

This is a Story from 'A Few Forgotten Women'



This story was written, in January 2023, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of girls from Leeds, Girls' Industrial School, Yorkshire.

Anne Mary FLETCHER

Unfortunately the entry for Anne Mary in the Leeds Certified Industrial School Register for Shadwell Children's Centre does not provide much background informationⁱ. It tells us that she was admitted on 8th February 1867 age just 8 years old, that she was born in Beeston, her mother was dead and her father's name was Richard, a farm labourer from Mill Shaw, Beeston. Her offence was recorded as "Destitute" and she was sentenced to 5 years, with a note added next to the sentence in blue ink stating "Time Up Feb 8 1872". Sadly the details regarding physical description, schooling (including literacy or numeracy) and character have been left blank.

Between 1845 and 1862, Beeston came under the registration district of Hunslet, Yorkshire West Riding. No record of a baptism in the area for an Anne Mary FLETCHER (or other variant of name) with a father Richard could be found; and a search of the 1861 census for a family with the same name

combination/relationships - with or without an occupation of Farm Labourer – proved fruitless.

Additionally, despite the register entry stating that her time was not up until Feb 8 1872, Anne Mary is also not listed on the 1871 census of the Ragged School; where many of her fellow inmates from Shadwell whose sentences extended beyond 1871 can be found.

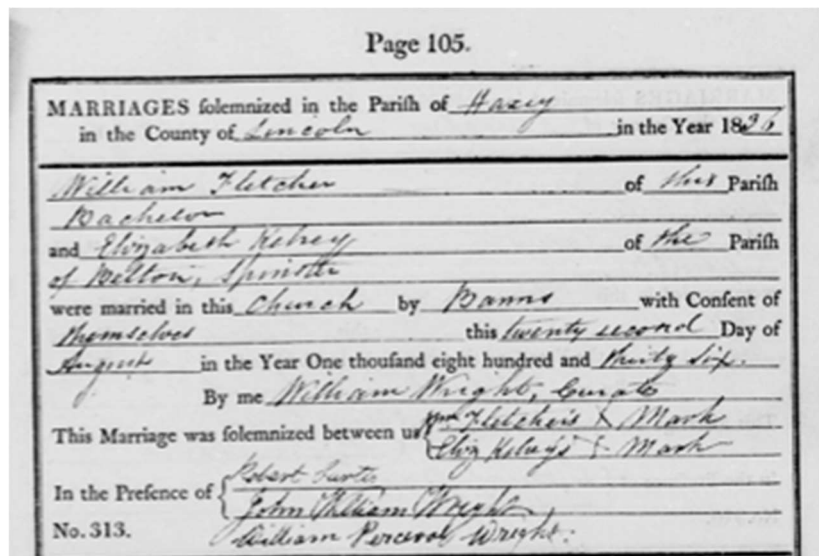
The most promising birth record was that of Anne Mary FLETCHER recorded in the June Quarter of 1858 in the registration district of Hunslet. The GRO online index provided a mother's maiden name (MMN) of KELSEYⁱ.

Unfortunately there was no FLETCHER/KELSEY marriage to be found not only in Yorkshire, but in the entire country, despite searching for a period of 20 years period to Anne Mary's birth.

However, an Annie M FLETCHER age 12, born Churwell, Yorks can be found on the 1871 Censusⁱⁱⁱ living in Low Fold, Churwell, Holbeck, Yorkshire with her elder brother George FLETCHER (age 33, Colliery Worker, born Huxley, Lincolnshire) along with his wife Mary Ann (age 29, born Churwell, Yorks.) *Churwell was also within the Hunslet registration district until 1862, when boundary changes moved it to Kirkstall (along with Beeston).*

Fortunately George FLETCHER was born at the end of 1837, which was at the very start of civil registration, and the GRO online index helpfully records his birth with a MMN of KELSEY^{iv}. Checking for a marriage of FLETCHER and KELSEY in Lincolnshire before George's birth, finally uncovered a marriage on

22nd August 1836 in Haxey^v The bride's name was Elizabeth, however, the groom's name is not Richard as expected, but William. Could there have been a mistake in the Register regarding the father's name?



Haxey Marriage Bann Register Page 105 showing wedding took place 22 August 1836

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The 1861 census recorded a Fletcher family living at Petty's Fold, Beeston^{vi} :

William FLETCHER - Head, Widowed, Occupation: Cart Driver (Ag Lab), age 52, b. not known

Eliza - daughter, servant, single, age 23, born Askey, Yorks.^{vii}

Ellen - daughter, Flax Mill, single, age 18, b. Sheffield

Amos - son, coal miner, age 14, b. Sheffield

Alice - daughter, age 11, b. Churwell

Emma - daughter, age 8, b. Churwell

Polly - daughter, age 3, b. Churwell.

When cross-referenced in the GRO online indexes all the children in this family were found to have the MMN KELSEY with the exception of Polly. There is no entry in the birth indexes for a Polly FLETCHER regardless of MMN, and the only female FLETCHER birth registered with MMN KELSEY is the Anne Mary birth registered in Hunslet in June 1858 previously identified. The name Polly was often used for girls named Mary Ann – was it possible that Anne Mary had been unofficially known as Polly by her family?

Working backwards, the family can be found on the 1851 census living at Clay Row, Churwell^{viii}.

William FLETCHER (Head, married, age 43, Excavator, b Kirk, England)^{ix}

Elizabeth (wife, married, age 33 b. Haxey, Lincolnshire)

George (son, age 12 Coal miner, b. Haxey, Lincolnshire)

Eliza (daughter, age 10 half-timer at cloth mill b. Lincolnshire)

Esther (daughter, age 9, half-timer at cloth mill, b. Everton, Nottinghamshire)^x

Ellen (daughter, age 5, b. Everton, Nottinghamshire)

Amos (son age 2, b. Fulwood, Yorkshire)

Allis (daughter, baby, age 3 months, b. Churwell, Yorkshire)

The 1841 Census show the family living at Carr, Gringley on the Hill, East Retford, Nottinghamshire^{xi}. William FLETCHER (age 34, Ag Lab, born in the county) with wife Elizabeth (age 26, not born in the county), son George (age 3, not born in the county) and daughter Eliza (age 1, not born in the county).

Putting all the information together shows clear that Elizabeth FLETCHER (nee KELSEY) died between 1858 and 1861 and would have been around 45 years

old at the time. There is a death registered in Hunslet of an Elizabeth FLETCHER in 2Q 1858 - which when cross referenced using the GRO online index indicates an age of 45 - which appears to fit these details and possibly means that Elizabeth sadly died in childbirth or shortly after giving birth to Anne Mary^{xii}.

Following the 1871 census, the next record for Anne Mary is a marriage of Annie FLETCHER age 20, on Jan 1st 1879 at St. Clements, Sheepscar - which is about 8-9 miles from Beeston/Churwell.



Annie married John ROBINSON a 23 year old miner and lists her father as William, and his occupation as Cab Driver.

St. Clement's, Sheepscar, Chapeltown Road, Leeds

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1879. Marriage solemnized at <i>Sheepscar</i> in the <i>Church of St. Clement</i> in the County of <i>York</i>								
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.
341	<i>Jan 1</i> <i>1879</i>	<i>John Robinson</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Miner</i>	<i>Ruby St.</i>	<i>George Robinson</i> <i>dec.</i>	<i>Sailor</i>
		<i>Annie Fletcher</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>40 Francis St. Wellin</i>	<i>Annie Fletcher</i>	<i>Cab driver</i>
Married in the <i>Church of St. Clement</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by _____ or after <i>By us</i> by me,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>John Robinson</i>	in the presence of,		<i>Harry Hargreaves</i>			
		<i>Annie Fletcher</i>			<i>Thomas Rockledge</i>			

The couple can be found on the 1881 census living at 23 Museum Terrace, Leeds^{xiii}; though interestingly Anne Mary's name has been recorded as Mary Ann. John's sister Annie Elizabeth, who was a year older than Anne Mary, and an infant John William Elsworth age 1 are listed as boarder and visitor. John William Elsworth was also a relative of John Robinson's as his mother's maiden name was Rawnsley – the same as John and Annie Elizabeth's mother^{xiv}.



Museum Terrace Nos. 23-29 © Leodis (<https://www.leodis.net>)

By 1891 the family were living on Wright Street, Leeds with 4 children^{xv} and John's sister Annie Elizabeth was also still living with them.

John - Coal Miner, 37, b. New York, USA

Annie M - 32, b. Churwell, Yorks.

John W - son, age 9, b. Leeds, Yorks.

Lily - daughter, age 7, b. Leeds, Yorks.

Joseph - son, age 3, b. Leeds, Yorks.

Annie - daughter, age 1, b. Leeds, Yorks.

Annie E ROBINSON - Boot Machinist, single age 33, b. Leeds, Yorks.

Coal mining was a major industry in the area, and by the end of the 19th century there were nearly 100 individual coal mines in West Yorkshire, mainly concentrated in the east of the county, and ranging from single large pits to clusters of several smaller pits. As a coal miner, John would have worked at one or more of these coal mines in and around Leeds at the time and no doubt endured very dark, long and arduous working days..



When found on the 1901 census, the family were living on Bruntcliffe Road, Morley, Dewsbury and had been joined by another 2 children, meaning they now had 3 sons and 3 daughters^{xvi}. The couple's son John was by this stage also a coal miner and most likely worked in the same colliery as his father. Lily was working as a rag sorter, the textile industry being one of the other big industries in the area.

John W - miner age, age 45, New York, USA

Annie - wife, age. 42, b. Churwell, Yorks.

John - son, coal miner, age 19, b. Leeds, Yorks.

Lily - daughter, rag sorter, age 17, b. Leeds, Yorks

Joseph - son, age 13, b. Leeds, Yorks

Annie - daughter, age 11, b. Leeds, Yorks

Herbert - son, age 8, b. Leeds, Yorks

Beatrice - daughter, age 5, b. Leeds, Yorks

However at the time of the 1911 Census, John is living at Cliff Row, Knottingley, but Anne Mary was obviously away from home at the time of the census as he is recorded with the 3 youngest children, though indicating that he was married, stating that he had been married for 34 years, with 10 children born alive, 4 of whom have died^{xvii}.

John William - Miner, age 56, b. America

Annie - daughter, age 21, b. Leeds

Herbert - son, Glasshand, age 18, b. Leeds

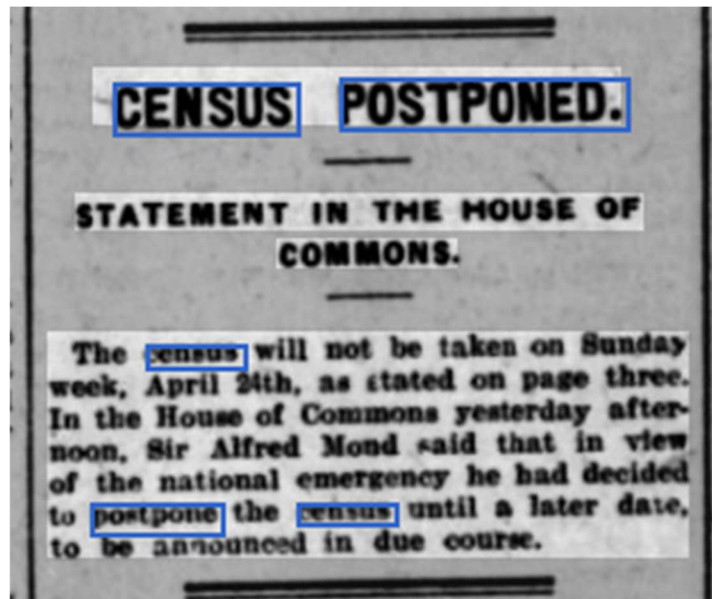
Beatrice - daughter, age 15, b. Leeds

Interesting to note that son Herbert had not followed his father and older brother as a miner, but was a Glasshand in the glass bottle manufacturing industry.

Using a combination of FreeBMD and GRO Online indexes it was possible to identify 3 of the children born to the couple who had all died in infancy or early childhood. There was a male child born in Q3 1879^{xxviii}, who died the same quarter^{xxix}, a daughter Mary Elizabeth born Q3 1880^{xxx}, who again died the same quarter^{xxxi} and son Ernest who was born Q3 1885^{xxii} and died at 1 year old in Q3 1886^{xxiii}.

Its possible that none of Anne Mary's sons served in WW1, particularly due to two of them being miners, which was a reserved occupation.

After WW1, when the 1921 census was taken, the couple were living at The Island, Knottingley, Yorkshire (West Riding)^{xxiv}. The census was originally due to take place on 24 April 1921 but was postponed to Sunday 19 June 1921 because of industrial action. This was a time of huge post war economic turmoil in the country; Coal miners were on strike and there was the prospect of a national strike (later averted) which led to prime minister David Lloyd George calling a state of emergency on 5 April 1921, in which he mobilised the Army Reserve and a new Defence Force from 8 April.



Runcorn Weekly News, 15 April 1921

John is, unsurprisingly given this turmoil, recorded as an out of work coal miner. Sadly, their daughter Annie had moved back in with them, along with her 3 children following the death of her husband William BEDFORD. William died on 24 Nov 1917 whilst serving as a Lance Corporal with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 2nd Battalion^{xxv}, he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Passendale, just outside of Ypres, Belgium^{xxvi}.

John William - Coal Miner (Hewer), age 66 yrs 2 mths, b. New York, U.S. America - Naturalised British, employer Prince of Wales Colliery, Pontefract – out of work

Annie Mary – wife, age 63 yrs, 1 mth, b. Leeds, Yorkshire

Annie - daughter, widow, age 31, 3 mths, b. Leeds, Yorkshire

Henry - grandson, age 10 yrs, 3 mths, father dead, b. Knottingley, Yorkshire

Florence - granddaughter age 8 yrs, 3 mths, father dead, b. Knottingley, Yorkshire

Francis Bedford - grandson, age 6 yrs, father dead, b. Knottingley, Yorkshire.

At the outbreak of WW2 in September 1939, the 1939 register revealed that Annie Mary was a widow, age 80, living with her daughter Beatrice (age 44) and Annie's husband, Robert DAWSON (School Caretaker, age 45) and one of their children, in the School House on Weeland Road, Knottingley^{xxvii}. There is a photo of Weeland Road and the school on the Francis Frith website.
https://www.francisfrith.com/knottingley/knottingley-weeland-road-c1950_k82004

John William ROBINSON was fairly consistent with his age and place of birth across all the different censuses he appeared on, indicating a year of birth between 1954 and 1956 and giving his place of birth as NY, USA. On one particular census he specified his place of birth as Ward Island, NYC, USA.. The most likely death record for him, if this information is reliable, is that he died in Leeds in 3Q 1922 aged 68 years old^{xxviii}.

Anne Mary died in 1940, aged 81, and her death was registered in Pontefract which is the registration district for Knottingley.^{xxix}

It is clear, that despite sadly never knowing her mother, and being placed in the reformatory school at just 8 years of age, Anne Mary was one of the more fortunate girls to find themselves in Shadwell and perhaps one of the few success stories. She clearly did not serve her full "sentence", as by 1871 she was living with her older brother George and his wife.

Anne Mary met and married her husband John shortly before she turned 20, and despite the heartbreak of losing 4 children in infancy and a son in law in the Great War, they were married for over 40 years until John's death. After

which, it appears she moved in with her youngest daughter and her family, living until she was 81 years old.

Mandy Geary January 2023

ⁱ Anne Mary FLETCHER, ,Shadwell Childrens Centre Commitments 1862-1879, Ref LC/SS2/1/1, Register Numbers 1-461, Entry 103; via West Yorkshire, England, Reformatory School Records, 1856-1914 www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: West Yorkshire Archive Service, accessed 20th January 2023.

ⁱⁱ Anne Mary FLETCHER, GRO Birth Index, Registered 2Q, 1858, Hunslet; Vol 9b; Page: 276; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: General Register Office; accessed: 20th January 2023

ⁱⁱⁱ Anne Mary FLETCHER, 1871 England and Wales Census, Ref: RG10; Piece: 4519; Folio: 35; Page: 23; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 20th January 2023

^{iv} George FLETCHER, GRO Birth Index, Registered 4Q 1837, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire: Vol 14, Page 245; <http://www.ancestry.co.uk/>; original data: General Register Office; accessed 20th January 2023

^v William FLETCHER and Elizabeth KELSEY Marriage, Haxey Marriage Bann Register 1813-1837 Page 105; www.findmypast.co.uk, original data: Lincolnshire Archives, accessed 12th February 2023

^{vi} William FLETCHER and family, 1861 England and Wales Census, Ref: RG9; Piece: 3361; Folio: 79; Page: 5; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 20th January 2023

^{vii} Should be Haxey, Lincs. Eliza GRO Birth Index, Registered 2Q, 1858, Hunslet; Vol 9b; Page: 276; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: General Register Office; accessed: 20th January 2023

^{viii} William FLETCHER and family, 1851 England and Wales Census, Ref. HO107; Piece: 2317; Folio: 6; Page: 5; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 31th January 2023

^{ix} Mis-transcribed as Kirk, England on Ancestry – think it should be NK England (ie Not Known)

^x Mis-transcribed as Charles on Ancestry and Easter on FindMyPast

^{xi} William FLETCHER, 1841 England and Wales Census, Ref. HO107; Piece: 1349; Book: 5; Civil Parish: Leeds Town; County: Yorkshire; Enumeration District: 20; Folio: 24; Page: 7 ; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 12th February 2023

^{xii} Elizabeth FLETCHER GRO Death Index, Registered 2Q 1858, Leeds; Vol: 9b Page: 470; <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/Login.asp>; original data: General Register Office; accessed 31^h January 2023

^{xiii} John and Anne Mary ROBINSON, 1881 England and Wales Census. Ref. RG11; Piece: 4522; Folio: 37; Page: 4; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 12th February 2023

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- ^{xiv} John William ELSWORTH, GRO Birth Index, Registered 1Q, 1880, Bramley; Vol 9b; Page: 369 www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: General Register Office; accessed: 12th February 2023
- ^{xv} John and Anne Mary ROBINSON, 1891 England and Wales Census. Ref. RG12; Piece: 3693; Folio: 10; Page: 14; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xvi} John and Anne Mary ROBINSON, 1901 England and Wales Census. Ref: RG13; Piece: 4253; Folio: 18; Page: 27; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xvii} John ROBINSON, 1911 England and Wales Census: Ref: RG14; Piece 27441; RD: 505; RSD.: 1; ED: 5; Schedule: 253; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xviii} Male Child FLETCHER, GRO Birth Index, Registered 3Q 1879, Leeds; Vol: 9b Page: 470, www.freebmd.org; original data: General Register Office; accessed 12^h February 2023
- ^{xix} Male Child FLETCHER, GRO Death Index 3Q 1879 Leeds Vol: 9b Page: 244; www.freebmd.org; original data: General Register Office; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xx} Mary Elizabeth FLETCHER, GRO Birth Index 3Q 1880; Leeds Vol: 9b Page: 490; www.freebmd.org; original data: General Register Office; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xxi} Mary Elizabeth FLETCHER, GRO Death Index 3Q 1880; Leeds Vol: 9b Page: 333; www.freebmd.org; original data: General Register Office; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xxii} Ernest FLETCHER, GRO Birth Index 3Q 1885, Leeds Vol: 9b Page: 473; www.freebmd.org; original data: General Register Office; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xxiii} Ernest FLETCHER, GRO Death Index 3Q 1886, Leeds Vol: 9b Page: 329; www.freebmd.org; original data: General Register Office; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xxiv} John and Ann ROBINSON, 1921 England and Wales Census, Ref RG15; Piece: 22549, RD: 505, RSD: 1, ED: 7, Schedule: 274; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 20th January 2023
- ^{xxv} William Bedford, UK, World War I Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914-1923, www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: Western Front Association; London, England; WWI Pension Record Cards and Ledgers; Reference: 018/0065/BEC-BEE; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xxvi} William Bedford, Commonwealth War Graves Commission; Find War Dead; <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/844515/william-bedford/>; accessed: 12th February 2023
- ^{xxvii} Anne Mary ROBINSON, 1939 Register Ref: RG101/3676J/003/35; www.ancestry.co.uk; original data: The National Archives; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xxviii} John William ROBINSON GRO Death Index Q3 1922 Leeds: Vol:9b; Page: 214; www.freebmd.org; original data: General Register Office; accessed 12th February 2023
- ^{xxix} Anne Mary ROBINSON GRO Death Index Q4 1940 Pontefract; Vol: 9c; Page: 238; www.freebmd.org; original data: General Register Office; accessed 12th February 2023