

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in April 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women staff and female patients associated with the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital, Jesmond, Northumberland.

Norah Adamson's Story

Norah Penelope Adamson was born on January 09 1881 in the colliery town of Hetton-le-Hole in County Durham to James Adamson MD and his wife Jane nee Dunn. Norah's father, born in Ballydangan, County Down, Ireland, was a doctor of medicine, having studied in Glasgow, while her mother was more local, having been born in nearby Houghton-le-Spring in Co. Durham. They had married in Sussex on June 12 1872, their marriage certificate stating that James' father John was a Merchant while Jane's (deceased) father Philip, had been a 'Gentleman'.

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1872 Marriage solemnized at *S. Paul's Church in the Parish of S. Mary Magdalen in the County of Sussex*

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
29	June 12 1872	James Adamson	28	Bachelor	Doctor of Medicine	Hetton-le-hole Durham	John Adamson	Merchant
		Jane Paul Dunn	24	Spinster		Honfield Town	Philip James Dunn (deceased)	Gentleman

Married in the *Parish Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by *James Adamson* after *L. Morley* by me, *W. J. Smith*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *James Adamson* in the Presence of us, *Laura Jackson* *Caroline Stewart* *Elizabeth Penelope Adams*

Norah's family appear to have been quite affluent. In 1881 they were living at St Nicholas' Villa in Front Street, Hetton-le-Hole. Baby Norah can be found alongside her sisters Kathleen Jane aged 7, a scholar, Elizabeth Annie, 6, also a scholar, and brother Philip Francis aged 2, all born at Hetton-le-Hole. The family were wealthy enough to have hired a Governess, a Cook, a Nursemaid, and a Housemaid and were also entertaining a visitor on census night. Ten years later, in 1891, the family were still in Hetton-le-Hole, but now living at Park View, South Side, and Norah, now aged 10, has another brother called Herbert James aged 8.

By 1901, Norah had become a nurse at the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital; it could be that her father's profession had some influence on her decision to enter the nursing profession. However, Norah's promising career was to be sadly cut short.

On 23 November 1905, Norah Penelope Adamson died at her father's home, Hetton House in Hetton-le-Hole aged just 24 years. She died of a duodenal ulcer and exhaustion. Her death was certified by A J Watson MB of Church Villa, Hetton-le-Hole, who was present at the death which was registered four days later.

50	Twenty-fifth November 1905. Hetton House Hetton-le-hole U. S.	Norah Penelope Adamson.	Female 24 years.	Daughter of James Adamson, a Physician M. B.	Duodenal Ulcer, operation 2 days, exhaustion. Certified by, A. J. Watson, M. B.	A. J. Watson, Present at the death Church Villa, Hetton-le-hole.	Twenty seventh November 1905.	Joseph Elliott Registrar.
	Twenty-sixth			Daughter of	Broncho	H. B. Maddison	Twenty	

An extract from the report of her funeral reads:

We regret to record the death of Miss Norah Adamson, youngest daughter of Dr. James Adamson, Hetton-le-Hole, which took place early on Saturday morning. Miss Adamson, who was only 24 years of age, had been in failing health for a considerable time. She was much esteemed by all who had the pleasure of her acquaintance. Dr. Adamson is very popular in the district, where he has lived for many years, and much sympathy is felt for him and Mrs Adamson in their sad bereavement.

Amid many signs of respect, the interment of the remains of the late Miss Adamson, took place at Hetton Cemetery on Tuesday afternoon. The service, which was fully choral, was

held in the parish church...Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, there was a large gathering of friends. There were several mourning coaches and private carriages...Many beautiful wreaths were sent...carried to the grave on the ambulance litter...The coffin was of oak with brass mountings.

Through Probate, administration was eventually granted, 22 years after her death, to Norah's sister Kathleen Jane Adamson, Spinster, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 01 March 1927. Norah left £589 8s 6d which in today's money is worth about £90,000.

Sources

GRO Civil Birth Registration Index **Norah Penelope Adamson** Registered 1881 M Q Houghton-Le-Spring Vol 10a page 472 Mother's maiden name DUNN
<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/menu.asp>

Ancestry, East Sussex, England Marriages and Banns 1754-1936 St Leonard St Paul Parish Marriage Register 1870-1937 page 15 entry 29 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62126/>

GRO Civil Birth Registration Index **Kathleen Jane Adamson** Registered 1873 M Q Houghton-Le-Spring Vol 10a page 577 Mother's maiden name DUNN

GRO Civil Birth Registration Index **Elizabeth Annie Adamson** Registered 1875 M Q Houghton-Le-Spring Vol 10a page 546 Mother's maiden name DUNN

GRO Civil Birth Registration Index **Philip Francis Adamson** Registered 1879 M Q Houghton-Le-Spring Vol 10a page 473 Mother's maiden name DUNN

GRO Civil Birth Registration Index **Herbert James Adamson** Registered 1882 M Q Houghton-Le-Spring Vol 10a page 461 Mother's maiden name DUNN

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<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/7814/>

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<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/2352/>

GRO Civil Death Registration Index **Norah Penelope Adamson** 1905 D Q Houghton-le-Spring Vol 10a Page 285

Death certificate **Norah Penelope Adamson** 25 Nov 1905

National Probate Calendar 1927 **Norah Penelope Adamson**
<https://www.gov.uk/search-will-probate>

CPI Inflation Calculator <https://www.officialdata.org/>

Newspapers:
The Belfast News-Letter, Belfast, Tuesday January 11, 1881 p1
Durham County Advertiser 01 December 1905 p8
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