

# *This is A Few Forgotten Women Story*



*This story was written, in November 2023, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who studied at The Grange School of Housewifery in Street, Somerset.*

## **Margaret Hunter Pearson's Story**

Margaret Hunter Pearson was born on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1869 in Campbell Town, Argyllshire to Thomas Pearson and his wife Helen Russell<sup>1</sup>

By 1871 the family lived in the High Street in Campbeltown and her father Thomas Pearson was an Examiner of the Inland Revenue<sup>2</sup> and Margaret lived there with her mother and father and 4 siblings. It would seem that the family moved around quite a bit with Thomas's job as Margaret's older sister Francis was born in Glasgow and her older brother James and sister Ruth were born in Wales and her other brother Samuel was born in England.

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<sup>1</sup>[www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) Scotland, Births and Baptisms, 1564-1950.

<sup>2</sup>[www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) 1871 Scotland Census Campbeltown; 507 Folio 2; Page: 3;

By 1881 the family had moved to Falkirk and Margaret now had 3 more younger brothers William, Thomas, and Charles.<sup>3</sup>

The family then moved to London although the exact date is unknown. Helen her mother died in 1890 in Stamford Hill <sup>4</sup>and her father was found on the 1891 Census at 29 West Bank, Stamford Hill and was by this time retired<sup>5</sup>.

In the 1891 census Margaret was working as a governess in Chapel Allerton in Leeds to a Helena Mary Hattersley<sup>6</sup> who was the daughter of a Thomas Hattersley who was a spindle manufacturer.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas her father died on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1893 and he was granted probate on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1894<sup>8</sup>

By 1901 Margaret was back in Friern Barnet in Middlesex working for Benedicta J Keen at The Laundry. Benedicta was an Organiser Domestic Economic Instruction but sadly Margaret's role is too difficult to read as someone has written over her job title and all that can be seen is Laundry Pu ?  
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By 1911 she was then a tutor at the Affley Grange School of Midwifery and was the Assistant Teacher of Laundry and Dressmaking<sup>10</sup>

It would appear that she started teaching at this school in 1905 as she appears in the Minute Books regarding her appointment. "A meeting of the Committee

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<sup>3</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) 1881 Scotland Census *Falkirk Burgh*; Folio 13; Page: 2

<sup>4</sup> [www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk) 4<sup>th</sup> Q 1890 Hackney 1b Pg 325

<sup>5</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) 1891 England Census RG12/183 Pg 31 Folio 18

<sup>6</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) 1891 England Census RG12/3713 Folio 86 Pg 7

<sup>7</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) 1881 England Census RG11/4538 Pg26 Folio 16

<sup>8</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) *England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995* Principal Probate Registry. *Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of the High Court of Justice in England*

<sup>9</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) 1901 England Census RG13/1325 Folio 128 Pg 48

<sup>10</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) 1911 England Census Class: RG14; Piece: Piece: 14542:

of Managers of the School held on 8th December 1905 noted that Miss M H Pearson had begun teaching at the school on 26th September 1905 with a salary of £50 per annum.”<sup>11</sup>

She appears in the minute book several times during the time she was at the school and these notes have been included below.

A Meeting on 12th April 1910 noted that Miss Pearson had been granted “leave of absence on account of ill health” the previous summer.<sup>12</sup>

A meeting of 30th October 1911 noted that there had been a scarcity of water at the school and therefore the holidays had been extended. Payments of 25/ per week for the 3 weeks they could not be at the school were to be paid to each of the staff to help fund their accommodation costs. <sup>13</sup>

A Meeting of the Committee of Managers on 14th June 1912 approved an increase in salary for Miss Pearson from £60 to £65 per annum.<sup>14</sup>

There had been an outbreak of Diphtheria at the school and a Meeting on 17th June 1913 noted that bicycles belonging to the teachers had been damaged during the disinfection process. It was agreed that the Committee would cover repair costs.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

<sup>12</sup> South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

<sup>13</sup> South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

<sup>14</sup>South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

<sup>15</sup>South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

A meeting on 15th June 1915 noted that Miss Pearson was acting Head Mistress during the period that Miss Acheson was on sick leave.<sup>16</sup>

A further meeting on July 9th at which the death of Head Mistress Miss Acheson was announced, Miss Pearson was appointed Head Mistress at a salary of £85 per annum from 1st July 1915 and that she was to receive an additional £10 for services rendered during Miss Acheson's illness. Also, that another staff member should have their salary increased subject to a good report from Miss Pearson.<sup>17</sup>

A report by Miss Pearson given to a Meeting on 18th December 1915 gave information about a modified timetable and a visit from HM Inspector Miss Johnson. The County Committee has decided to close the school the following March. The meeting notes that staff will remain for a fortnight after the girls have left and that Miss Pearson be authorised to "engage a charwoman".<sup>18</sup>

The final meeting on 28th March 1916 gave Miss Pearson authority to organise professional laundering of some items such as sheets and good blankets but that other blankets should be laundered in the school laundry. Miss Pearson also has authority to engage "such help as may be necessary"<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

<sup>17</sup>South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

<sup>18</sup>South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

<sup>19</sup> South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

At that same meeting Miss Pearson was authorised to pay the gardener, settle a bill with a local contractor and that her accounts until the end of February 1916 were checked.<sup>20</sup>

By the 1921 census she had moved to 4 West Hill, St Leonards on Sea, Hastings and gives her occupation as Domestic Science Teacher at Uplands School, St Leonards on Sea for the Church Education Corporation.<sup>21</sup>

It seems that Margaret was at this school for a number of years as she appears on the Electoral Rolls in St Leonards on Sea from 1924-1932 and lived at Quarry Hill, Quarry Bank<sup>22</sup>

Her sister Ruth was buried at the Parish Church of Hollington in near Hastings in 1926 and gives her address as Woodmancote, Woodland Vale Road, St Leonard's On Sea,<sup>23</sup> however on her will it gives her home address as West Hampstead<sup>24</sup>.

Her other sister Jessie Laurie was buried on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1935 and appears to be buried with her sister at Hollington but died at Spinney Oak, Letchworth, Hertfordshire on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1935<sup>2526</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre, C/E/1/146, Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery – Minutes 1897 – 1916

<sup>21</sup> [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) 1921 England Census

<sup>22</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) East Sussex Record Office; Brighton, East Sussex, England; *East Sussex Electoral Registers*; Reference: DH/B/141/26

<sup>23</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office; Brighton, England, UK; *Sussex Parish Registers*; Reference Number: Par 380/1/5/4

<sup>24</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) *England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995*

<sup>25</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office; Brighton, England, UK; *Sussex Parish Registers*; Reference Number: Par 380/1/5/5

<sup>26</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) *England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995*

Margaret is mentioned in the will of Mrs Mary Parker Pearson who was the wife of her brother Frank Pearson and bequeaths £50.00 each to her sisters-in-law Ruth Helen Pearson, Margaret Hunter Pearson, Jessie Laurie Pearson until they respectfully should marry. <sup>27</sup>

Margaret must have left Uplands sometime after 1932 but by 1939 she is living with her brothers Samuel and Charles at Spinney Oak, Letchworth, Hertfordshire and is a Domestic Science Teacher Retired.<sup>28</sup>

Margaret died on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1943 having never married or had children and at the time of her death still lived at Spinney Oak, Letchworth and left quite a large amount of money in her will at the time of her death.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) British Newspaper Archive 16 February 1935 Hertfordshire Express

<sup>28</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) England 1939 Register

<sup>29</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995