## **Roberts, Helen Cameron**

Helen Cameron Roberts was born Helen C. Christison on 30th April 1883 at Lammermoor [Station], Rockhampton Region, Queensland [also said to be at Coole Island (whereabouts unknown)].

Her parents were Robert (1837-1915) & Mary (nee Godsall; 1845-1922) Christison.

Robert Christison published two pamphlets: United Australia and Imperial Federation (London, 1888) and The Flocks & Herds of Queensland (Brisbane, 1896).

‘In London about 1877 he had married Mary Lovey whom he met in Bristol when she was painting family portraits for his sister; she died of malaria soon after arriving at Lammermoor.

In 1880 in London he married Mary Godsall, another English girl who did not like Australia and returned to England with their son and two daughters, the elder of whom was Mary Montgomerie (‘Mimi’) Bennett and the younger **Helen Cameron Roberts**.

In 1910 Robert Christison sold all his Australian interests and joined his family in Britain. He died of pulmonary tuberculosis at Burwell Park, England, on 25 October 1915’.

In 1887 the family returned to London, which was their primary residence, but a number of trips were made back to Australia for essentially business reasons.**1**

In 1891 the family were living at South Hill Park, Hampstead, London, Middlesex, England.

The family consisted of: Robert Christison, Australian Squatter, born Scotland; wife Mary, 38, born London; Elizabeth Godsall, 72, wife’ mother, born London; children: Mary M., 9, born London; Helen C., 7, born Queensland; & Robert A., 4, born N.S.W. There was also a cook, a housemaid and a nurse.

In 1901, still at Hampstead, the family consisted of: Mary Christison, 56, ‘artist, sculptor & printer’; Mary M., 19, art student; Helen C., 17, art student; Robert A., also a cook and housemaid.

In 1911, at Haugham Burwell, Louth, Lincolnshire, resided Robert Christison, 74; wife Mary, 67; children: Mary M., 29, single; Helen C., 27, single; Robert Alexander, 24, single (occupation for all: private means).**2**

Helen married Stewart Leslie Roberts in 1920 and together worked on several pastoral properties, including *Bolivia Station* and *Foyleview*, before returning to Sydney.

‘LONDON, Nov. 20 [1919]

The engagement is announced of Mr. Stewart Roberts, M.C., late A.I.F., of Queanbeyan (N.S.W.) to Miss “Lily” Helen Christison, daughter of the late Mr. Robert Christison and Mrs. Christison, formerly of *Lammermoor*, Queensland, and afterwards of Burwell Park, Lincolnshire. The bride elect is a cousin of Sir Robert Christison, Bart.’

‘Mrs. Robert Christison, of Burwell Park, England, and at one time of *Lammermoor*, North Queensland, and her younger daughter, Miss Lily Christison, have left England for Australia [February 1920]. Miss Christison will be married on her arrival to Mr Stewart Roberts, of Queanbeyan, New South Wales.’**3**

On 29th April 1922, at *Kew*, Beresford-road, Rose Bay, a daughter was born to Lily Helen Cameron (nee Christison) and Stewart Roberts.

[This child was Eleanor Rosemary Roberts (1922-2012).]**4**

In 1925 & 1930 Helen Cameron Roberts (home duties), Stuart Leslie Roberts (grazier) were living at “*Foyleview*,” Surat, Maranoa, QLD**5**

In 1932 Helen Cameron Roberts (author), Stewart Leslie Roberts (grazier) – *Chilworth*, Welham-street, Beecroft.**6**

For 1933 up to 1949 their address is given as 20 Welham-street, Beecroft - Helen Cameron Roberts (author), Stewart Leslie Roberts (grazier).**7**

For 1954 up to 1963 her address is given as 26 Botanic-road, Mosman - Helen Cameron Roberts (home duties), Stewart Leslie Roberts (no occupation).**8**

Helen died on 3rd November 1963, aged 80 years, at Mena Private Hospital, Mosman. Her funeral left St. Clement’s Church of England, Raglan Street, Mosman, for the Northern Suburbs Crematorium.

Probate (London) gives her estate valuation at £8726 in England.**9**

It is difficult to determine her literary pursuits which seem focused on her correspondence 1941-1960, concerning her ‘interest in the welfare of aboriginals, their tribal language and their customs. In the 1890’s she became very familiar with the people of the Dalleburra tribe. Wyma (Booloodea Timullinya, c1850-1926) was the Christison’s children’s nurse at *Lammermoor*.’

**Bibliography**

1 Various online resources (listed below), including Ancestry.com

2 Ancestry.com – Census Returns

3 Australasian (Melbourne, Vic.: 1864 - 1946), Saturday 3 January 1920, page 36; Townsville Daily Bulletin (Qld.: 1907 - 1954), Wednesday 18 February 1920, page 6

4 Sydney Morning Herald (NSW: 1842 - 1954), Tuesday 2 May 1922, page 8

5 1925, 1930 Electoral Rolls

6 1932 Electoral Roll

7 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1943, 1949 Electoral Rolls

8 1954, 1958, 1963 Electoral Rolls

9 England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations)

**Other resources:**

[Christison Family papers and Lammermoor Station records | SLQ Collections](https://collections.slq.qld.gov.au/node/1000)

[Series 16: Helen Roberts, photographs](https://collections.slq.qld.gov.au/guide/tr1867/details#SRTR1867-16)

[Biography - Robert Christison - Australian Dictionary of Biography (anu.edu.au)](https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/christison-robert-222)