

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in September 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of pupils at the Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor (later The Royal School for the Deaf), Margate, Kent and The West of England Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Exeter, Devon.

Elizabeth Jane Emmeline Smith's Story

Elizabeth Jane Emmeline Smith was born to **John Joseph** and **Elizabeth Jane Smith** on the 15th October 1888 at 18 Crosby Road, Long Lane, Bermondsey.

Her baptism took place at the Parish Church of St. Hugo in Bermondsey, Southwark. St Hugo's Church is the partner church of Southwark Cathedral.

Elizabeth had one sibling who died very young,



St. Hugo's

It was not known if Elizabeth was born deaf but by the age of ten her parents had applied to the *Royal Asylum for the Deaf and the Dumb Poor*.

The Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor was founded in 1792, the first public institution to provide a free education for this group. It opened a branch in Margate in 1876 and moved entirely from London to Margate in 1905, so pupils could benefit from the sea air.



The Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor in Margate

By way of a voting system, Elizabeth (perhaps she was called Emmeline by her parents), was elected on the 11th July 1898 and admitted to the Asylum on the 4th September 1899. She was sent to the Margate Asylum on the 8th August 1900.

On her first examination in 1899 it was found that *'Elizabeth was of only moderate capability. Has had two years of oral instruction but without much result. Voice weak.*

Articulation very defective'. In March 1900 she is 'doing fairly well'. In November 1900 'Good progress except for articulation'.

Elizabeth's father John was expected to pay for her board and lodging. This amounted to about £2.50 per week. John was assisted in this regard by two Sureties – **Hugh Carloss**, Master Baker, of 67 Long Lane, Bermondsey, and **J. E. Woozley**, Dairyman, of 3 Long Lane, Bermondsey.

Elizabeth is recorded in a Register dated 1895 to 1913. She is reflected there as having a Post Office Savings Book earned from undertaking repairs.

She appears in the 1901 Census at the Asylum in Margate along with twenty-five other children.

At the age of sixteen Elizabeth was due to leave the Asylum.

Before leaving she was confirmed into the Anglican Church on the 6th December 1904.

A sad time for Elizabeth, her father died a few months earlier on the 9th October 1904 and was unable to be at her Confirmation nor see how well she had done at the Asylum.

Elizabeth's final class at the Asylum was the Special Oral Class. She did very well. The following are the results of that class in which she came seventh.

Religious Knowledge	75%	Old and New Testaments
Articulation	77%	Intelligible
Lip Reading	73%	Words, sentences and combinations
Language	86%	Composition and Letter writing
General Knowledge	75%	Questions on everyday events
Geography and History	80%	Europe and characters in English history
Arithmetic	71%	Compound rules and mental exercises
Drawing or sewing	89%	Standard VI lower
Conduct		Good

Signed by Elizabeth and her Teacher M. E. Wilcher in December 1904

A Programme of Arrangements for the Distribution of Prizes and Awards was arranged by the school on an annual basis.

It is highly likely Elizabeth received awards especially for her Drawing and Sewing.

Elizabeth married **Richard Thomas Bolt** at St. James, Bermondsey, on the 30th July 1910.



St. James, Bermondsey

Richard Thomas Bolt was born on the 18th October 1878 and baptised at St. Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey, on the 2nd March 1979.

He had two older sisters Frances and Ellen and two younger brothers Arthur and Albert. Their parents were **Richard Thomas Bolt** and **Ellen Jane Bolt** (born Roff).

Richard and Ellen were in the Leather Market Trade

In the 1911 census Richard is reflected as being thirty-two years old and Elizabeth as twenty-two years old.

Richard was a Leather Tanner, a lucrative business. Elizabeth would have lived well.

They were living at 73 Vienna Road, Jamaica Road, Bermondsey.

The Census was signed by Richard.

Elizabeth and Richard had one child, a son, born in the 1920s.

In the 1939 Census Richard and Elizabeth were living at 66 Bevington Street, Bermondsey, with their son. Elizabeth's occupation was recorded as *Unpaid Domestic Duties*.

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Richard's father **Richard Thomas Bolt** died in September 1933 at the age of seventy-six.

Richard's mother **Ellen Jane Bolt** (born Roff) died on the 11th May 1939 aged eighty five.

Elizabeth's father **John James Smith** died on the 9th October 1904.

I do not know when **Elizabeth Jane Smith**, Elizabeth's mother, died.

Elizabeth Jane Emmeline Bolt (born Smith) died at Bermondsey, London, in January 1964 at the age of seventy-five. Elizabeth and Richard had been married for fifty-three years.

Three years later **Richard Thomas Bolt** died at Sutton, Greater London, in January 1967 aged eighty-eight.

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Sources

Register of Children, Old Kent Road, Margate Ch192/R2/1/5 Entry 5490

Admission Records Application for Admission 4325-7615 (1880 to 1925) Ch192/R1/1/1

Leavers Records: Registers of Children Leaving School 1902-1912 Ch192/R8/1/3 Entry 132
