

# *This is A Few Forgotten Women Story*



*This story was written, in March 2023, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who appear in the 1901 census for St. Joseph's Inebriate Reformatory, Ashford, Middlesex and Farmfield Reformatory for Inebriate Women, Horley, Surrey.*

## **Alice Jones 's Story**

Alice Jones was admitted to the Farmfield Reformatory for Inebriate Women in Horley, Surrey on 1 October 1900. Alice, who was 29 years old, was described as being 4 feet 8 inches in height, weighing 108lbs, with a fair complexion, dark brown hair, and grey eyes. She bore smallpox marks and a scar on the right side of her upper lip and chin.

At the time of her admittance, Alice was said to be single and living alone. She had no living children although her admission notes say she was the mother of three children who had died. She was of no fixed abode, and working as a charwoman.

Whilst the details of her family are very scant, Alice was said to have been born in Hackney, the 6<sup>th</sup> child in the family, with one unnamed brother still living. Her father, described as intemperate, was dead, possibly from phthisis, and her mother was not named. Her admission notes state that Alice had been taken from her home at 16 years of age to lead an immoral life with a gentleman. She had commenced drinking at 18 and had been abandoned by the man after about 4 years. Her intemperate habit was said to be regular with a continuous desire for drink. She favoured rum and whiskey and when intoxicated was cheerful and occasionally violent. Her criminal record notes 34 counts of drunkenness, 4 counts of prostitution and 2 other misdemeanours, and she had been imprisoned 16 times with 24 other sentences.

Details of Alice's drunken behaviour is captured by numerous newspaper accounts of her court appearances. The first such account found was when Alice was about 17 years old:

*Kentish Mercury*, 25 April 1890

GREENWICH POLICE COURT

TUESDAY

DRUNKENNESS – Alice Jones, 17, hawker, of 45 Regent-street, Deptford, drunk and disorderly and using obscene language at Regent-street. - Discharged

There is then a gap of 4 years before the next newspaper article, but from 1897 there are two or more reports per year concerning Alice's drunk behaviour.

*Islington Gazette*, 5 July 1894

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY

Alice Jones, aged 24, of Margaret's-place, charged with disorderly conduct and using bad language, at Mare-street, denied the allegation, and asked how she could use bad language if there was no one to swear at? She alleged that the police constantly pursued her because she had the misfortune of being locked up once before. Fined 7s. or five days imprisonment.

*Islington Gazette*, 1 April 1897

NORTH LONDON POLICE

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Alice Jones, aged 25, flower-seller, of Rushmore-road, charged with being drunk and disorderly and using bad language at Amherst-road, was find 3s, or three days imprisonment.

*Islington Gazette*, 24 August 1897

NORTH LONDON POLICE

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Alice Jones, aged 27, of Brick-lane, objected to being mistaken for another delinquent well known at the Court; and consequently, upbraided the constable who called her by a different name. Then she was arrested on a charge of being drunk and disorderly, and

using bad language; but as she had not been in trouble for some time, she was allowed to go on payment of 5s.

*Islington Gazette*, 6 September 1897

NORTH LONDON POLICE

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Alice Jones, aged 26, of Brick-lane, was fined 10s, or seven days imprisonment for being drunk and disorderly at Dalston-lane, on Thursday night.

*Islington Gazette*, 2 February 1898

NORTH LONDON POLICE

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Alice Jones, 26, an old offender in the drunk and disorderly list, was charged with being drunk and with assaulting the police. As she did not keep her promise to reform, Mr D'Eyncourt sent her to gaol for a month's hard labour.

*Islington Gazette*, 2 May 1898

NORTH LONDON POLICE

SUMMONSES

Alice Jones, 26, box-maker, of Tower-buildings, Grove-road, said she certainly would reform if allowed to go. But she was not so drunk as the policeman made out. Mr D'Eyncourt let her go with the instruction that next time she came there she would get the heaviest sentence possible for her offence.

*Islington Gazette*, 13 July 1899

NORTH LONDON POLICE

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Alice Jones, 28, of Brick-lane, and Mary Hurley, 30, laundress, of Millfields-road, were charged with being drunk and disorderly, and using bad language at Pembury-road: and both got 14 days.

*Islington Gazette*, 1 August 1899

NORTH LONDON POLICE

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Alice Jones, 27, box-maker, of Brick-lane, made another appearance on a charge of drunkenness and disorderly conduct in the street. She got a month's hard labour.

*Islington Gazette*, 14 September 1899

NORTH LONDON POLICE

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Alice Jones, 29, of Brick-lane, made another appearance on a charge of being drunk and disorderly in Richmond-road, this time, and was fined 10s.

*Islington Gazette*, 3 October 1899

NORTH LONDON POLICE

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Alice Jones, 28, ironer, of Brick-lane, added one more to the long list of convictions against her for being drunk and disorderly at Dalston-lane, and was fined 10s, or 14 days.

*Hackney and Kingsland Gazette, 8 August 1900*

Maggie Elliott, 35, married, of Peter-street, Hackney, and Alice Jones, 30, flower-seller, of Brick-lane, were charged at the North London Police-court, on Monday, with being drunk and disorderly and using bad language at Kingsland-road. This was at 2.30 in the morning.

Mr Fordham suggested that they may have lost their way as well as their hats.

Police-constable 429 J said both prisoners knew very well where they were.

The gaoler said this was Elliott's thirty-first appearance at this Court on similar charges (four times this year), and Jones, too, had been many times charged.

Mr Fordham sent both of them to gaol for a month's hard labour.

*Islington Gazette, 20 September 1900*

NORTH LONDON POLICE

ANOTHER CANDIDATE

Alice Jones, 27, of Brick-lane, who has been many times convicted of drunkenness, shed genuine tears when Mr John Dickinson suggested that she should go to a Home for Inebriates.

Gaoler Baker said she had qualified for admission by the fact that she had been four times convicted of drunkenness this year.

The prisoner (addressing the Magistrate) said, "Oh, don't send me away. I will be good. I will be a teetotaller!" but

Mr Dickinson replied, "I will remand you in custody, and consider what I will do with you."

Alice was admitted to Farmfield Reformatory 10 days later, sentenced to three years for drunk and riotous behaviour. On arrival, Alice was said to be most abject and healthy, though quiet on admission. Her general health was good but her mental condition was recorded as weak. Whilst her conduct at Farmfield was noted as being fairly good, Alice was described as a very weak woman who was easily influenced.

On 6 February 1903, Alice was released on probation into the care of her mother, who was not well. Sadly, her mother died shortly after, with Alice quickly relapsing as a result and finding herself up in court once again:

*Echo (London)*, 2 March 1903

#### BEGGING FOR PRISON

After being committed to the Farmfield Reformatory as a habitual drunkard, Alice Jones, a laundress, of Shrubland-road, Dalston, was released on probation in care of her mother, who has since died.

Alice at North London today pleaded guilty to once more being drunk and incapable. She asked the magistrate to be lenient, and begged him to send her to prison, but not to the home again. She had had a lot of trouble, and "I don't want to drink anymore."

The magistrate remanded her for inquiries at the home.

*Islington Gazette*, 3 March 1903

#### PREFERRED PRISON TO THE HOME

Alice Jones, 34, laundress, of Shrubland-road, Dalston, was charged at North London Police court yesterday, with being drunk near her residence.

Police inspector Wallace, of the J division, said the prisoner was out on license from the Farmfield Inebriates' Home. Last year she was sent away for two years, but was let out on license because of the serious illness of her mother.

Mr Fordham – I suppose I must send her back again.

The prisoner – Give me imprisonment. Don't send me back to the Home.

Mr Fordham – It would probably be much better that you should go back to the Home.

The prisoner – Oh, don't do that!

Mr Fordham – I don't want to punish you – I want to cure you of drunkenness.

The prisoner – I have had a lot of trouble. I don't particularly want to drink.

Mr Fordham – You are remanded; and the inspector will communicate with the authorities at Farmfield.



Following her relapse, Alice was readmitted to Farmfield for a further 6 months before her discharge on 29 September 1903. However, it was not long before Alice was back on the drink (a later newspaper report suggests her relapse was immediate) and getting into trouble as a result, as further newspaper articles depict:

*Echo (London)*, 16 October 1903

#### BEYOND ALL HOPE

Committed to the Farmfield Reformatory in October, 1900, Emily, otherwise Alice Jones, a Bethnal Green charwoman, was released at the end of 2½ years on licence, but was almost immediately charged again, and was sent back to complete her term.

She was finally discharged five weeks ago, but was up again at North London today on a charge of being drunk and disorderly and using obscene language.

Mr Holmes, the missionary, said everything possible had been done to give the woman a chance of redeeming her character, and the magistrate fined her 2s. 6d. or three days.

*Islington Gazette*, 15 February 1904

#### “QUITE HOPELESS”

At North London Police-court, on Saturday, Emily Kenny, 40, a flower seller, of White’s-road, Spitalfields, was charged with being drunk, disorderly, and using bad language in the street. This was at 12.30 that morning, at Lower Clapton-road, where the prisoner was making night hideous by her noise.

Assistant-gaoler Clover told the Magistrate that the prisoner had been to an Inebriates' Home, and was on the "Blacklist;" but since she was released from the Home last October she had been nine times convicted for similar conduct. Her real name was Alice Jones.

The prisoner was asked for another chance. She said she unfortunately took a little spirit, to which she was not accustomed, and in her weak condition, caused by continuous imprisonment, she was unable to stand it.

Mr Fordham – But you become such a nuisance to other people. I can call upon you to find a surety to keep the peace, or send you to gaol for six months. I shall now send you to prison for 14 days.

The prisoner – Thank you, sir; God bless you, sir.

Mr Fordham – I shall make it six months next time.

Addressing Mr Holmes, the missionary, Mr Fordham said: this is quite a hopeless case, I suppose?

Mr Holmes – Oh yes; quite. The first day she came out of the Inebriates' Home she went back to her old life.

*Islington Gazette, 7 March 1904*

#### MR FORDHAM AND THE INEBRIATES' HOME

At the North London Police-court on Friday, there were two women answering charges of being drunk and disorderly in the streets, and as each of these had been in homes for inebriates Mr Fordham made some strong comments upon the administration of those institutions. The women were Alice Jones, 32, with no fixed abode, who the gaoler said had been ten times convicted of

drunkenness since she was released from the home; and Alice Francis, 35, who was released on license from the Farmfield Home in January last. The first-named had been let out on license and sent back to complete her term, and the latter had only served 16 months out of the three years to which she was sentenced when she was let go...

*Islington Gazette, 22 June 1904*

#### ANOTHER INEBRIATES' HOME FAILURE

Alice Jones, 36, who refused her address, appeared in the dock at North London Police-court yesterday, minus hat or jacket, and with arms folded, to answer a charge of being drunk and disorderly in the street.

This was at Dalston-lane at 1.40 that morning. The policeman who arrested her said she had been many times convicted, and once had been sent for three years to an Inebriates' Home. But she had been released on license, and was soon in trouble again.

Mr Fordham – This is another of those cases in which the intention of the Magistrate has been frustrated by the authorities at the Inebriates' Home. The Magistrate thought that a long abstinence would be the only cure; but the authorities thought differently, and let her out on license. No good at all.

The gaoler – There are nine convictions against her since she was liberated from the Home. The last time she had three months.

Mr Fordham – What can I do for you, Jones?

The prisoner – Give me another chance.

Mr Fordham – You will find one surety in £50 to be of good behaviour for 12 months, or go to gaol for six months, with hard labour.

The prisoner – My God!

Alice did in fact get sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and on 29 August 1904 was in Holloway Prison. On her release, there was absolutely no change in her behaviour:

*The People*, 14 May 1905

North London

#### INEBRIATE HOME FAILURE

Alice Jones, 35, charwoman, of Dorset-st, Spitalfields, was charged with being drunk, disorderly and using obscene language at Dalston-lane. Prisoner did not dispute the charge. She is one of the women who had been treated at the Farmfield Reformatory for Inebriates, and was detained there for two years. Since her release she had made 12 appearances at this court on charges of drunkenness. Mr Fordham now called upon the prisoner to find one surety in £20 to keep the peace for six months, or three months in default.

*Islington Gazette*, 19 January 1906

NORTH LONDON POLICE

AND JONES

Alice Jones, 38, charwoman, of Dorset-street, Spitalfields, who was drunk at Richmond-road, had many previous convictions of a similar character against her; and now had to pay 40s. or go to gaol for a month.

The records from Farmfield Reformatory note that in 1906 Alice was sent to Aylesbury, presumably Aylesbury Prison Inebriates Centre, for a further 3 years. The following newspaper article confirms her committal:

*Islington Gazette*, 23 July 1906

NORTH LONDON POLICE

SENT TO A HOME

Alice Jones, 36, of Brick-lane, who has been many times convicted of drunken and disorderly conduct in the street, was sent to an Inebriates' Reformatory for three years, though she pleaded to be sent to prison instead.

A further description and photograph of Alice can be found in the Registers of Habitual Criminals. They confirm that she was convicted on 21 July 1906. She was described as being 36 years old, 5 foot 1 inch, of medium build, with a fresh complexion, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, a straight nose, an oval face, and scars on the bridge of her nose, right cheek, and on right side of upper lip. Alice's residence was recorded as Brick Lane, Spitalfields and her profession was prostitute. She was known to frequent Amhurst Road and Dalston

Lane in Hackney. [UK, Registers of Habitual Criminals and Police Gazettes, 1834-1934 - Ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

Despite these additional 3 years of detention, Alice was still unable to stay away from alcohol upon her release.

*Islington Gazette*, 31 August 1910

Alice Jones, 40, no fixed abode, pleaded guilty to a charge of being drunk and disorderly at Lower Clapton-road at a late hour last Monday night.

Assistant-gaoler Allard said that there were seven convictions against prisoner for drunkenness this year. She had been in an Inebriates' Home twice – three years each time.

She was sentenced to a month's hard labour.

After this newspaper article in 1910, only two further articles were found that MAY relate to this Alice (with more time and widening search terms other relevant reports might come to light):

*Fulham Chronicle*, 28 May 1915

WESTMINSTER POLICE COURT

TROUBLESOME AT WILTON ROAD – Alice Jones, 41, address and occupation not tendered was charged with being drunk and disorderly at Wilton-road. PC Stevenson, 461B, said that prisoner was drunk and catching hold of gentlemen's arms. She was violent all the way to the station. Prisoner who admitted the charge, was fined 10s or seven days imprisonment.

*Marylebone Mercury, 24 July 1926*

### THE "DYING" DRUNK

Alice Jones, 50, of no fixed abode, when charged with being drunk and incapable at Wilsden, pleaded she was too ill to work and she had a drop to cure pains in her head. "I am really dying. I ought to be in the hospital instead of in prison," she added.

Mr W B Luke: The police doctor takes a far more hopeful view. He does not think there is much the matter. I suppose you haven't any money?

Alice: Of course not. I have been too ill to work.

She was sent to prison for seven days, the magistrate saying is she was too ill she would be taken to hospital.

*Hendon & Finchley Times, 29 September 1933*

DRUNKENNESS – Alice Jones, aged 63, whose address was given as the Church Army Home, Westminster, was charged at the Wealdstone Petty Sessions on Friday with being drunk and incapable at Brent-street, Hendon, on September 21. In view of the fact that she had been in custody all night she was discharged.

With such a common name, and with so little information to go on, at the present time, it has not been possible to identify Alice's birth or death, although the search continues. Evidence would suggest that Alice was born 1870 – 1873 in Hackney, Middlesex.

In that time frame, there are three possible birth registrations:

Alice Jones	Mar 1871	MMN: Partridge
Alice Grace Jones	Dec 1871	MMN: Aldersley

Alice Mary Jones      Jun 1873      MMN: Gunner

However, there are also two death registrations:

Alice Jones              Sep 1873      Age: 2

Alice Mary Jones      Sep 1873      Age: 0

With regard to census records, if she was born in 1870 to early 1871, she should be listed in the 1871 and 1881 census with her family. Possible entries still need to be checked. It is known that Alice's mother died between 6 February and 2 March 1903. There is a Harriet Jones whose death was registered in Hackney registration district in the first quarter of 1903. There are 16 other possible individuals if the search is extended to all of London.

Alice was said to have a brother who was still living in 1900. Above the report of Alice's arrest and fine in August 1897 there is also the following report:

*Islington Gazette*, 24 August 1897

Charles Jones, aged 19, gas-fitter, of Dunlace-road, charged with disorderly conduct in Dalston-lane, and causing a crowd to assemble, was fined 2s. 6d.

With Alice known to have a connection to Dalston Lane, could Charles be her brother? This might be worth following up.

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## Sources

Farmfield Reformatory for Inebriate Women, Horley, Surrey RG13 629 folios 151-152

FindmyPast, **British Newspapers**

The National Archives; Kew, London, England; MEPO 6: Metropolitan Police: Criminal Record Office: **Habitual Criminals Registers and Miscellaneous Papers**; Reference: MEPO 6/80

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