

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]

Emily Adams King's Story

Emily was born on 4 September 1890, the fourth of five children to warehouseman William Henry King and Mary Jane, nee Morton.¹ The family were staunch methodists with William being a well-known local preacher and a member of the Rechabite movement,² who later in life was elected onto the Macclesfield Urban District Council.³ By the time the enumerator called with the family's 1901 census forms, they were living at 177 Buxton Road in Macclesfield,⁴ William at the time was working in the silk industry, for which Macclesfield is famous. Emily's three older sisters, Janet, Elizabeth, and Clara were also employed within the industry as stocking knitters or silk yarn pickers. Emily, at 10 was still in school and younger

¹ GRO Marriage Indexes, 1881 June Quarter, Macclesfield District, Vol 8a, Page 221; Birth Certificate of Emily Adams King, 4 September 1890; England and Wales 1891 Census, RG12, Ashton under Lyne Registration District, Piece 3282

² For more information on the Rechabite Movement see - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rechabites>

³ *Macclesfield Times*, 22 December 1922, 8; *Macclesfield Times*, 18 January 1935, 8

⁴ 177 Buxton Road was a house that was lived in by employees of London and Northwestern Railway company who specifically were employed as canal labourers for the company, the house was demolished in 1984 by the order of the British Waterways board as per reports in the *Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 29 September 1939, 6 and *Macclesfield Express*, 5 January 1984, 11

brother Arthur was just four.⁵ Seven years later in September 1908 we find Emily registering as one of the first cohort of trainee teachers to be trained at the Cheshire County Training College in Crewe [CCTCC]. Her registration details note her father as her guardian and that the family were at the time living in Grimshaw Lane, Bollington, not too far from Macclesfield. Emily had attended Macclesfield High School where she attained the Oxford Senior Local qualification which allowed her to enrol at CCTCC.⁶ During her time at CCTCC Emily was a member of the college Hockey XI and can be seen in the image of the team below, Emily is the student standing on the far left of the group on the back row.



*The 1908-1910 First Hockey XI*⁷

After completing the two-year course Emily found a position at Willaston primary school, on the outskirts of Crewe and on the 1911 census can be found listed as an Assistant Teacher and lodging in Gainsborough Road in the home of railway coach maker James Arden and his

⁵ England and Wales 1901 Census, RG13, Macclesfield Registration District, Piece 3309

⁶ *CCTCC Student Registers [1908-1935]: CCTCC Archives, Unpublished data, under the care of the Family History Society of Cheshire, Crewe*

⁷ CCTCC student hockey team 1908-1910, CCTCC Archives, Under the care of the Family History Society of Cheshire, Crewe

family.⁸ A wedding report in 1917, helps us to keep track of the King family. Emily's sister Elizabeth marries Arthur Hebblewaite and captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps, the wedding taking place in Leeds, the bride's parents noted as living in Sunnybank, Bollington.⁹ Two years later, on 12 June 1919 Emily marries, her groom is Wilfred Allen Berry, son of a well-known and highly respected methodist lay preacher and church organist, George Berry. The marriage taking place at the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Bollington.¹⁰ Wilfred worked at the Adelphi Mill as a clerk for cotton spinners George Swindle and Co, the couple made their first home at Jackson Lane, Bollington.¹¹

In 1921 Emily takes over as assistant mistress to Mrs Turner at the local council school in Bollington following the registration of Miss Cubbon, who had after a number of years teaching in the school had decided to move back to her native Isle of man and take up a similar post at a local school on the island.¹² The following year Emily's mother Mary Jane passed away, aged 65, her obituary tells of a highly respected resident of Bollington who was connected with the Primitive Methodist Church.¹³ Her passing was in later years often remembered with a memorial notice in the local press from William, a typical example being that of the one in 1926, *'memories cling with silent thoughts. Husband and Family.'*¹⁴ I cannot find any trace of Wilfred and Emily ever having had any children.

The booklet produced for 21st 'Coming of Age' anniversary of CCTCC lists all ex-students, with an up-to-date note of where that student now lived. Emily was no exception, and she is listed as Mrs W Berry, residing at 41 Grimshaw Lane, Bollington.¹⁵ A year later, at the age of 40 Emily retired from her career in teaching. According to the press report Emily retired from her post as assistant head at the Bollington Parish Church School Infants Department in December

⁸ *Crewe Guardian*, 27 June 1913, 3; England and Wales 1911 Census, RG14, Monks Copenhall Registration District, Piece 21797

⁹ *Macclesfield Times*, 1 June 1917,6

¹⁰ England, Cheshire, Non-Conformist Records 1671-1900 accessed via www.familysearch.com; *Primitive Methodist Leader*, 25 May 1911, 4

¹¹ England and Wales 1921 Census, RG15, Macclesfield Registration District, Piece 16756

¹² *Macclesfield Times*, 9 September 1921, 8

¹³ For more details and images of the Primitive Methodist building in Bollington see - https://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/content/chapels/cheshire/a-b-cheshire/bollingtonhigh_street_pm_chapel_cheshire

¹⁴ *Macclesfield Times*, 22 December 1922, 8; *Macclesfield Times*, 17 December 1926, 8;

¹⁵ 1908-1929, Souvenir of the 21st Anniversary, CCTCC, Unpublished data, under the care of the Family History Society of Cheshire, Crewe

1930, at the same time as the head of the department, Miss Turner. A crowded senior school building witnessed a presentation of parting gifts to both women. The many guests included local councillors, Miss Earlam, the Cheshire County inspector of Schools and clergy of many denominations. Emily was thanked for her 11 years of service as the assistant head, her services were noted as being very valuable to the school. The vicar presented Emily with a ring set with a ruby as a token of the esteem and affection that she held.¹⁶

Emily's retirement sadly was not destined to be long, as on 15 January 1936 at the age of just 45 she died of breast cancer at home. Wilfred was by her side and her demise was certified by the doctor present at the time, E Coope.¹⁷ Her death announcement in the local newspaper noted that Emily was well known in the town and district, that she was a former day school teacher and a daughter of the late Councillor Mr W H King.¹⁸ Her funeral took place at Bollington Parish Church and was attended by family and many friends,¹⁹ she was buried in the graveyard and an image of her gravestone can be seen at the following link - <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/242154317/emily-a-berry>. Wilfred posted an acknowledgement to give sincere thanks for the many floral tributes and letters and messages of sympathy he had received. Interestingly, for the Few Forgotten Women team at least, he also thanks those '*who held absent intercession*' which included the doctor who signed Emily's death certificate, E Coope, who was actually Dr Eileen Coope, one of only a small number of female GPs at that time.²⁰ Emily died intestate, letters of administration being granted to Wilfred as her lawful husband on 14 March 1936, her estate being valued as £119:4:7d.²¹

Emily was one of the married women who continued to teach despite the fact that the law in force during the period stated that women, once married, should resign their position. Many married women however were employed due to the lack of male teachers available during WWI and continued after the war had ended and this may well have been the case for Emily. It was generally considered that it was advantageous to have married women as teachers

¹⁶ *Macclesfield Times*, 24 December 1930, 8

¹⁷ Death Certificate, Emily Adams Berry, 15 January 1936

¹⁸ *Macclesfield Times*, 17 January 1936, 12

¹⁹ *Macclesfield Times*, 24 January 1936, 12

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Letters of Administration, 14 March 1936, granted at the District Probate Registry of Manchester; Wilfred marries again in 1945, *Macclesfield Times*, 4 October 1945, 12

especially in infant and girls' schools.²² I was delighted to read that among the floral tributes at her funeral were names of women that I recognise as being former students at CCTCC, Nellie, Lorna, Ellen, Ruth, and Winnie. This suggests that the friendships Emily formed at the college with the women of that first cohort of students lasted for the rest of her life.

**Narrative by Margaret Roberts
Few Forgotten Women Team**

²² See - [https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1930-07-02/debates/0312aa7e-df3a-4661-a3b0-fd07a5e71d4a/MarriedWomenTeachers\(Employment\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1930-07-02/debates/0312aa7e-df3a-4661-a3b0-fd07a5e71d4a/MarriedWomenTeachers(Employment))