1919.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Margaret Thomas, a nurse who would spend her life supporting Elizabeth Glover.
- ² Margaratta Wright Brayshay married John McInerney, a medical doctor. She was very active being President of the Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society and of the National Council of Women during WWI. Active in the Victorian Red Cross during WWI for which work she received the OBE. She was also a member of the Lyceum Club, a club specifically for women.
- ³ Details from the Inventory submitted in probate papers.
- ⁴ From probate records - PROV have misfiled the Will.