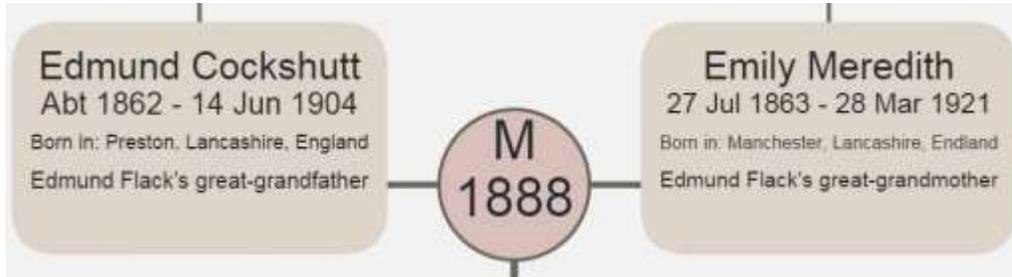


Our Cockshutt Family History ^ Cockshutt–Roberts Great Grandparents

Cockshutt family history leads the researcher down many interesting roads. The dates and places of birth, death and marriage are important to the genealogist but the social and historical settings in which these men and women lived is much more than a sum of these details. In this family history, the facts and some interpretations of the facts are included to paint the picture of the lives and times of the generations of a remarkable family whose lives in many ways were first moulded by, but then in turn, contributed to the history of North East Lancashire. In this article, we look at our Grandmother's family.



Alice May Cockshutt (1890-1955)
with baby HED Flack



Edmund Cockshutt (1862-1904)



Smith Roberts (1872-1943)

My grandmother on my father's side, Alice May Flack nee Cockshutt, was the eldest of three children born to Edmund Cockshutt and Emily Cockshutt nee Meredith in Bamber Bridge, Lancashire.

Bamber Bridge is close to Walton-le-Dale where, where according to the 1891 Census, the family was living at Cumberland House, Browndedge Lane. Edmund was listed in the Census as the head of household, aged 29, "Cotton Spinner Manufacturer", born in Preston, Lancashire along with his wife, Emily, aged 27 also born in Preston, and Alice, aged 1 born in Bamber Bridge, Lancashire, England. The 1891 Census also lists two servants living in the house, one listed as "Servant Domestic" and the other "Servant Nurse".

Cumberland House in Browndedge Lane does not appear to have survived to the present day and Browndedge Lane must have been a rather different place in 1891. Among the Cockshutt's neighbours, the Census lists a medical practitioner and a teacher, each with two servants. There are still some examples of the types of residences that were typical then in the Lane, before the expansion of the industrial estate that now dominates one side of the road.

The 1901 Census finds Alice Cockshutt, aged 11, born Browndedge, Lancashire a "Student" living on Census day in what appears to be a boarding school for young women in Skipton Yorkshire.

Meanwhile, in the same 1901 Census, her father and mother Edmund and Emily Cockshutt (aged 36, born 1865 in Manchester), together with Alice's younger sister Margaret May (aged 9, born 1892 in Lancashire) and younger brother Edmund Cockshutt (aged 7, born 1894, Lancashire) were recorded living at "Oak Villas, Nelson, Lancashire". Two Domestic servants are also recorded in that household. Edmund is listed as an Insurance Agent aged 39 years old. No reference can be found to "Oak Villas, Nelson" in contemporary maps of the area.

On 14 June 1904, Alice's father, Edmund Cockshutt died suddenly at just 42 years of age. In the days before social services, dying without a Will meant that Emily, his widow and the three children, Alice, May and Edmund, not to mention the two servant's resident in the Cockshutt household, would have found themselves in difficult circumstances. It's not clear just how the family managed but less than a year later, Emily (aged 36) married Smith Roberts, a 32 year old Bank Cashier and member of a prominent Nelson family. The couple was not married in St Mary's Church of England, the family church in Nelson, but rather in Lunesdale in the March quarter of 1905.

Smith Roberts was born on 2 October 1872 in Nelson, Lancashire, the sixth son of William and Kezia Roberts, an Engineer Millwright who ran a successful engineering business in Nelson. Smith Roberts had been brought up in a large family having had nine brothers and sisters. Alice, [Margaret] May and Edmund Cockshutt became part of their extended family. William Roberts, Smith Roberts's father, had died in 1898, leaving Kezia Roberts, his widow and ten children to care for. However, the Roberts family appear to have been reasonably well off, for when Keziah died in 1911, she left an estate worth £4,510. Smith had enjoyed a good education, as had his brothers, Frank Roberts, aged 23 was already a practicing solicitor, William, aged 38, a Corn Millers Salesman, Arthur aged 33, a Draughtsman, Tom aged 31, Charles aged 30, and Fred aged 22 and they employed a cook and a housekeeper in their home at Netherfield House, Nelson.

One of the more intriguing aspects of the new Roberts-Cockshutt family is their religious affiliations. We know that the burial service for William Roberts was conducted at St John the Evangelist, Church of England in Nelson in 1893 and that the Parish record shows that the service was conducted as a "Masonic Service" by "Rev. Bro. CE Little". Yet the 1901 Census records Alice Cockshutt as a "boarder" at the [Benedictine College at Ampleforth](#) in Yorkshire. The Ampleforth School records show that Alice and her brother, Edmund, and their cousins, Joseph and Nicholas Cockshutt, were all educated at Ampleforth.

It is also noted that Edmund Cockshutt, Alice's brother, was baptised in a Catholic tradition as the following transcript of the Parish record shows:

*Baptism: 9 Dec 1893 Brownedge St Mary, Bamber Bridge, Lancashire, England
 Edmundus Cockshutt - filius Edmundi Cockshutt & Emiliae (formerly Meredith)
 Born: 7 Dec 1893
 Godparents: Thomas Henricus Littler; Elizabetha Cockshutt
 Baptised by: Josepho Flanagan O.S.B. Miss. Coadj.
 Register: Baptisms 1884 - 1904, Page 198, Entry 988
 Source: Original register at Lancashire Archives*



Edmund Meredith Cockshutt (1893-1964)

These records suggest that probably Emily, their mother, was a practicing Roman Catholic and that their Uncle Joshua Cockshutt, father

of Joseph and Nicholas, were also brought up in the Catholic tradition.

Is it possible that the reason the Roberts-Cockshutt marriage was not conducted in their local Parish Church in either Nelson or Burnley was that Emily Cockshutt had not been 'confirmed' in the Church of England? At the turn of Century in NE Lancashire, it would have been unusual for Smith Roberts, the son of a practicing Mason, to have his adopted children attend a Catholic boarding school. Perhaps these arrangements predated his marriage to Alice?

Smith Roberts, Alice's step father, was a colleague of Dr Frederick Henry Douglas (Harry") Flack (who Alice was later to marry) as Smith Roberts and William Henry Douglas Flack's, Harry Flack's father, shared employment in the Manchester and County Bank. The following advertisement appeared in the Burnley Express Newspaper. It shows that in 1911 WHD Flack was a District Manager for the bank and Smith Roberts was the Manager of the bank's Nelson branch.

The
COUNTY BANK
 THE MANCHESTER & COUNTY BANK LTD.
 SUBSCRIBED CAPITAL - - - £5,460,000
 PAID-UP CAPITAL - - - £1,092,000
 RESERVE FUND - - - £725,000
 TOTAL ASSETS - - - £71,690,354
 Head Office - 75, King Street, Manchester.
 Foreign Dept. - 59, King Street, Manchester.
 LOCAL BRANCHES:
 BURNLEY: 19, Grimshaw St.
 BURNLEY: 119, Colne Road. W. H. D. FLACK.
 BIRKBEILD: 16, Colne Road.
 PADIHAM: 47, Burnley Road.
 COLNE: 1, Church Street ... EDWARD GOUGH.
 NELSON: 6, Leeds Road ... SMITH ROBERTS.
 BARROWFORD: 143, Gilsen Rd.
 122 BRANCHES IN LANCASHIRE AND ADJACENT COUNTIES.
 Every kind of Banking business transacted at Home and Abroad on behalf of customers.
 132 BRANCHES



William Henry Douglas Flack
 copied from a photographic portrait in the
 Victoria Hospital Burnley