

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]

Florence Roscoe's Story

Florence was born on 3rd August 1891 and baptised 20 days later in Christ Church, Crewe, the tenth of twelve children born to Robert Benjamin Roscoe and his wife Maria, nee Greenhalgh.¹ Robert was a fitter in the London and North Western Railway Company's [LNWR] Nut and Bolts workshop, housed at the railway engineering works in Crewe eventually becoming the workshop foreman. Here he oversaw the training of apprentices, the majority of whom it was reported rose to high positions in the railway industry both in the UK and abroad. Robert was also an instructor at the Mechanics Institute where CCTCC held lectures for the first 4 years of its existence.²

¹ Cheshire Diocese of Chester Parish Baptisms 1538-1911, Christ Church Crewe, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk; 1901 England Census, RG13, Crewe, Cheshire, Folio 128; GRO Marriages Indexes, 1876, September Quarter, Nantwich District, Vol 8a, page 471

² Crewe Chronicle, Saturday 7 March 1942, page 8

The Roscoe children attended the Central primary school in town before transferring in turn to Crewe Secondary school. Florence's records show that she excelled at maths especially.³ The entry in the 1909 student register relating to Florence suggests that she was a promising trainee teacher as she sat not only the London Matriculation examination but the Preliminary Certificate for entry into CCTCC, the latter which she passed with distinctions in English, French, History and Maths.⁴

Robert and Maria lived at 9 Delamere Street in Crewe for most of their married life and in 1911 Florence is enumerated at that address, along with 9 of her siblings and her parents and noted as being a 19-year-old student in the teaching profession. One of her brothers, Joseph, is listed as an assistant teacher employed by the borough council.⁵

Florence graduated in 1911, however I don't think she ever became a teacher, as unhappily she died in 1913, the first line of her obituary states she was a former student of Crewe Secondary school and CCTCC, with no mention of her teaching at the time of her death, but that is just speculation on my part. Her funeral report in the Crewe Guardian lists several of her college friends as being in attendance, you can read the stories of these students on the CCTCC section of Few Forgotten Women website. Other details from her funeral service suggest that she was well liked at college; her coffin was carried into church by some of the male students who trained at the same time as Florence, the organ

³ National School Admission Registers and Logbooks, accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk

⁴ CCTCC Student Registers [1908-1935]: CCTCC Archives, Unpublished data, under the care of the Family History Society of Cheshire, Crewe

⁵ 1911 England Census, RG14, Crewe, Cheshire, Piece 21772

was played by the CCTCC music lecturer, and the funeral was attended by the college principal and his wife as well as most of the lecturing staff.⁶

Florence's father was obviously one of those artisan workers who understood the value of education. Most of the Roscoe male children followed their father into the railway works, rising to positions of influence as trainers and teachers both in the works, at the Mechanics Institute and the town's Technical College.⁷ One brother, Joseph, also trained to be a teacher, he undertook his studies at Peterborough Training College and his career saw him as headmaster at three local schools, a governor on a number of primary, secondary, and colleges in the area, as well as being a prominent member of the local masonic lodge. His obituary in 1965 notes that his only child, a daughter Joan, who had followed in her Aunt Florence's footsteps and trained at CCTCC, was at her father's death the headmistress of a primary school in Bramhall, near Stockport in Cheshire.⁸ Joan had previously taught at Brookhead CP School and Wilmslow Country Infants School, and at the time of her appointment as head at Bramhall was deputy head at Romiley CP School near Stockport.⁹

Florence had 4 sisters, Mary, Maria, Margaret, and Janet, none of whom married. After the death of their mother in 1927,¹⁰ Mary took on the role of housekeeper, the four women continue to live together, at first in the family home and then later moving into a house is nearby Wistaston, which enabled them all to carry on their various careers in local companies. Maria worked for

⁶ Crewe Guardian, Friday 18 April 1913, page 5

⁷ Crewe Chronicle, Saturday 26 June 1965, page 16

⁸ Nantwich Chronicle, 18 November 1965, page 8

⁹ Crewe Chronicle, Saturday 14 November 1959, page 18

¹⁰ Crewe Cemetery Records accessed via Deceased Online

LNWR as a wages clerk,¹¹ and Janet studied to become a pharmaceutical dispenser, a career she followed all her life.¹² Margaret was a manageress at the Central Confectionery Department at the Crewe Co-operative Friendly Society, she started in the bakery in 1916 and worked for the society until she retired in 1957.¹³ Maria and Margaret were also prominent members of the Christ Church Ladies Society.¹⁴ The sisters therefore avoided the constraints of marriage and child rearing, in order to follow the dictates of their own lives and I'm sure Florence would have not been an exception.

Margaret Roberts [Few Forgotten Women Team]

¹¹ 1939 National Register, Mary E, Janet, Maria, and Maggie Rosoce, Borough: Crewe, District: Crewe 449-2

¹² Crewe Chronicle, Saturday 19 June 1965, page 18

¹³ Evening Sentinel, Monday 11 July 1966, page 8; Crewe Chronicle, Thursday 28 July 1966, page 5

¹⁴ Crewe Chronicle - Saturday 18 June 1955, page 5