

All About Sister Dora

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Fact File

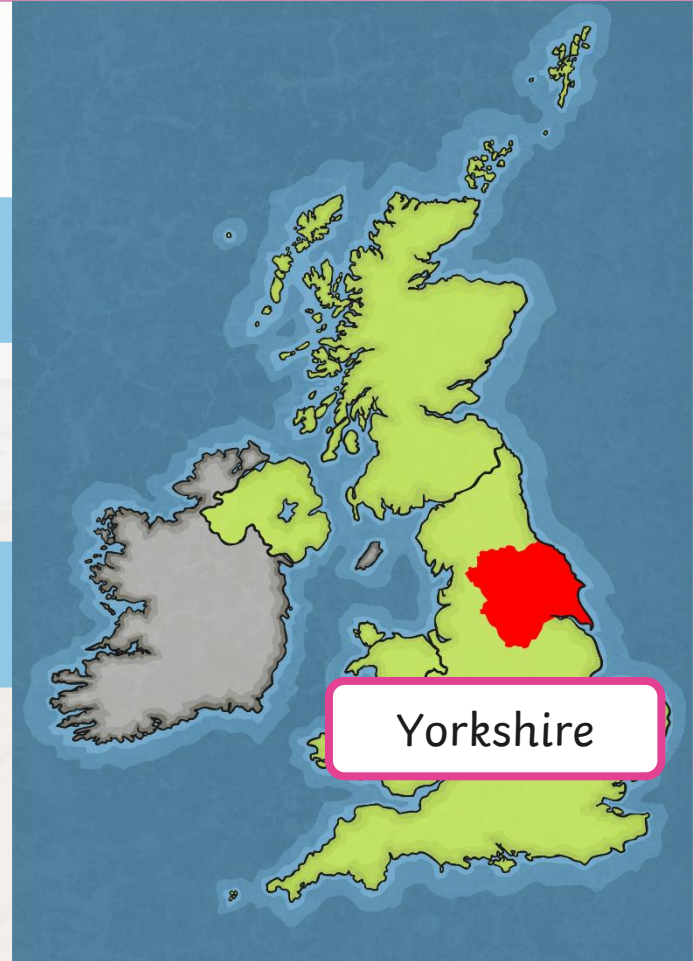
Born: Dorothy Wyndlow Pattison was born in Yorkshire on 16th January 1832.

Died: She died on 24th December 1878 in Walsall.

Can you work out how old she was when she died?

46

School: Dorothy's parents were strict. Her father, Mark James Pattison, and Jane Peterson, the governess, had 12 children and Dorothy was the second youngest.

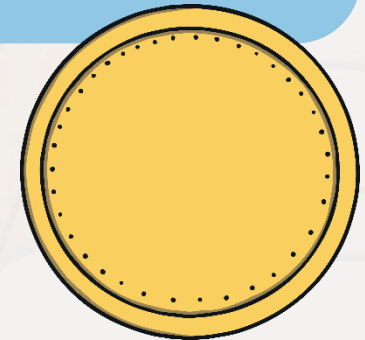


Fact File

Dorothy had a challenging start to life. Her father was quite strict, not allowing Dorothy and her sisters to do many things.

When Dorothy became a nurse a few years later, her father was angry because he didn't think it was a good choice of job for her. After this, they stopped seeing each other.

After her mother died, she used the £90 left to her to set up a new life elsewhere.



Do you think £90 would be enough to set up a new life today?

Moving On

She moved to the village of Little Woolstone, in Buckinghamshire, and became the schoolmistress.

She taught the sons of local farm workers to read.

For the rest of her life, being a nurse was the most important thing to her.

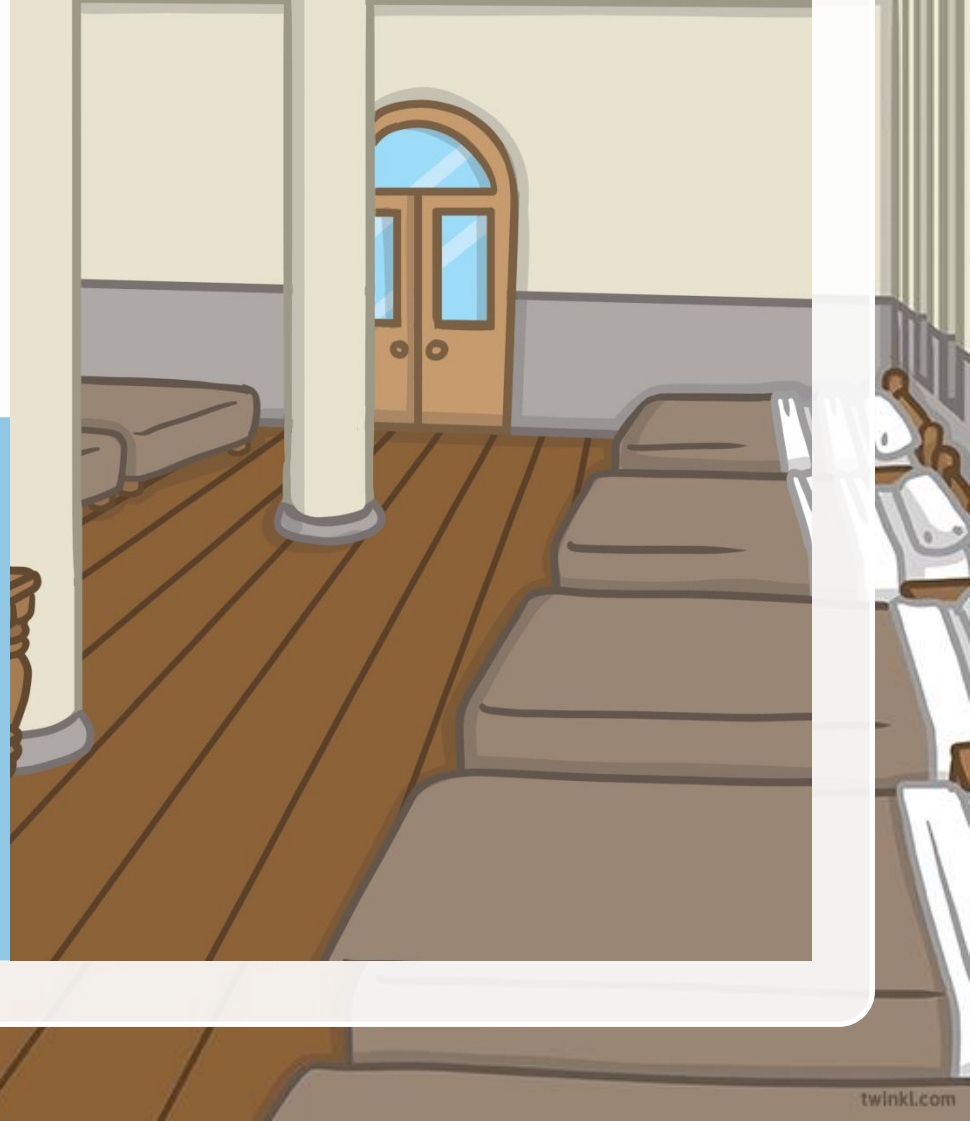


Later Working Life

At first, she moved between Coatham and Walsall.

In 1865, she returned to Walsall permanently.

In 1868, the new Cottage Hospital opened and she was put in charge of nursing. She learnt lots of new skills. Some people wanted her to progress to become a doctor but she wanted to continue doing what she knew best.



Colliery Accident

The first accident happened at Pelsall Hall Colliery on 14th November 1872. A colliery is where there is a coal mine and other buildings. It is where people dig for coal.

The coal mine flooded and twenty-two men and boys were trapped underground for five days.

Sadly, they all died before anybody could rescue them.

Sister Dora stayed with the relatives, giving out food and blankets.

She did everything she could to help them.



Small Pox Epidemic

In 1875, a disease called smallpox was spreading quickly in Walsall.

The hospital that usually treated illnesses like smallpox (The Epidemic Hospital) was not well-liked and so patients preferred to stay at home.

Two women helped her to wash clothes and bedding.

She had to stay there for 6 months.



Interesting Fact

The last person to die in the UK of smallpox was in 1978.

Iron Works Accident

Another accident took place on 15th October 1875, at Birchills Ironworks.

Three men died straight away and the others had serious burns. They were rushed to the hospital where Sister Dora worked.

She nursed them both day and night for several weeks but sadly ten still died.

The infection from the men spread across the hospital and it had to be closed.

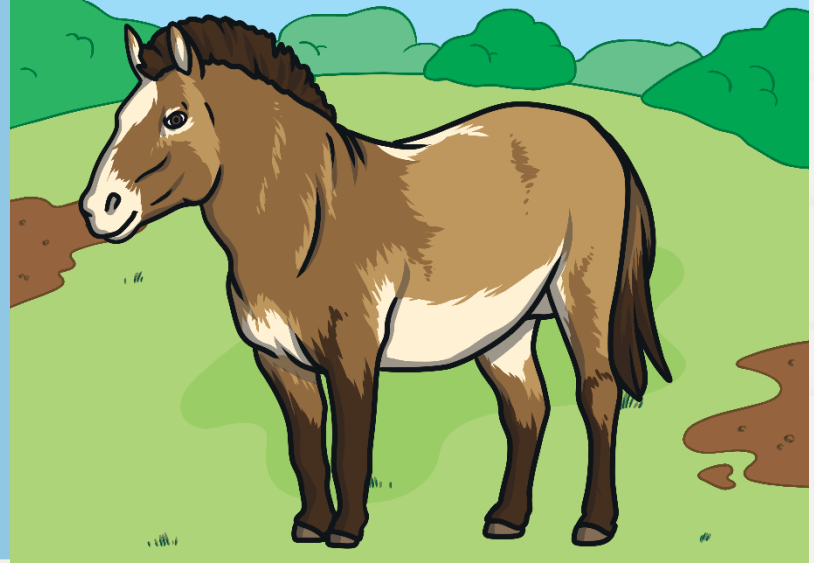


The Final Stages of Her Life

In the final two years of her life, she worked at a hospital overlooking the South Staffordshire Railway.

She developed friendships with the railway workers who had suffered in the accidents.

They gave her a pony and carriage so that she could visit housebound patients more easily.



The End of Her Life

Sister Dora died at the age of 46, in Walsall, after developing a disease. She chose to keep this illness a secret and died on Christmas Eve 1878.

Her funeral was held on 28th December and was attended by thousands of people. She had touched the lives of many during her life.

Florence Nightingale even paid tribute herself.

“May every nurse, though not gifted with Sister Dora’s genius, grow in training and care of her patients, that none but may be better for her care, whether for life or death.”





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