

# *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.*

## **Winnifred Snell 's Story**

Winnifred Amelia Jane Snell was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1887 in the village of Gosport in Hampshire. She was baptised on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1887 at St John the Evangelist Anglican church in the parish of Forton, Hampshire. Her parents were George William Snell a ships corporal in the Royal Navy and Rosina Anna Snell who was from Switzerland.

In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales described Forton like this:

*FORTON, a village and a chapelry in Alverstoke parish, Hants. The name is a corruption of Fort-town. The village is suburban to Gosport; stands outside of the fortifications, on the Gosport railway, at the upper end of a sort of lake of Portsmouth harbour; has a post office under Gosport; and contains the railway terminus, the new military prison, and the royal marine barracks.*

George Snell had more than likely had his naval training at the Forton Barracks which had been a divisional headquarters for the Royal Marines and subsequently served as a Royal Navy training establishment.

In 1891 the family are living on Queen's Road, Gosport and Winnifred is aged 3. She has an older brother George who is aged 6 years. The family move to Weymouth sometime before 1894 as three more siblings are born - Maud, Reginald and Mabel. Reginald sadly only lived for 7 weeks. Winnifred's father was serving in the Royal Navy at this time and finished his service on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1897 and this is perhaps when the family moved to Bathampton in Somerset. Bathampton is just over 2 miles away from Claverton which is where George Snell had been born in 1857 so perhaps this is the reason they moved there.

In 1901 Winnifred is able to secure a place at The School of Housewifery located at The Grange, Street, Somerset quite a distance away from her home - about 28 miles - so the family must have thought this was a good prospect for their daughter. A meeting held by the Committee of Managers of the School on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1901 noted that two girls had left the school and that "Winnifred Snell of Bathampton" had taken one of the vacant places. On the census return Winnifred is one of the youngest pupils at age 13 and she is engaged in 'housework' probably being taught by Miss Emma Tyler who was the housewifery teacher at the school.

In 1903 Leonard Snell was born and he completed the family as no more children were born after him.

Winnifred's time at The School of Housewifery stood her in good stead as at the age of 23 she is employed as a domestic cook. She is living with her family at Collingwood Cottage, The Normans, Bathampton. Her father is now retired from the Royal Navy after serving for 12 years. Interestingly Collingwood was the name of one of the ships her father served on for a period of 2 years. George Snell died on the 18th December 1915 at the Wells Asylum and is buried at St. Nicholas' Churchyard in Bathampton.

In 1921 Winnifred is still single at the age of 35 years and living with her widowed mother and sister Maud and brother Leonard. They are still in the family home at The Normans, Bathampton. Winnifred is a domestic servant for a Miss Elwood of 18 Lyncombe Hill, Bath. The Elwood's were lace dealers.

Another sad event for Winnifred would have been the passing of her mother Rosina Anna Snell who died on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1930.

Winnifred remained in the area as we find her again on the 1939 census living at 17 Pulteney Road in Bath where she is a cook for a retired officer of the Indian Army - a man called William Pitt Haydon and also Louis Donald Stansfield MBE, Assistant Director of Naval Construction. Lieut. Col. William Pitt Haydon died in

1940 and his death was announced in the *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 1940. I'm sure Winnifred must have been shocked by the sudden death of her employer and perhaps unsure about what the future held for her.

Winnifred Amelia Snell never married and died on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1966 at St. Martin's Hospital in Bath and was cremated on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1966. She had always been a woman of independent means and yet stayed close to her family. In her will she left £1,035 to her brother Leonard, an aero engine fitter. Leonard lived in the family home at The Normans, Bathampton until his death in 1976.

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