

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written in August 2023 as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who enrolled in the first two cohorts [1908 & 1909] of Trainee Teachers at the Cheshire Country Training College, Crewe [CCTCC]

Dora Jones's Story

Dora Jones' father, Pryce Jones had been born in Llanfair Caereinion, Montgomeryshire c. 1839 but had moved to Knutsford, Cheshire by the time of the 1861 census, when he was recorded as living in King Street, assistant to a draper named Joseph Griceⁱ. Ten years later, he was still in King Street, but was now the head of establishment, a woollen and linen draper, employing two men (one of whom was his younger brother) and a Wesleyan Methodist local preacher. Also living there in 1871 was a 20-year old housekeeper, Hannah Read, born in Over Peover, Cheshireⁱⁱ. Both Pryce and Hannah were still at the same address in 1881, with one draper's assistant living with themⁱⁱⁱ. Whatever the arrangements had been, the household's dynamics changed in 1887 when Pryce and Hannah were married on 6th December by licence at the parish church

in Chelford, Cheshire^{iv v}. Dora, who appears to have been their only child, was not born until 5th May 1891^{vi vii}. Exactly one month earlier, when the 1891 census was taken, Pryce, aged 57 and Hannah, aged 40 had still been living in King Street, with a young servant girl, Lily Robinson^{viii}.

Dora grew up at 100 King Street (also known as White House) with her parents; Pryce continued business as a draper and the family also took in lodgers^{ix x}.



100 King Street, still a 'White House' is the building in the right foreground^{xi}

In the 1901 census, Dora was recorded as a scholar, aged 9, Lily was still the family servant and the family also had three lodgers^{ix}. Dora attended Sale High School^{vi}, which was a private girls' school at Oaklands, on Marsland Road, Sale; this appears to have been a day school so either Dora had a round journey each day of around 50 miles or else she may have stayed in local lodgings. In 1903^{xii} the school's headmistress was Miss Margaret Horner, who had attended Lady Margaret Hall at Oxford to study Modern History although she would not have been permitted in that era to take her degree. The fees (per term?) were £2. 2s. to £4. 4s. and an entrance exam was required. By 1909, Cheshire County Council had taken over the running of the school and it had been renamed the County

High School for Girls, Sale and the headmistress was Miss Amy Wallis. The Crewe Guardian, reporting on Miss Wallis's speech at the school's annual prize giving for 1909 stated:

"Considering the size of the sixth form the external examination results had been most satisfactory... Their three bursars had all passed the preliminary certificate examination and had gone to Crewe Training College."^{xiii}

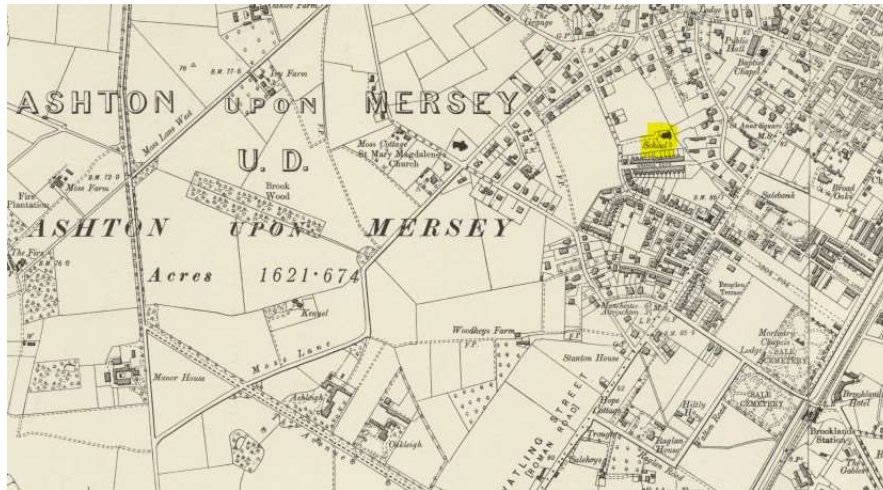
Dora was one of those three bursars, entering Crewe Training College on 15th September 1909^{vi}, part of the second cohort to commence training, attending classes still being held at that point in the Mechanics Institute in Crewe. At the time of the 1911 census she was lodging at 74 Nelson Street, Crewe with Ernest and Lucy Wakefield and another "student for elementary teacher", Gladys Taylor, was a fellow lodger^{xiv}. We do not have much other information about Dora's time at the Training College although she is one of the two students standing in the middle of the back row of this photograph of the hockey team^{xv}





Crewe, 1910^{xvi}. The yellow highlight is the Mechanics Institute where lectures were held; the red highlight is Dora's lodgings in Nelson Street

Dora qualified in 1911 and took up her first appointment as an assistant mistress at Barker's Lane Council School in Ashton-on-Mersey, not far from her alma mater in Sale^{xvii}. Whether she was in lodgings or still commuting from Knutsford as this point we do not know but by 1915^{xviii} her parents had moved to 110 Hale Road in Hale, near Altrincham, Cheshire and Dora was living there with them at the time of the 1921 census^{xxvi}.



Barker's Lane Council School highlighted in yellow, 1911

From Dora's own comments in later life^{xix} we know that she was teaching juniors at Barker's Lane. During this time she gained the National Froebel Union Higher Certificate.^{v xvii} This qualification stemmed from the work of Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel in the nineteenth century, focussing on early childhood education and the foundation of the kindergarten system. She also obtained the City and Guilds of London Institute Evening School Teacher's Certificate in Plain Needlework and the London Institute of Plain Needlework Certificate in Plain Needlework,^{v xvii} although it is not clear if this was whilst at Barker's Lane or later.

In 1916, however, she changed job and was now assistant mistress at the County Central School in Sale^{xvii} so had much less of a commute from her parents' home. From her comments in later life^{xix} she specialised in history and geography whilst there.

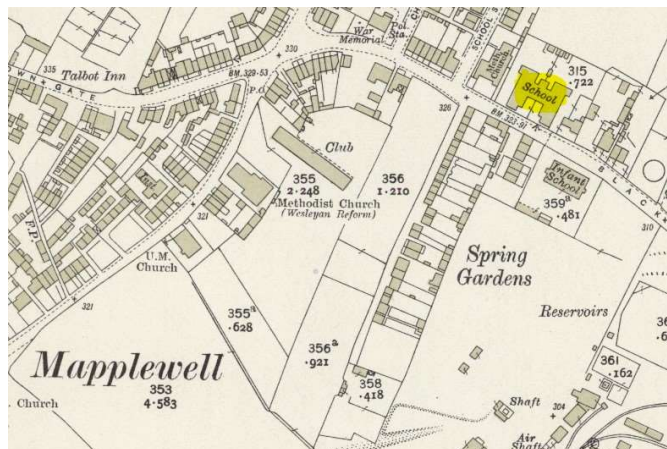


Sale County Central School, 1938^{xvi}

Dora's mother, Hannah, died in 1923 aged 72^{xx} and her father, Pryce died two years later aged 87^{xxi}. This perhaps gave Dora the opportunity at last to move away from the area in which she had grown up, studied and worked to date and in 1927 she moved across the Pennines to take up the role of headmistress at Darton Mapplewell Senior Girls' School near Barnsley in Yorkshire^{xvii}.

Mapplewell had originally been a very small hamlet. A Board School had been established there in 1856 and had 271 pupils in 1861. These numbers had nearly doubled by 1881 as the settlement developed into a bigger village as coal mining and associated industries rapidly expanded in the area^{xxii}. A new Board School had been built in 1876 and by the time of the 1921 census, there appear to have been three, possibly, four female teachers employed in the Girls' School (as well as others employed in the Infants and Boys' Schools). All of them were locally-born women and all bar one with living with family members. Did this, coupled with a move away from town/suburban living and life without her own family

members make Dora feel like an outsider? She only remained in post for four years.



Mapplewell School highlighted in yellow, 1929^{xvi}

In 1932, Dora moved back to Cheshire as headmistress of Cheadle Etchells Council School in Cheadle^{xvii}.



Cheadle Etchells Council School highlighted in yellow, 1934^{xvi}

She was only here for two years^{xvii}, presumably leaving at the end of the Summer Term of 1934 as the Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser, on 31st August 1934 reported, in relation to the filling of a vacancy for the head teacher that there

Cheadle and Gatley Council had protested against the decision of the North Cheshire Administrative Sub-Committee for Education to appoint another headmistress for the school when they had requested appointment of a headmaster. Councillor Entwistle said *“This Council, even before the School was opened, and just before the appointment of a head teacher, asked that a man be placed in charge... We were informed that it had been decided to appoint a mistress in charge, and not a master – that we were a minor authority and had no power in the matter. We were practically told to mind our own business.”* It was reported that *“The school, originally intended for pupils under 11, now had all the standards and took pupils up to 14 years of age. It was a mixed school.”* It was further reported that the Council *“had no notice whatsoever that the headmistress [i.e. Dora Jones] had resigned or tendered her resignation, or knowledge at all that a new headmistress was contemplated...[Councillor Simpson] was in agreement with the Heald Green representatives that there was a mixed school with children up to 14, there should be a headmaster, and not a mistress.”*^{xxiii} Perhaps Dora had not been made not to feel any more comfortable here!

She moved to the post of headmistress at Langley Mil Council Girls’ School, almost on the border of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire^{xvii}. Unusually, she appears to have taken up office mid-term; the local paper reported on the retirement of the previous headmistress, Mrs T. Horsley (whose husband was headmaster of the Boys’ School) at the beginning of October 1934, ending by noting that *“Mrs. Horsley is being succeeded by Miss Dora Jones, of Altrincham, Cheshire.”* The article also noted that during the 35 years that Mrs. Horsley had been headmistress, the school had *“attained an excellent reputation in the scholastic profession, having been responsible for many scholarships, marking*

the efficiency reached by scholars attending this fine and up-to-date place of learning, and upon several occasions the success achieved has been such as to elicit special congratulatory messages from His Majesty's Inspectors."^{xxiv}



Langley Mill School highlighted in yellow, 1938^{xxvi}

This therefore promised to be rather more of a prestigious placement for Dora, but she was only there for four years^{xvii}, before moving further south, this time to take on the role of headmistress at Solihull (Sharman's Cross) Senior Girls School in Shirley, in 1938. This was a very new school, only opened in 1934, in a rapidly expanding suburb of Birmingham. Reporting on the formal opening of the school, the Birmingham Daily Gazette said "*Sharman's Cross Senior Mixed Elementary School, which lies between Shirley and Solihull, was formally handed over to the school managers... yesterday... The new school, which cost about £20,000, has accommodation for 520 pupils between the ages of 11 and 14, and if necessary can be enlarged to take another 200 pupils*"^{xxv}. Indeed, just two years later the same paper published notice of a proposal "*to enlarge Solihull Sharman's Cross Senior Council School, situated at Sharmans Cross Road, by providing additional accommodation for about 200 senior children.*"^{xxvi}



Sharman's Cross School highlighted in yellow, 1939^{xvi}

This was therefore a much bigger (in several senses of the word) challenge for Dora and one in which she perhaps felt she had reached her full potential as she stayed here for 22 years until her retirement. When the 1939 Register was drawn up, she was one year into post and was living at 14 St Gerrards Road, Solihull, about a mile from the school. Her housemate was Miss Effie M.A. Taylor, 18 years older than her and named as a “*Teacher Retired*”^{vii}. In the 1921 census, Effie was living at 66 Manchester Road, Altrincham, a “Teacher of Needlecraft” employed by Cheshire Education Committee in Sale^{xxvii}. This strongly suggests that either she was a colleague of Dora’s during her time at the County Secretary School in Sale or potentially even her own evening class teacher when she took her Plain Needlework certificates. The friendship was clearly long-standing; Effie Marion Alice Taylor of 14 St Gerrards Road, Solihull died on 13 December 1947 at the age of 74 and probate was granted to “Edward Percy Morris solicitors managing clerk, Florence Mary Yearden married woman and Dora Jones spinster.”^{xxviii}

The school grew again during her tenure. The Birmingham Daily Post, reporting on the end of year prize-giving in 1951 noted “*Miss D.M. Jones, headmistress of the school, stated in her report that the number of girls in the school had reached 500.*”^{xxix} Incidentally, I have come across no other suggestion that Dora had a

middle name so the middle initial of ‘M’ appears to be an error! The expansion of numbers had been anticipated the previous year when the Vice-Chairman of Governors had noted on prize day *“Next year was going to be a difficult one... Inside the school there was likely to be 551 names on the register, compared with 421 – a number with which it had been difficult enough to cope this year.”*^{xxx} The school has now closed, but former pupils sharing recollections on Facebook frequently refer to *“Miss Jones”* as headmistress.^{xxxi}

Dora retired at some point in 1955 – the Birmingham Daily Gazette reported in October that Miss H. Rushton, of Ashton-under-Lyne, had been appointed as the new headteacher and would take up appointment in the following January.^{xxxii} However, this and her death are not the end of her story!

Most of her contemporaries either married soon after qualification or else never married – perhaps not surprisingly for a generation whose source of potential suitors had been decimated by the First World War within a few years of their qualification as teachers. Dora, however, retired and promptly married for the first and only time at the age of 64, marrying the 75-year old Venerable Arthur White, former Archdeacon of Warrington, on 8th December 1955 at St Luke’s, Orrell, Lancashire^{vii, xxxiii}.



St Luke's, Orrell^{xi}

Arthur White was born in Whaley Bridge, Cheshire, on 17th January 1880. His education was more extensive than Dora's: Deytheur Grammar School in Llansantffraid-y-m-Mechain, Wales, St. David's College, Lampeter and Oxford University, where he read Theology^{xxxiv}. He was ordained Priest in the Church of England in 1905 and held curacies in Ashton-in-Makerfield and Headington Quarry and incumbencies in Wigan, Golborne and Billinge. He was appointed Archdeacon of Warrington in 1947 and held the office until 1958^{xxxv}.

His first wife was Elizabeth Herring-Shaw (at times given as Herringshaw), who he married in the parish church of Macclesfield on 14th July 1909. At the time of their marriage, Elizabeth had also been a teacher – she was living in Prestwich, North Manchester when the 1901 census was taken^{xxxvi}. They had a daughter and then a son, who died in the RAF during the Second World War. Their daughter married and had children and, writing in 1966, Dora enjoyed “*watching her husband's grandchildren grow up and pass through various stages of school life*”^{xix}. I cannot find for certain when Elizabeth died; Lancashire BMD has a record for an Elizabeth White dying in Leigh and Golborne in 1943, although the age (62) is slightly out to be certain that this is Arthur's first wife^{xxxvii}.

It is something of a puzzle to work out how Arthur and Dora would have come to know each other. Arthur had spent all of his working life within the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool and none of Dora's placements coincided with his. Indeed, she had presumably been brought up in the Methodist tradition, given that Pryce Jones was a local preacher in 1871ⁱⁱ and a circuit steward for Knutsford in 1875^{xxxviii}.

Arthur died on 20th August 1961, aged 81^{xxxv}. He was living at 49 Up Holland Road in Billinge, near Wigan at the time^{xxviii}. Dora survived him by nine years, still living at the same address until her death on 31st May 1970^{xxviii}, shortly after her 79th birthday.

Narrative by Sheila Jones

SOURCES

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- ⁱ 1861 census RG09 Piece 2593 Folio 42 Page 25 Schedule 113 (Find My Past)
- ⁱⁱ 1871 census RG10 Piece 3687 Folio 38 Page 25 Schedule 122 (Find My Past)
- ⁱⁱⁱ 1881 census RG11 Piece 3510 Folio 45 Page 26 Schedule 572 (Find My Past)
- ^{iv} Cheshire Marriage Licence Bonds And Allegations 1606-1905 (Find My Past)
- ^v Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser 16 December 1887 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{vi} CCTCC Student Registers [1908-1935]: CCTCC Archives, Unpublished data, under the care of the Family History of Cheshire, Crewe
- ^{vii} 1939 Register RG101/5703D/020/16 Letter Code: QEJY (Find My Past)
- ^{viii} 1891 census RG12 Piece 2828 Folio 27 Page 47 Schedule 284 (Find My Past – mistranscribed as Joens)
- ^{ix} 1901 census RG13 Piece 3329 Folio 52 Page 10 Schedule 61 (Find My Past)
- ^x Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper 3 December 1900 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xi} Geograph <https://www.geograph.org.uk/> (used here under Creative Commons Licence)
- ^{xii} Manchester City News 18 April 1903 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xiii} Crewe Guardian 10 November 1909 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xiv} 1911 census RG14PN21795 RG78PN1297 RD449 SD1 ED43 SN154 (Find My Past)
- ^{xv} CTCC student hockey team 1909-1911, CCTCC Archives, Under the care of the Family History of Cheshire, Crewe
- ^{xvi} National Library of Scotland: Map Images <https://maps.nls.uk/> (used here under Creative Commons Licence)
- ^{xvii} Teachers' Registration Council Registers 1914-1948 (Find My Past)
- ^{xviii} Cheshire Electoral Registers (Find My Past)
- ^{xix} 'The Torch': CCTCC Old Students Magazine, 1966 Edition, Unpublished data, under the care of the Family History of Cheshire, Crewe
- ^{xx} Free BMD Deaths Mar 1923 Bucklow 8a 221
- ^{xxi} Free BMD Deaths Sep 1925 Bucklow 8a 176
- ^{xxii} <http://mapplewell.info/history-of-mapplewell-and-staincross>
- ^{xxiii} Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser 31 August 1934 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xxiv} Ripley and Heanor News and Ilkeston Division Free Press 5th October 1934
- ^{xxv} Birmingham Daily Gazette 23 June 1934 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xxvi} Birmingham Daily Gazette 25 July 1936 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xxvii} 1921 census RD 445 RS 2 ED 3 Piece 16807 Schedule 207 (Find My Past – wrongly transcribed as Ellie Taylor)
- ^{xxviii} England & Wales Government Probate Index 1858-2019
- ^{xxix} Birmingham Daily Post 5 July 1951 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xxx} Solihull News 22 July 1950 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xxxi} https://www.facebook.com/SharmanCrossSchool/?locale=en_GB
- ^{xxxii} Birmingham Daily Gazette 10 October 1955 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)
- ^{xxxiii} Lancashire BMD Deaths 1955 Ref. C25/5/134
- ^{xxxiv} Crockford's Clerical Directory 1932 (Ancestry)
- ^{xxxv} Wikipedia entry for Arthur White (priest)

^{xxxvi} 1901 census RG13 Piece 3774 Folio 154 Page 29 Schedule 169 (Find My Past)

^{xxxvii} Lancashire BMD Deaths 1943 Ref. LG/8/31

^{xxxviii} Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser 28 May 1875 and 18 June 1875 (British Newspaper Archives/Find My Past)