

Jane Ann l'Anson

(b 1854, d.1907)

Elizabeth Barker

Jane Ann l'Anson was born in Leeds in September 1854, the daughter of William and Maria l'Anson of Kirkby Malzeard in the West Riding of Yorkshire (1). Her father was a stonemason, and was presumably working in Leeds when Jane was born. Jane was also baptised in Leeds (2).

Some time later the family returned to Kirkby Malzeard, and they seem to have remained there permanently. The 1861 census shows Jane living with her parents and her younger sister Mary (3). In 1871 the family, who now included a son Francis, were living at 98 Town Street, Kirkby Malzeard, and the entry for Jane, aged 17, and therefore of working age, states under the heading of "Occupation", "learning to sew", with a note alongside stating "deaf and dumb"(4).

In 1880, Jane's father was admitted to the Ripon workhouse, due to ill health. He left of his own accord in May 1880, but returned on 1st October and died shortly afterwards (5). On 20th October 1880 Jane was admitted to the workhouse, and remained there for the rest of her life (6). The 1881 census entry has a note alongside her name stating "deaf and dumb from birth"(7). After the death of her father, her mother may have had no option but to send her there.

In 1885 she was formally classified as a "certified lunatic" on the basis that she was of "defective intellect, not dangerous to herself or others, of clean habits and of unsound mind since birth" (8). This allowed the workhouse to claim extra money for her keep. The census for 1891 shows that she had been classified as "deaf and dumb and idiot" (9). The 1901 census then shows that she had been reclassified as an "imbecile and deaf and dumb" (10). However, despite this she was not permanently incarcerated in the workhouse. Inmates were permitted to leave for short periods into the care of their families, and there is a note in the records that in November 1891 her brother Francis successfully applied to the workhouse master to take her out for a few days (11). The surviving workhouse records are patchy, so this visit may have been one of many rather than an isolated occurrence.

Jane died in the workhouse on 21 November 1907 at the age of 52 (12).

References:

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- (3) 'Jane Ann l'Anson'. (1861). *Census return for Kirkby Malzeard, Yorkshire, Reg. Dist. Ripon, sub-reg. dist. Kirkby Malzeard. PRO: piece 3198, folio 13, page 20.* Available: <https://search.ancestry.co.uk>. (Accessed 28/11/2019)
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- (10) 'Jane Ann l'Anson' (1901). *Census return for Ripon, Yorkshire, Ripon Union Workhouse District 3. PRO: RG13/4040.* Available: <https://ancestry.co.uk>. (Accessed 09/12/2019)
- (11) 'Jane Ann l'Anson' (1891). Master's reports Ripon Workhouse 1855-1922. Letter of 19/11/1891. Available: www.northyorks.gov.uk/county-record-office, ref QSB 1885 2/12/30. MIC 2420 (Accessed 26/11/2019)
- (12) 'Jane Ann l'Anson' (1907). *Certified entry recording death on the Civil Registration Death Index, England & Wales 1837-1915, Ripon 9a p.62.* Available: <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/information.pl?cite=JoYSPFyUoXNGootqVNNfXw&scan=1>. (Accessed 12/12/2019)