

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in November 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who were found residing or working in various homes for Fallen Women in the census returns.

Ellen Botting's Story

Ellen Botting was born in May 1863 and christened in Horsham on the 31st May¹, her birth being registered in the June quarter of 1863, to Richard and Emily Botting, nee Rapley, who married in 1860². She was their second child and first daughter, her brother, Edward being born 2 years previously³.

By the 1871 Census,⁴ the family were living in Sullington, Broadbridge Heath near Horsham. Her father is shown as a widower, aged 37, a miller who was

¹ Baptisms (PR) England and Wales. Horsham, Sussex. 31 May 1863. BOTTING, Ellen. Collection: Sussex Baptisms Index. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

² Marriages index (CR) England & Wales. RD Horsham, Sussex. 3rd Q. BOTTING, Richard and RAPLEY, Emily. Vol 2b. p. 383. <https://freebmd.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

³ Baptisms (PR) England and Wales. Horsham, Sussex. 24 February 1861. BOTTING, Edward. Collection: Sussex Baptisms Index. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

⁴ Census records. England. Sullington, Sussex. 02 April 1871. BOTTING, Richard (Head). RG10/1165. FN 56. P 1. Collection: England 1871 Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

born in Sullington. Ellen, aged 7 is shown as a scholar as is her brother, Edward, aged 10, both born in Sullington. Her younger sister, Mary Ann, in 1871 census⁵, is aged 5 and a scholar, is in the house of John Parsons, a labourer also living in Broadbridge Heath, but she is described as a nurse/child, so may have been living with this family since her mother died in childbirth.⁶

Ellen appears on the 1881 Census⁷ as an inmate of St Thomas' Home for the Friendless and Fallen, in Sherborne Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire. The home was originally established in 1864 in Gosport and moved to Sherborne Road in 1874. It was run by the sisters of Charity, an Anglican Order on behalf of the Church Penitentiary Association. The home had room for 48 women aged from 15-30 years and on average they stayed at the home for 2 years, being trained in needlework, laundry, dairy work and cooking. How Ellen came to be here or who sent her here is not known, but further research of the registers of admission, might explain this, but they were not available for this research day.

Ellen may have married Thomas Miles, a labourer in 1885⁸, when she was aged 22, although she appears to be using the name Helen now. In the 1891 census⁹ she and Thomas, a Brewers Labourer, are living in Mansion Alley, Leatherhead, some 18 miles to the north of Horsham. Ellen makes a comeback in the 1901

⁵ Census records. England. Sullington, Sussex. 02 April 1871. PARSONS, John (Head). RG10/1105. FN 57. P 3. Collection: England 1871 Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

⁶ Death index (CR). England & Wales. RD Thakeham, Horsham, Sussex. 1st Q. 1866. BOTTING, Emily. Vol 2b. p. 209. <https://freebmd.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

⁷ Census records. England. Basingstoke, Hampshire. 03 April 1881. VENESS, Rachel (Head). RG11/1255. FN 08. P 13. Collection: England 1881 Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

⁸ Marriages index (CR) England & Wales. RD Epsom, Surrey. 2nd Q. MILES, Thomas and BOTTING, Helen. Vol 2a. p. 25. <https://freebmd.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

⁹ Census records. England. Leatherhead, Surrey. 05 April 1891. MILES, Thomas (Head). RG12/548. FN 12. P 17. Collection: England 1891 Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

census,¹⁰ as wife to a General Labourer, but no children are in the household. In the 1911 census,¹¹ we discover that she (Helen) and Thomas have been married for 25 years and have had no children born alive during that time. In the 1921 census¹², Thomas is a Hire Carter, and they are both still living in the same house in Leatherhead.

In the 1939 Register¹³, there is an 'E' Miles living in 10 Headcorn Road, Croydon, aged about 75, a widow, living alone doing unpaid domestic duties. Ellen Miles of 18 Percival Way, Ewell, Surrey dies in November 1949¹⁴, aged 87 and probate is granted to her husband's cousin, Beatrice¹⁵.

¹⁰ Census records. England. Leatherhead, Surrey. 31 March 1901. MILES, Thomas (Head). RG13/585. FN 12. P 15. Collection: England 1901 Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

¹¹ Census records. England. Leatherhead, Surrey. 02 April 1911. MILES, Thomas (Head). RG14/31/3. ED 2. SN 18. Collection: England 1911 Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

¹² Census records. England. Leatherhead, Surrey. 19 June 1921. MILES, Thomas (Head). RG15/31/3. ED 2. SN 12. Collection: England 1921 Census. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

¹³ 1939 Register, England. Croydon, Surrey. MILES, E. 29 September 1939. [Transcription] Schedule 236/1. RG101/1303G/013/39. National Archives (Great Britain), Kew, England. Collection: 1939 Register. www.findmypast.co.uk : accessed 07 November 2024.

¹⁴ Death Index (CR) England & Wales. Mid-Surrey. 4th Q. 1949. MILES, Ellen. Vol. 5g. p. 156. <https://freebmd.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.

¹⁵ Testamentary records. England. 21 January 1950. MILES, Ellen. Principal Probate Registry. *Calendar of the grants of probate*. p. 862. Collection: England & Wales, National Probate Calendar, 1858-1995. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 November 2024.