

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.

Jane Fallon

Jane Fallon was admitted to the Shadwell Children's Centre for nine years on 16 December 1869, she is recorded as being 7 years of age, making her birth circa 1862. The details on her admission sheet contain specifics of her physical appearance, familial connections and the reasons why she was admitted. Jane was said to have a slight figure, brown hair and eyes and light complexion. She had never been to school and could not read, write or cipher.¹

Jane is stated to be illegitimate, her mother also called Jane Fallon, was said to keep a 'brothell' [sic] and the residence noted as St James, Court 21, Lady Lane, Leeds.

Other relations and friends of Jane junior are listed as:

- Aunt Maria Northrop, who kept a spice shop on York Street
- Aunt Charlotte Chadwick, who kept the spice shop with Aunt Maria

¹ West Yorkshire Reformatory School Records 1856-1922, originals at West Yorkshire Archives Service WRT/1/72-77, 81-84 accessible on www.ancestry.co.uk

- Grandmother Northrop, a lodging housekeeper on the *'Top of York Street'*
- Grandmother Haigh, also a lodging housekeeper on Lemon Street.

Looking at maps of Leeds at the time, Lemon Street was a court or street leading off York Street, so the families lived in close proximity. When young Jane went before stipendiary magistrate William Bruce, her mother was said to be a *'low prostitute, often drunk and in prison and keeps one of the worst Houses in Leeds'* I think the next line *'Came here with three other companions, black eye and four teeth knocked out'*, refers to the child rather than the mother, but could be read either way. Jane was sentenced to nine years detention at Shadwell School, with her time up being recorded as 15 December 1878.

Other details on the form include the fact that Jane has been brought up by her grandmother Haigh, who *'had to leave her'*. Jane junior is in all probability the Jane Fallon listed in the 1871 census at the Windsor Street Ragged School.²

I started my search looking for a birth for Jane junior and discovered a Jane Northrop Fallon registered in the third quarter of 1863 in Leeds. I send for an image of this birth registration, and this shows Jane being born on 16 July 1863 at 34 East Lane, Leeds. The mother, Jane Fallon, is of the same address and made her mark in the informant section of the register when she registered the birth on 27 July.³ The middle christian name, Northrop, ties in with the names of the aunt and grandmother noted on the admission sheet.

² 1871 census, Girls' Ragged School, Windsor Street, Leeds, Yorkshire RG10, 4555, folios 114 and 155

³ England, General Register Office, Birth Indexes, 1863 S Quarter, Leeds, Vol 09B, Page 365

I next searched for a marriage between a Fallon and a Northrop or a Fallon and a Haigh, the names noted of both grandmothers. I wondered perhaps as neither have the same surname as Jane junior and her mother, whether either Jane senior or one of the grandmothers remarried but that search was fruitless.

A search of the newspapers came up with several interesting leads. Firstly, in December 1855 a Jane Fallon was convicted of stealing a cloak and imprisoned for two months for the offence in January 1856, the report implied that Jane was a middle aged woman.⁴ This led me to the Yorkshire Quarter sessions on Ancestry for which the name Jane Fallon came up on numerous occasions.⁵ I then searched the UK Calendar of Prisoners because the Quarter sessions and newspaper searches suggested that Jane had been imprisoned; this set of records gave me two entries for Jane Haigh alias Fallon, one for 1870 and a further entry in 1872, both entries have additional charges handwritten on the sheet. On 11 April Jane Haigh, alias Fallon, a 26-year-old spinster of no given trade was charged, together with habitual criminal Rebecca Wild, of larceny and a sentence of 10 months hard labour in a house of correction was handed down. There are a number of previous charges noted from 1859 to 1870, including drunkenness and riotousness, larceny and being idle and disorderly.⁶ The 1872 entry is in connection with theft and assault on one William Thompson for which Jane is convicted and sentenced to 15 months hard labour, while her accomplice Patrick Conway is found not guilty.⁷ Although this information does not give any address for Jane it does give a rough date of birth, 1844/5. The newspaper report

⁴ Leeds Times, 15 December 1855, page 5; Leeds Times, 5 January 1856, page 3

⁵ *Yorkshire, England, Quarter Session Records, 1637-1914, originals* - Leeds Quarter Sessions, Order and Indictment Books. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds, England. Available on www.Ancestry.co.uk

⁶ *Home Office: Calendar of Prisoners*; Reference: HO 140/12, Available on www.Ancestry.co.uk

⁷ Ibid

of this incident refers to Jane as a *'woman of loose character, well-known to the police'*, Conway was portrayed as her paramour. It continues to describe the assault and robbery of William Thompson and states that the accused was *'taken at her lodgings in Stainburn Sq, York Rd'*, the same address supplied by the male prisoner.⁸ Looking at a map of the area at that time, Stainburn Square was off York Street rather York Road, which further links with the information given on the admission sheet.

The UK Prison Commission Records gives a little more information, documenting that on 31 October 1873 Jane Haigh alias Fallon was released from Leeds prison after serving 15 months for robbery with violence. Jane is said to be 31 years of age and factory hand, she stood 4 feet 11¾ inches high with brown hair and eyes and moles on her right arm.⁹ This gives a birth date of circa 1842, so perhaps a little earlier than was suggested previously, but of course we can't take that as definitive, and the previous newspaper description of Jane Fallon as a *'middle aged woman'* muddies the waters as we perhaps don't today think of someone in their early 30s as being middle-aged. Finally, an earlier newspaper report of a robbery in 1862 names the accused as a John Northrop a tinner from East Lane, Leeds together with two prostitutes, namely Jane Haigh and Mary-Ann Doherty both of East Lane.¹⁰

There are a number of Jane Haighs born within the 1842-45 period in Yorkshire and until I had more to work with, I moved onto trawling the census data to try and pin down the family members noted on the admission sheet, starting with

⁸ Leeds Mercury, 29 June 1872, page 5

⁹ UK, Prison Commission Records, 1770-195, accessed via www.Ancestry.co.uk

¹⁰ Leeds Mercury, 26 December 1862, page 2

the Northrop family, sometimes also spelt as Northorp. In 1861, living at 173 York Street is lamp lighter James and Elizabeth Northrop, together with their children 23-year-old John who is a tinner and glazier and two daughters, 17-year-old Charlotte and 15-year-old Maria, both recorded as nail cutters.¹¹ There are also a number of boarders at the address, which would corroborate the *'lodging house keeper'* status of grandmother Northrop on the admission sheet.

Note: The item of interest here is the son John who is listed as a tinner and glazier. Recapping the discoveries so far, we can perhaps link this snippet of information with what we know - Jane Northrop Fallon was illegitimately born to Jane Fallon in East Lane, Leeds in July 1863, a Jane Haigh, who uses the alias Fallon, of East Lane, is a few months earlier accused of robbery alongside tinner John Northrop. I am beginning to think there is a connection here!

Returning to the Northrop sisters, on 2 November 1862 at St Peter's parish church in Leeds, Charlotte Northrop married Samuel Chadwick, a 22-year-old carrier from nearby Church Street, her father is noted as James Northrop, lamplighter and the bride's address is York Street, both parties are able to sign their name and the witnesses do not seem to be related at all, although Ann Frith could be the woman of the same name who is boarding with the family in 1861.¹² This marriage would suggest that Charlotte is the aunt Charlotte Chadwick referred to in Jane's admission sheet. Moving onto to the other aunt, namely Maria Northrop, she married Thomas Kershaw in the same parish church as her sister on 24 March 1870. Thomas was a 32-year-old detective police

¹¹ 1861 Census, York Street, North Leeds, Yorkshire. RG 09, 3377, Folio 12

¹² West Yorkshire Archive Service; Leeds, Yorkshire, England; *Yorkshire Parish Records*; Reference Number: RDP68/5/64, available at www.Ancestry.co.uk

officer from Portland Street and Maria's father is listed as James, a lamp lighter and the address is once again York Street. Both bride and groom are able to sign the register and one of the witnesses is possibly an Elizabeth Haigh or Hague, the handwriting is not that clear.¹³ Maria and Thomas are living at 1 York Street in the 1871 census.¹⁴ Elizabeth Northrop, the mother, referred to as grandmother Northrop, is widowed in January 1866, when James dies aged 54 and was buried in Beckett Street cemetery, Leeds.¹⁵ I lose sight of Elizabeth herself in 1871, she is not living in York Street and there is a possibility she may have remarried.

Grandmother Haigh, noted as living in Lemon Street, could be the Mary Haigh residing at 70A Lemon Street in 1861. A 37-year-old widow, whose occupation is recorded as a hawker, Mary has three daughters and a son living with her, namely Mary, Ann and Winefred [sic] aged 19, 6 and 3 respectively and 7-year-old Benjamin.¹⁶ Mary and her daughter Winifred are still in Lemon Street ten years later, this time at number 16.¹⁷ I suspect that grandmother Haigh is the maternal grandmother of Jane junior, as the admission sheet states that grandmother Haigh '*brought her up*', mothers quite often took charge of their own offspring's illegitimate children and this could be the case here.

It also looks as the Haigh family may not have been on the right side of the law either, in May 1861 the Leeds Mercury reported a theft of 43 yards of fabric

¹³ West Yorkshire Archive Service; Leeds, Yorkshire, England; *Yorkshire Parish Records*; Reference Number: RDP68/5/77, available at www.Ancestry.co.uk

¹⁴ 1871 Census, York Street, North Leeds, Yorkshire, RG10, 4551, Folio 28

¹⁵ *Leeds, England, Beckett Street Cemetery, 1845-1987*, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds, England, available at www.Ancestry.co.uk

¹⁶ 1861 Census, Lemon Street, North Leeds, RG 10, 3382, Folio 50

¹⁷ 1871 Census, Lemon Street, North Leeds, RG10, 4554, Folio 81

from a shop doorway, the accused pair, Maria Bargate of Wellington Place and Mary Haigh of Lemon Steet were found to have numerous other purloined items in the premises that they occupied.¹⁸ There are many mentions of a Mary Haigh in the police and Quarter sessions from Leeds, but whether the mother or the daughter it is not clear, but this may possibly account for why grandmother Haigh had to give up Jane junior and place her in Shadwell School, because she herself was in trouble with the police.

Trying to trace Jane junior further than her entry in the 1871 census, when she is listed at the Ragged School in Windsor Street, Leeds has proved difficult and her mother's whereabouts in 1871 are unclear. There are a number of people that they could be but without any conclusive leads then it's impossible to be certain and the Haigh and the Northrop families are interesting as a case study on their own and worth investigation. Jane Haigh alias Fallon is an enigma, there are many possibilities to her identity but again nothing concrete and as in a lot of the Forgotten Women research, these women knew how to dodge the law, often keeping just out arm's reach of officialdom by using aliases or giving false information.

Researched by Clare Abbott and Margaret Roberts January 2023

¹⁸ Leeds Mercury, 11 May 1861, page 5