

## Mary Ann Bladon

Mary Ann Bladon was the eldest daughter of my great, great, great grandparents, William and Sarah Bladon (nee Poole), dairyman of Moseley and Kings Heath. She was born on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1838 at Kings Heath. Whilst she was a child, the family moved to a farm situated opposite Addison Road which was owned by Henry Chinn. This later became Church Farm after All Saints Church was built. The family later moved to 108 High Street, Kings Heath (next to the Hare and Hounds) in the 1870's, after her father had died and her mother and brothers, James and George, took over the running of the dairy business.

Mary Ann and her eight siblings attended Moseley National School where she later became a pupil teacher. After attaining a Second Class Scholarship in 1859 and a Third Class the following year, on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1860, she enrolled at the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Training School for School Mistresses. It was one of 25 training schools promoted by the National Society to supply qualified teachers to the Church of England's Voluntary Elementary Schools. It had opened in 1853 and later became part of the UWE Bristol. Mary Ann's referee on enrolling at the training school was the Vicar of St Mary's Moseley.

It is unknown how long Mary Ann undertook training but the 1861 census lists her as a Queens Student at the Training College. After her training ended, when she gained the Queens Scholarship, she appears to have returned to Moseley as on 3rd December 1864 it was proposed by Mr Welch and seconded by Mr Badham that she be appointed mistress of the girls National School on a salary of £30 per year including school house, coals and garden. She had to give 3 months notice and to superintend the Sunday school. This appointment was after the resignation of Emma Abrahams. The school log books 1862-1889 for Moseley Girls and Infants school survive which Mary Ann compiled after 1864 her appointment. The rent for the school house cost 12s 3d per annum.

From the log book entries, we get an insight to the school life. Lessons included were scripture, needlework, dictation, arithmetic, reading, singing, drawing, geography and church. Mary Ann was assisted by pupil teachers.

In 1882, a testimonial was given due to her 20 years at the school. Mary Ann stayed another 22 years and retired in February 1904. A collection organised by Rev. W.H. Colmore raised £61 4s 6d to be presented as a cheque and an additional £3 3s 0d for an illuminated address. The previous September, 150 applications were received for the headmistress vacancy and in October 1903 Miss Garside was chosen to succeed Mary Ann.

Mary Ann received a Government pension and by 1908 was residing and running a shop at 12 Waterloo Road, Kings Heath where she was joined by her widowed brother, George, after he retired from the family dairy business at nearby 7 York Road. In 1910 she donated one guinea towards the building work at St Marys. George died in July 1915 and on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1916, Mary Ann died of bronchitis and cardiac failure at 12 Waterloo Road. She was buried in the family grave at St Mary's Moseley with her parents and brothers, James and Alfred.



*Birmingham News April 22nd 1916:*

As was briefly announced in our last issue, the funeral of Miss Bladon took place on Friday last week, the interment being made in the family grave at Moseley parish churchyard. The mourners were Messrs Fred Hallam, H Bladon, E Onley and Jack Aston (nephews) and Mr B Young (an old friend). Amongst those gathered at the graveside were Mr F Greenhill and Miss Longslow from Moseley National School. Floral tributes were sent by relatives and friends. Miss Bladon was a member of one of the oldest families in the district and was connected with Moseley National School for 42 years, first as a pupil, then as a pupil teacher, schoolmistress and finally headmistress. In her early days at the school the late Rev JR Davison was the vicar and she served for many years under the late Canon Colmore. She retired from the headmistress ship about 12 years ago. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs Ambler Bros.

She appears to have had a considerable estate, valued at £845 19s 6d and it was distributed as follows:-

- £50 to her brother George, (he predeceased her)
- The estate was to be sold and distributed as follows in equal shares
- one fifth to the children of late brother Thomas Edward
- one fifth to the children of late sister Elizabeth
- one fifth to the children of late brother William (my branch)
- one fifth to the two children of late brother Alfred but Alfred Herbert's share double that of Percy
- one fifth to sister Emily

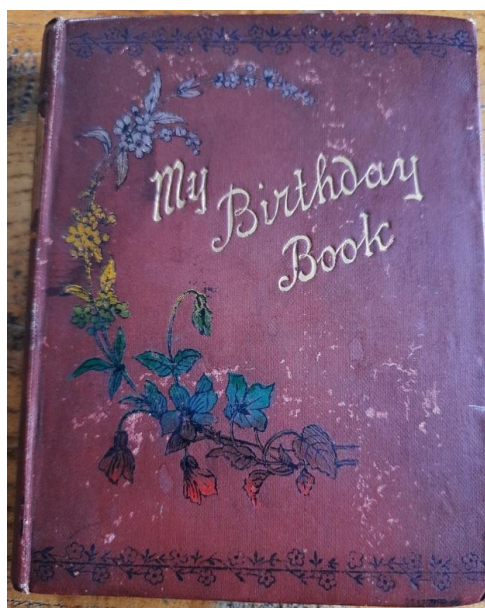
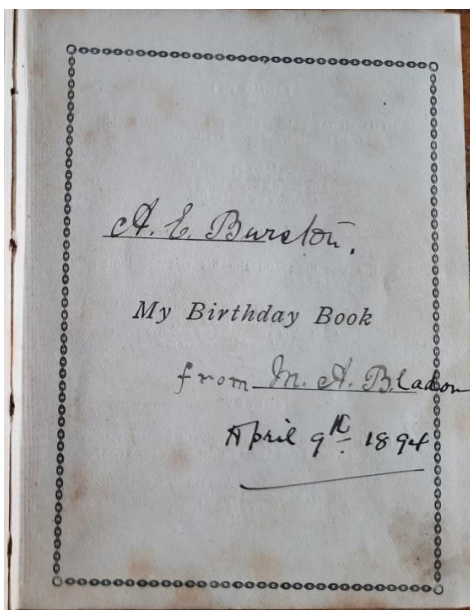
The estate was sold by auction in two lots as the following newspaper reports state:

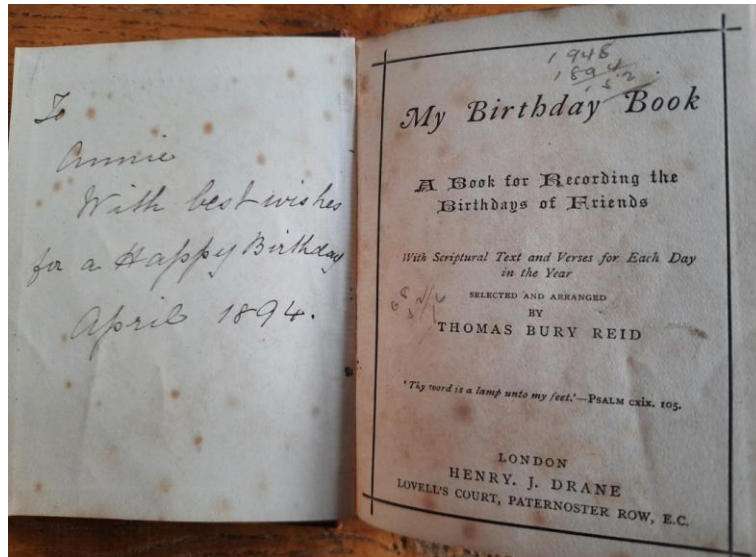
Re Miss MA Bladon deceased 12 Waterloo Road, Kings Heath  
Sale of Antique and Modern Furniture by auction on Friday May 19<sup>th</sup> including antique grandfather clock, Genuine Antique Jacobean chest of drawers, antique corner cupboard, iron and brass bedsteads, feather beds, bolsters, blankets, bed linen, wire wove mattress, shop fixtures, and other effects

On 8th September 1916 the following was up for sale by auction:

Estate of Mary Ann Bladon, deceased.  
Lot 4.—A FREEHOLD GROUND RENT of £15 per annum, secured by six front Dwelling Houses, being Nos. 38 to 48 (even numbers), Lottie Road, and known as "Alpha Place," Selly Oak. Rack rentals about £105. Area 1,029 square yards or thereabouts. REVERSION June 24, 1990.

I have two items associated with Mary Ann, a birthday book, and a 'tin'. The birthday book was given to Ann E Burston born 1880 from Mary Ann in 1894. It ended up in Florida along with other items, including a Bible presented to Annie from St Marys Sunday School, rescued from a skip and sent to me by the finder who contacted me via Ancestry.





The 'tin' (maybe a biscuit barrel) came to me via my grandfather's cousin, Ray Smith. His mother was Doris Helen Bladon, sister to my great grandfather and thus a niece of Mary Ann. Ray was told the 'tin' was presented to Mary Ann as a 'thank you' but that's all we know. The year 1878 would mark 15 years of service from 1863 when I think she returned to the school. It is inscribed:

*Mary Ann Bladon  
July 1878  
Pro Beneficiis Acceptis (For Good Services Received)*



The school built in 1828 was replaced in the 1960's. The old building survived until December 2005 when it was sadly demolished.



**Helena Coney, 2022**