

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in April 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women staff and female patients associated with the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital, Jesmond, Northumberland.

Harriet Eliza PRIESTLY's Story

Harriet was born in April 1857¹ in Beverley and was christened on the 13th² at St Martin's, Beverley Parks – the family were living in Westwood Cottage, between Molescroft and Cottingham. Her father, Charles Henry PRIESTLY was a bank clerk, and her mother was Eliza SMITHSON. She was the second child and the only daughter of the couple.

Sources

¹ Birth Index England and Wales. RD Beverley, Yorkshire. April. 1857. PRIESTLY, Harriet E. Vol. 9d, p. 90. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 23 April 2024.

² Baptism (PR) England. Beverley, Yorkshire. 13 April 1857. PRIESTLY, Harriet. Collection: England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975. <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JMBR-D7V> : accessed 23 April 2024.

In the 1861 Census³, she was living with her parents and two brothers in Priestly House, possibly named after the family. In the 1871 Census,⁴ Harriet is described as a scholar, aged 14 still living in the family home with her parents and one brother; the older two brothers having died aged 11 and 9 respectively, the previous year. Her father was now a Bank Manager and the family had moved to Yorkersgate, New Malton, not far from Castle Howard. In the 1881 Census,⁵ she was aged 24 and still living with her parents in Yorkersgate, New Malton. She was not shown as having any occupation, but the census records did not give a true picture of women or their employment at this time, focusing mainly on the (Male) head of the household.

In the 1891 Census,⁶ she is listed as aged 33, the Matron of the Fleming Children's Hospital in North, Road, Jesmond. This was a surprise as she did not appear to have any qualifications for the role and had not undertaken any training. However, she could have possibly overseen the household, as opposed to having a medical remit, something that a Bank Manager's daughter might have excelled at.

In the 1901 Census,⁷ she is back living with her mother, a widow – her father obviously died between the census years. She is aged 39 and again has no

³ Census Records. England. Beverley Parks, Beverley, Yorkshire. 07 April 1861. PRIESTLY, Charles H. (Head). RG09 PN. 3571. FL. 83. p. 4. Collection: 1861 England Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 April 2024.

⁴ Census Records. England. New Malton, Yorkshire. 02 April 1871. PRIESTLY, Charles H. (Head). RG10 PN. 4825. FL. 136. p. 5. Collection: 1871 England Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 April 2024.

⁵ Census Records. England. New Malton, Yorkshire. 03 April 1881. PRIESTLY, Charles H. (Head). RG11 PN. 4812. FL. 42. p. 4. Collection: 1881 England Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 April 2024.

⁶ Census Records. England. Jesmond, Newcastle, Northumberland. 05 April 1891. PRIESTLY, Harriet E. (Matron). RG12 PN. 4921. FL. 74. p. 18. Collection: 1891 England Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 April 2024.

⁷ Census Records. England. Chapel Allerton, Leeds, Yorkshire. 31 March 1901. PRIESTLY, Eliza. (Head). RG13 PN. 4251. FL. 98. p. 16. SN. 89. Collection: 1901 England Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 April 2024.

occupation, but the family have a Visitor from Newcastle in the household on Census night, possibly someone that Harriet met while she was working in Jesmond. Annoyingly, the visitor also does not have an occupation recorded.

In the 1911 Census,⁸ she is living back in Yorkersgate, New Malton and has one servant and is aged 45 and living on Private Means. Her age in this census, is about 9 years adrift and seeing as she filled out the Census information herself, we can speculate that she did this to make herself less unattractive to the enumerator!

She cannot be found on the 1921 Census, possibly she is away on holiday abroad.

She died on 19 January 1932 aged 74⁹ at Harrogate, Yorkshire – late of Malton and probate¹⁰ was granted to Charles Edward Stancliffe, a Bank Accountant and James Reginald Wilkinson, Solicitor. She left £3538 17s 10d. She had outlived her remaining brother and the estate possibly went to her niece, who lived in London.

⁸ Census Records. England. New Malton, Yorkshire. 02 April 1911. PRIESTLY, Harriet E. (Head). RG14 PN. 28993. RD. 528. SD. 3. ED. 8. SN. 21. p. 41. Collection: 1911 England Census. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 April 2024.

⁹ Death Index. Wales & England. RD. Knaresborough, Yorkshire. 1st Q., 1932. PRIESTLY, Harriet E. Vol. 9a. p. 149. Collection: Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 April 2024.

¹⁰ Testamentary records. England. 11 March 1932. PRIESTLY, Harriet E. Principal Probate Registry. *Calendar of the grants of probate*. p. 787. Collection: England & Wales, National Probate Calendar, 1858-1966. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 07 April 2024.