

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This is one of a series of stories about those whose names appear in the Weston Park Servants' Database.

Anne Bathe, 4th Housemaid

Anne Bathe was one of 5, 4th housemaids in the household at Weston Park, Weston under Lizard, in 1891. In all there were approximately 14 housemaids of various ranks. The housemaids at Anne's level were between about 18 and 21. As they rose through the hierarchy they were gradually older. At this level at Weston they earned between £10 and £12 per year. However, housemaid, Susan Richards, working for the family in London, earned £34 in 1891.

Although there were 3rd, 2nd and 1st housemaids above her, Anne would probably have been responsible to the housekeeper, Emma Hart who at 46 had gained more experience in life in country house household and this was reflected in her £60-£65 per annum salary. The servants' titles probably depended on the system in the household. Some estates had parlour maids and housemaids, the parlour maids undertaking the more visible jobs such as answering the door or serving tea, whilst the housemaid would take on the heavier and dirtier tasks, cleaning and black-leading grates and would be expected to be "invisible". Weston only having housemaids, but several grades, possibly those like Anne, would carry out the heavier and dirty duties, whereas those in grade 1 and 2 would have the lighter and more

visible tasks. In a household as large as Weston Park the servants would have worn a uniform, often dark skirts and blouse or white blouse with white apron and sometimes a mop cap.

Anne was just 18 when she was working at Weston Park. She would have had to have been in good health as the work was hard and the hours long. Looking at several of the servants revealed that many did not remain long in their posts. It may have been that they got married and set up their own homes, perhaps moving up the hierarchy was difficult so they left to advance their careers, or they found the work too arduous. At dawn Anne would have risen and started work clearing the grates and black-leading them, then setting the fire. After which she would clean the living room, beating carpets and polishing the furniture. She would have had to disappear before the family made their appearance for breakfast which would have been prepared by the cook, female cooks at Weston, not male chefs. It would have been set out by the more senior maids.

While the family were at breakfast work moved upstairs to cleaning the bedrooms and the unpleasant task of emptying the chambre pots. The afternoon would be taken up with tasks such as repairing linen and sewing, less arduous but if the light in the room was not bright Anne's eyes would soon have become sore. Preparing the rooms for night would take Anne quite late into the evening before she was able to retire to bed, Quite exhausted.

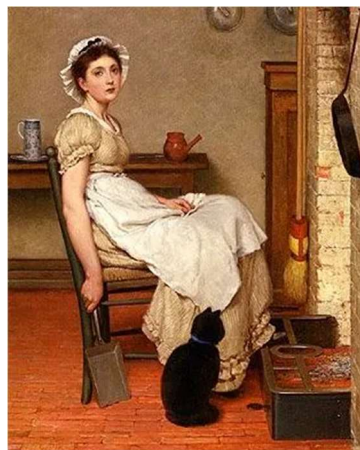


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Perhaps Anne would have been in the servants' quarters in the Victorian block, built in 1866. It was a building for guests and servants, the guests in the south facing elevation, overlooking the garden, whereas the servants occupied the north facing rooms at the back.

Elevation from Simon Huguet, Geograph



Front elevation imagined by Ai



If servants, in whatever size of establishments had any time off, which was not always frequent, in some places perhaps a day a month, should they live locally, they could go home to visit family but for those like Annie it was difficult, as, like quite a few servants at Weston, she came from many miles away. There were several ways in which people could have heard of the positions, newspapers frequently carried adverts placed by the establishments as they wished to attract the best and most experienced applicants. Annie could have enrolled with an agency; these would charge both seekers for employment and seekers for employees but the contacts would be nationwide. There was also word of mouth by the householders when they met in social situations, recommending one of their employees. Higher ranked servants could also recommend family members or neighbours' friends.

Servants sometimes met their future spouse in the household where they were working. In certain households, their marriage would mean leaving their positions. Annie did not meet her future husband at Weston but in the small community where she was born, King's Sutton, 80 miles away in

Northamptonshire. Perhaps they had attended the school together being of similar ages. The railway provided employment for her future husband, Thomas Twynham's family. On the other side of the canal was a quarry where Thomas' father, John would probably have been employed in 1871.

Map: The Genealogist



This is the small community of 1,087 in 1881 where Annie lived when she was 7. There was a railway station where she could have embarked to go to Staffordshire. Even taking the train from Kings Sutton would have taken a long time.

She had been born there in 1873, baptised, Anne on 10th August, the daughter of George Bathe and his wife, Mary. George Bathe had married Mary Humphries on 10th October 1863, they had 8 children in all, one of whom died. George was a labourer. Annie was recorded in the Weston Park wages book in 1891. The next record for her is her marriage, back in King's Sutton in 1897. What she had done between 1891 and 1897 is not clear. On 28th April 1897 Annie married 24 year old labourer, Thomas Bazely Twynhan in the Parish Church of St. Peter in King's Sutton in front of Thomas' younger

sister, Harriet and Annie's brother in law, Thomas Russell. The couple moved with their children, Lily and Florence, to Red Lion Square, the place where Annie's parents lived. Thomas was working on the railway. Two more daughters followed, Annie in 1902 and Gertrude in 1908. During her married life, Annie does not appear to have had any employment. However, after Thomas had died in late 1920, Annie needed to support herself and youngest daughter, Gertrude. Probably the only occupation which at 47 years of age was open to her, that of charwoman. It was 9 years later, at age 56 that Annie died in July 1929.

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