

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.

Jane Short's Story

At the time of the 1891 census, Jane SHORT was recorded at the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital in Jesmond¹ as a seven-year old patient, born in Newcastle-on-Tyne. The GRO Indexes show only two Jane SHORTs born in England in 1883 and 1884 – one born in Alnwick in 1883, who died the following year and one born in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1884. The latter was born in June Quarter 1884, daughter of John SHORT and his wife Annie².

In the 1891 census, John and Annie appear at 17 Park Place, Newcastle-on-Tyne³. Slightly confusingly, listed as living with them on the date of the census is also their daughter, Jane. As no other Jane SHORT appears to have been born in Newcastle around 1884, however, it is likely that the census instructions had

been misinterpreted and she had been returned as if living at home, despite the fact that she was actually in hospital.

John SHORT is listed in the 1891 census simply as “Labourer general” although a decade earlier he was recorded as an “Engine man (driver)” – presumably a stationary machine engine rather than a railway engine and in 1871 as a butcher! He was born in Newcastle in 1856, the son of labourer Richard SHORT and his wife Jane, née BELL, after whom his eldest daughter was perhaps named; Richard and Jane were living next door to John and Annie in 1 Court, Prudhoe Place, Newcastle in the 1881 census⁴. John married Annie PRESTON in Newcastle in 1880⁵ and, given that in all but one census Annie’s place of birth is given as Ireland, she was probably the daughter of William and Elizabeth PRESTON who appear to have moved to Newcastle-on-Tyne at some point between the birth of Annie (in Ireland around 1865) and a son William (in Newcastle around 1869)⁶.

John and Annie had four sons and four daughters, of whom only three sons survived childhood. Jane SHORT died in the June Quarter of 1891 so very soon after the census⁷. Margaret Jane, born in 1886⁸, died aged 1⁹, Robert, born in 1888¹⁰, died soon after birth¹¹, Alice, born in 1892¹², died aged 1¹³ and Annie, born in 1894¹⁴, died aged 2¹⁵. At the time of the 1891 census, the family was living at 17 Park Place, in the St Andrew’s district of Newcastle-on-Tyne³. From the number of other people living at this address, this appears to have been a large tenement building and, interestingly, just under two years later in January 1893, a mission room in connection with St. Andrew’s parish, opened in two rooms in the building, having outgrown previous accommodation on nearby Prudhoe Street¹⁶.

John SHORT died in December Quarter 1898, aged 43¹⁷. By the time of the 1901 census, his widow, Annie, appears to be the wife of a James GUTTERY. However, there is no record of a remarriage and she subsequently appears in other records various as Annie SHORT or as the apparent wife of a James GUTHRIE, some nine years her junior. In the 1901 census, James 'GUTTERY' and Annie are living at 31 Hill Street, in the Westgate area of Newcastle-on-Tyne¹⁸. Living with them are two of Annie's three surviving sons – James SHORT, born in 1882¹⁹ (although the census suggests 1885) and John SHORT, born in 1889²⁰ (although the census suggests 1891).

The third son, Annie's eldest child, George William SHORT, born in 1880²¹, is missing from the 1901 census. However, he was clearly back with his mother by the following year when, in November 1902, Annie SHORT, George William SHORT and James GUTHRIE (under those names) were charged with assaulting one Ellen THOMPSON in Westgate Road. The *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*²² relates that Ellen THOMPSON, who was living apart from her husband, had an altercation with them whilst drunk. Ellen denied that she had accosted George William SHORT and that she had asked him to "go with her." Nevertheless, it appears that Annie SHORT had occasion to remonstrate with her and it would appear that she at least pushed her away, although Ellen said she had been struck with a basket and a hand. George William had also accepted that he had shoved Ellen to one side but alleged that she was so drunk that "even a 'waff' of wind' would have blown her over. James GUTHRIE denied interfering in any way with Ellen. However, the Bench sent Annie SHORT to gaol for one month and both of the men for three months. The report also suggests why George William

may not have appeared in the 1901 census; he “had served in Malta as a corporal in the Militia.”

This was not to be Annie and George William’s last appearance in the dock. On 6th May 1919, the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*²³ reported that “Annie Short GUTHRIE, 50, of Wellington Street, was charged with having, between March 31 1918 and September 30, 1918, obtained £12 10s by false pretences from the Postmaster General [in respect of ‘Government allowance’]” and her son, “George William SHORT, 38, craneman of Stowell Street, was charged with having aided and abetted his mother.” They were remanded on bail for eight days but I cannot find an account of the outcome of the trial.

In the 1911 census, Annie had reverted to using the surname of SHORT and describing herself as a widow, despite the fact that James GUTHRIE is shown as a visitor at the same address, 30 Pitt Street, Westgate, Newcastle-on-Tyne²⁴. Both John and George William SHORT are still living with her. In the 1921 census, James and Annie GUTHRIE are living at 32 Wellington Road, Newcastle²⁵. James is described here as a labourer for the Corporation (he was a carman at the time of the 1901¹⁸ and 1911²⁴ censuses) and the only other resident at the address is a widowed boarder, Elizabeth CLAYTON.

Annie died at 32 Wellington Road on 4th August 1927 aged 59, her death being recorded in the GRO Death Index²⁶ and in an obituary in the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*²⁷ as GUTHRIE. The obituary incorrectly states that she was “Annie (née Short), dearly beloved wife of James GUTHRIE.” James GUTHRIE died on 31st May 1936, aged 59²⁸. Annie was buried at the Westgate Cemetery²⁷ and James at the Elswick Cemetery.²⁸

Sources

1. 1891 census: RG12 4219 Folio 75 Page 19 Schedule 65
2. GRO Birth Index June Quarter 1884 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 75
3. 1891 census: RG12 4206 Folio 42 Page 2 Schedule 16
4. 1881 census: RG11 5059 Folio 26 Page 44 Schedule 240
5. GRO Marriage Index December Quarter 1880 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 147
6. 1881 census: RG11 5050 Folio 61 Page 17 Schedule 728
7. GRO Death Index June Quarter 1891 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 99
8. GRO Birth Index June Quarter 1886 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 85
9. GRO Death Index March Quarter 1887 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 57
10. GRO Birth Index June Quarter 1888 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 77
11. GRO Death Index June Quarter 1888 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 45
12. GRO Birth Index June Quarter 1892 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 31
13. GRO Death Index December Quarter 1893 Vol Newcastle-on-Tyne 10b Page 18
14. GRO Birth Index June Quarter 1894 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 21
15. GRO Death Index June Quarter 1896 Vol Newcastle-on-Tyne 10b Page 24
16. *FindMyPast: Newcastle Journal* 18 January 1893
17. GRO Death Index December Quarter 1898 Vol Newcastle-on-Tyne 10b Page 16
18. 1901 census: RG13 4766 Folio 44 Page 28 Schedule 169
19. GRO Birth Index June Quarter 1882 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b Page 75

20. GRO Birth Index December Quarter 1889 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b
Page 89
21. GRO Birth Index December Quarter 1880 Newcastle-on-Tyne Vol 10b
Page 74
22. *FindMyPast: Newcastle Evening Chronicle* 25 November 1902
23. *FindMyPast: Newcastle Daily Chronicle* 6 May 1919
24. 1911 Census: RG14PN30625 RG78PN1754 RD558 SD4 ED10 SN384
25. 1921 Census: RG15 25320 Schedule 206
26. GRO Death Index September Quarter 1927 Vol Newcastle-on-Tyne 10b
Page 43
27. *FindMyPast: Newcastle Evening Chronicle* 5 August 1927
28. *FindMyPast: Newcastle Evening Chronicle* 3 June 1936