



Charles Alexander Shiel was born at Maghera, County Derry, Ireland, in 1859, and came to New Zealand with four of his brothers and sisters, arriving at Port Chalmers in February, 1878. For the following six years he worked in the Dunedin district, eventually entering the employ of Messrs Smith and Fotheringham at their brickyard in Kensington. In 1884 he started to make bricks on his own account at Rockside, Caversham, near the old Caversham Tunnel. In the following year he was joined by his elder brother William John Shiel and formed the firm of Messrs C & W Shiel which carried on the business of brick-makers and quarrymen for a long period. William John Shiel had worked on his father's farm in Ireland and when he arrived in New Zealand he engaged in farming until 1884 when he joined his brother Charles in partnership

When the lease of the Rockside property expired the firm purchased land at Forbury Road and continued operations as brick-makers and quarry proprietors.

In 1893 Charles married Miss Elizabeth Hegarty of Dunedin. They had five sons and one daughter. One son, V.D. Shiel, was killed in action in France in 1917.

In the late 1800s there were more than 100 brick, tile and pottery manufacturers operating throughout Otago. The largest was that of Shiel Brothers which occupied a 10 acres site on Forbury Road now occupied by Fenton Crescent, The Mormon Church, Francis Hodgkins retirement Village and Wycolla and Wilson Avenues. The business included a brickworks and quarry, which were connected over Forbury Road by an overhead conveyor. Clay was taken from the cliff face and sent across the road to the brickworks by trolleys on the conveyor. The brothers soon had a monopoly

on Dunedin brick-making, employing 60 staff at peak production. In 1917 when it became uneconomical to work the Forbury Road quarry, the quarry of the late Mr George Calder at North East Valley was taken over by the firm. In 1930 activities were transferred to Fairfield.

John died aged 85 on 19 October 1938, survived by three sons and a daughter, and is buried with his brother Charles in the family grave, in Dunedin's Andersons Bay Cemetery.

Charles died on 9 April 1943, survived by four sons and one daughter, and is buried in the family grave in Dunedin's Andersons Bay Cemetery.

Research taken from:

Otago Daily Times obituaries 21 October 1938 and 12 April 1943

Otago Daily Times 30 August 2007, piece by Nigel Benson