Florence Moorcroft née Lovibond **Factory Inspector**

During 1912, while developing a friendship with William Moorcroft, Florence continued to work hard at improving the lives of Stoke on Trent's pottery workers.

She made speeches, lodged complaints and instigated prosecutions in situations where workers, particularly children, were required to carry very heavy weights of clay or pottery as well as the damage caused by including lead in the paint used by the ceramic painters.

Florence supported the fight for women's suffrage and the emancipation of women, which challenged the traditional stereotypes of the early 20th century. These views were, clearly, shaped by debate and discussion with her mother and she would often travel down to Blackheath to visit Frederica and Beatrice. After 1913 William would often accompany her on these visits. It was there, while walking on the heath one day, that Florence agreed to marry him.

The ceremony took place at The Church of the Ascension in Blackheath in April 1913 conducted by Canon Escreet. He stepped in after Florence requested a change to the marriage vows meaning she would not promise to "obey" her husband. A change that William was happy with while the Blackheath vicar was not!

The couple honeymooned in Ilfracombe and, on their way home afterwards, they called into Liberty's in London, to discuss with Alwyn Lasenby his ongoing support of the new Moorcroft factory. This was being built on land that William had bought at Cobridge, after leaving his previous job at Macintyre's.

Florence's six years as a factory inspector meant she was well qualified to assist in the design of a new safe and well-ventilated single storey factory with good lighting and washing facilities and she had already been contributing to the plans.

Moorcroft's was the first modern factory to be built in Stoke on Trent, constructed in only ten weeks with the first firing taking place in September 1913.

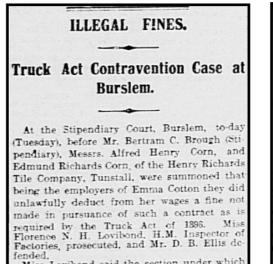
EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN ACT.

BURSLEM POTTERY FIRM FINED.

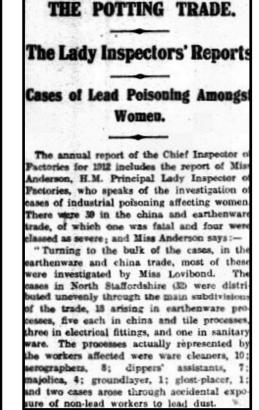
A prosecution under the Employment of Children A prosecution under the Employment of Children Act was heard by the Potteries Stipendiary (Mr. B. C. Brough) at Burslem, when Messrs. Myott, Son, and Co., earthenware manufacturers, of the Alex-ander Pottery, Cobridge, were summoned for illegally employing a child to carry a weight so heavy as to be liable to cause it injury. Miss Florence N. F. Lovibond, one of his Majestr's inspectors of factories, said whilst inspecting the Alexander Pottery on July 4 he noticed a boy of thirteen named Arthur Bold carrying a large basket of ware. She saw he had difficulty in carrying it up of ware. She saw he had difficulty in carrying it up of ware. She saw he had difficulty in carrying it up a flight of steps to the warehouse. The bastet weighed 48lb. There were no standards fixed by the English law as to the weights children should carry, but the French standard for boys under 14 years of age was 22lb., and the proposed English standard for boys under 16 was 40lb. Dr. S. King Alcock, the Home Office certifying surgeon for the Burslem district, said 48lb. was too much for a boy of 13 to carry. He thought 25lb. up to 14 years of age, and 40lb. up to 16 years of age should be the maximum. Mr. Monger, for the defence, urged that the

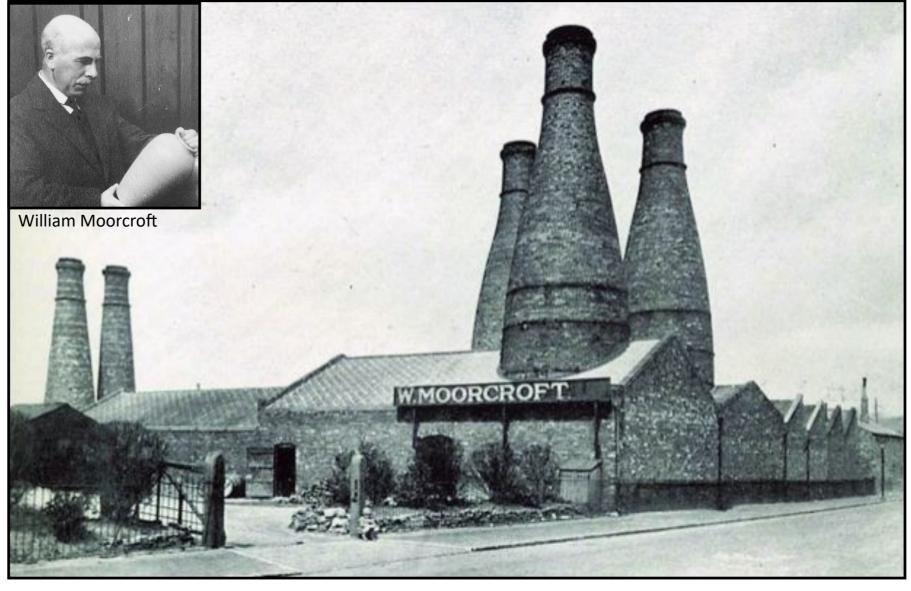
Mr. Monger, for the defence, urged that the

difficulty arose through there being no fixed standard of weight. Messrs. Myott had been in business for over 30 years, and had not been prosecuted. The Stipendiary decided to convict, and imposed e fine of 20s. and costs-£2 7s. 6d, in all.



Miss Lovibond said the section under which the proceedings were instituted laid it down that an employer should not make any deduction. or receive any payment, from any workman unless such deduction or payment be made in pursuance, or in accordance with, a contract which must be fixed somewhere in the factory in sight of all whom it concerned. It should specify the acts and omissions in respect of which a fine would be imposed, and these acts and omissions must be of the kind likely to cause damage or loss to the employer, or hindrance to his business. Further, the section laid it down that the fine imposed must be a reasonable one having regard to all the circumstances of the case. Miss Lovibond said the section under which







In the summer of 1926 Florence fell ill with influenza which led to pneumonia. Her sister Dr Beatrice Lovibond rushed all the way from London in a taxi and tried her best to save her, but sadly Florence died at the age of 47 years.

William told his factory staff her last words were: "I have finished my course and made a good fight."

Her headstone stands tall in Trentham graveyard and, although Florence's life was cut tragically short, her impact on those she loved and those for whom she worked and campaigned remain her legacy.

When adults, her son Walter followed his father and became a master potter and her daughter Beatrice, followed her mother and became a factory inspector.

With grateful thanks to Sara Morrissey (Florence's granddaughter) for help with family history and photos Also to The Sentinel newspaper for permission to use articles William and Florence set up home on Albert Road, Trentham and Florence went on to have two children, Beatrice in 1914 and Walter in 1917.

Once married, Florence was unable to work as a factory inspector but she continued her interest in the Moorcroft works. Walter recalled;-

"Almost as soon as I could walk, my mother took me to The Works, as it was known.....I have scant memories of these visits except my extreme dislike of being kissed by the ladies in the decorating room!"

No doubt the children also accompanied Florence when she proudly went to vote for the first time in the General Election on 14th December 1918.

Florence was a devoted mother, the children enjoyed walks down to Trentham Gardens, games at home and also trips down to London to visit Florence's mother and sister while keeping in touch with William by letter and telephone.

DEATH OF MRS. W. **MOORCROFT.**

A Distinguished Career

We deeply regret to announce the death of Mrs. Florence Norah Fleay Moorcroft, wife of Mr. William Moorcroft, the eminent potter and head of the firm of Messrs. W. Moorcroft, Ltd., Burslem, which took place early this (Thursday) morning at her residence, Glendair," Trentham, after a short illness, pneumonia having supervened upon influenza. The sincerest and most heartfelt sympathy will be extended to Mr. Moorcroft and the two children in their sad and irreparable loss.

Mrs. Moorcroft was the daughter of Mr. Valentine Locke Lovibond and Mrs. Octavia Augusta Frederica Lovibond, of South Kensington. Her mother was one of the earliest students at Queen's College, London, and was contemporary there with Dame Millicent Fawcett, G.B.E., and, after marrying, she became distinguished in the chemistry of brewing in connection with her husband's business, and also did a considerable amount of work as adviser in connection with the London School Board.

