



Elsie Margaret Williams

1896 - 1988

Elsie Williams' story is one of a remarkable woman getting on with life, making the most of little, dealing with four daughters and their need to look great at the local dance, and a husband who needed lots of support.

[*More about Elsie*](#)

SAY
HER
NAME

Elsie Margaret Williams

Elsie was a hard-working daughter, wife, mother and grandmother - and also businesswoman.

Elsie was the eldest of nine children. Her Dad had left the scene quite early, leaving her mum, an Irish immigrant living in a small town in Gippsland, as the breadwinner, carer, chief cook and bottle-washer. Elsie helped her mother out running the local railway station office. They shared a coat and a pair of shoes so only one could go out at a time.

After waiting for him to return from the war, Elsie married local copper, Sam. He came home decorated but injured. They lived in a couple of different places around the state before settling in Spring Street, Preston.

She once told her grandchildren about the mice plaque in Maryborough and how her dog would catch and bring the mice to her as she sat by the fire, she would whack them and lay them on the hearth like trophies. Good bit of teamwork!

A copper's wage didn't go far in those days and Elsie was known for making do (probably a skill she began learning as a young girl). She sewed all her girls' clothes, including very fashionable dresses, created dolls, made jam, cooked and cleaned while maintaining a garden and chooks. Her granddaughter, Genevieve, remembers her Mama's dolls, making them from all the bits and of pieces - basically a block of wood with a face she had drawn and a dress she made from a piece of cloth. Now that's making-do!

While her husband's health deteriorated and needed Elsie to care for him more and more, she established a haberdashery shop in Gilbert Road, Preston. She made and sold hats. Her granddaughter still has Elsie's hat block.

So there's a story about a woman getting on with life, making the most of little and dealing with four daughters and their need to look great at the local dance and a husband who needed lots of support.

Contributor – Genevieve Timmons, granddaughter