

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written in April 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women staff and female patients associated with the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital, Jesmond, Northumberland.

Lily Hymers Story

Lily Hymer a 10-year-old patient in the 1891 Census at the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital at Jesmond in Northumberland.

We first find Lily on the 1881 Census with her father Thomas Hymers, her mother Jane Hymers and paternal grandmother Mary Hymers living at Westerly Terrace, Haltwhistle, Northumberland. She was born in June 1880 in Haltwhistle.

Lily's father Thomas Hymer born in Lambley, Northumberland in 1856 and like his father John, was a carpenter/joiner. His mother Mary, and brother Thomas, a joiner apprentice also show on the 1871 Census.

Lily's mother Jane Ridley was born in Haltwhistle, Northumberland in 1852 as per the Census records. In Freebmd (birth, marriage, and death index), there are 4 Jane Ridley's: 2 born in 1852; 1 in 1851 and 1 in 1853 in Haltwhistle. Without the formal records it is difficult to identify which one was her mother.

Thomas Hymer and Jane Ridley were married in June 1877 in Haltwhistle. Lily was their first-born daughter, per the 1881 Census.

Lily's grandmother Mary died in 1887 (59 years), and her mother Jane Hymers (nee Ridly) died in 1888 (36 years) in Newcastle upon Tyne. Lily would have been only 8 years old.

1891 was an eventful year, Lily (aged 10) was a patient, at the Fleming Memorial Childrens Hospital. Her father, Thomas married his second wife, Emily A and two children were showing on the census with them - Mary aged 13 (b:1878) and John T aged 8 (b:1883) were living at No 10 Budle Street, Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne. From the year of birth for the two children we can ascertain that they seem to be both of Janes children as well.

Lily's sister Mary was born in 1878, right after the marriage of Thomas and Jane, but she is not listed on the 1881 Census with them. On further investigation, I found her living as a boarder, at age 3 with a Mary Ridley (Head-Widow) in Ulpham, Hartleyburn, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, England. I noticed that on the census there are two other Girls listed as Grand daughters, Mary J and Lizzie.

Of Interest this Mary Ridley could be our Jane's mother, and that the granddaughters Mary J and Lizzie were one of Jane's siblings' daughters. Why Mary was shown as a boarder, we might never know.

Life in the hospital was not an easy life.

The hospital, although established in Hanover Square in 1863, was deemed inadequate. It was a new building financed by John Fleming in memory of his late wife. It was officially opened in Jesmond in September 1888. So, when Lily was there it was only 3 years old. Despite being fairly new at the time, the hospital was poorly constructed with drainage issues and rampant staphylococcus A infections. I found an article written in September 1892 in Hospital (Lond 1886) (link to full article in Sources below) which states: *' We were informed that on several occasions steps have been taken to re-adjust the drainage which has from the first been unsatisfactory. There was patent evidence of the unhealthiness of the institution at the time of our visit, in the languid aspect of the children, supported by the presence of erysipelas in the wards. There was additional evidence which came under our notice, which we refrain from quoting here. The wards, though they contain, as we have said, handsome furniture, i.e., brass cots and expensive fittings, are too narrow for sick rooms, and sadly overcrowded, that is to say, there is not an adequate superficial area per cot. We are sorry to have to say all this, but we think it is only right to speak out in the interests of the poor little sufferers, and also for*

the Committee, who can have no knowledge of the real dangers which the children under their charge are unnecessarily undergoing within the walls of this institution.'



An undated postcard showing the interior of one of the wards in the Fleming Memorial Hospital Jesmond. The walls are lined with beds and there is a row of tables in the centre of the room. Children are either sitting up in their beds or standing in front of them. Nurses can be seen in the background. Hospitals Collection: Local Studies Printed Copy : If you would like a printed copy of this image please contact Newcastle Libraries

At the age of 20 Lily was a milliner and living at home with her family – father Thomas, her stepmother Emily A, her sister Mary and brother John T. Her two half siblings were there as well, Percy born in 1892 and Floy (aka Florrie) born in 1894. They lived in no 9 Campbell Street, Elswick, Newcastle on Tyne. Her father was a foreman cabinet maker, her sister Mary a dressmaker, her brother John T a photographer.



Early Winter hats from the November 1901 issue of Delineator magazine.

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The suicide of a Newcastle Tradesman the Newcastle Journal reported on 23 May 1902 advises that Thomas Hymers, (Lily's father) of 9 Campbell street assisted his neighbours wife in forcing the scullery door open and

found his neighbour James William Pye, aged 37, draper, deceased'

Lily Hymers passed away in 1903 at the age of 23, from Phthisis Exhaustion (Tuberculosis)

In 1909 on Tuesday March 9th, it was reported in The Evening Chronicle – the re-opening after a renovation of the school room at Park Road Wesleyan Church in Newcastle, and that there was a dedication of stained-glass windows to the memory of workers:' of which Lily and her half-sister Florrie Hymers, were mentioned.

Park Road Wesleyan Church.
The re-opening after renovation of the school room in connection with Park Road Wesleyan Church, Newcastle, took place yesterday evening. There was a large company, and the ceremony was performed by the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, of London, who also delivered a sermon prior to the proceedings. There were also dedicated a number of stained-glass windows to the memory of the following old workers:—Mr. Thomas Dargue, Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Lamb, Miss Pollie Armstrong, Mr. John Hunter-Bright, Margaret Johnson, J. C. and M. Gamwell, Jane Cross, Lily and Florrie Hymers, and John and Sarah Urwin. The chair was occupied by the Rev. J. Birtwistle, and among those who took part in the proceedings were Mr. M. W. Swinburne, Mr. J. R. D. Bell, Mr. John Hutchinson, and Mr. T. Arkless. At night, Mr. Young gave a lecture on "Impressions of America," which was greatly enjoyed.



Google maps showing the church where the stained-glass windows were dedicated to Lily.

Sources

www.findmypast.co.uk

1851 Census - Seat Sides, Henshaw, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, England

1861 Census - Towes Bank, Lambley under Asholme, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, England

1861 Census Begg, Edges Green, Melkridge, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, England

1871 Census Hawthorn Terrace, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, England

1871 Census Prospect House, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, England

1881 Census Westerly Terrace, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, England

1881 Census Ulpham, Hartleyburn, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, England

1891 Census Fleming Childrens Hospital, North Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, England

1891 Census 10, Budle Street, Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, England

1901 Census 9, Campbell Street, Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, England

1911 Census 65 Elswick Row Newcastle upon Tyne, Westgate, Northumberland, England

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The evening Chronicle, Tuesday 9th March 1909 page 7

Newcastle Journal Friday 23rd May 1902 page 6

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Picture of Park Road, Wesleyan Methodist Church

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Hospital (Lond 1886) Journals - Article 1892 Sep 24, 12 (313) page 430

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Photo of Childrens ward – Public Domain

www.flickr.com

1901 Early Winter Hats (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clotho98/3607306261/in/pool-44019984@N00/>) Non Commercial CC BY-NC-2.0)

www.genuki.org.uk : Death Notices Transcribed from Newcastle Evening Chronicle

<https://jmvh.org/article/history-of-tuberculosis-part-1-phthisis-consumption-and-the-white-plague/>