

Local Personalities

DR. HELEN DANIELS

With the candour that has since characterised her the teenage cook admitted that she could not make rhubarb jam. She added that she was not really a cook at all, and that her references came from an aunt.

But as soon as her employers found out who she was they agreed to keep her on.

Perhaps they sensed, all those years ago, the outstanding qualities of keen perception and forthrightness which have made Dr. Helen Daniels one of the leading personalities in the county.

For it was as a cook that Dr. Helen started her career.

The daughter of working class parents in Birmingham, she was determined when she was ten, to be a doctor.

"All my family were teachers", she explained. "I got sick of teachers, and wanted to be something different at all costs."

She went to Birmingham University and took a five year medical course, working in the holidays to help pay for her training.

Starting off as a cook, she then tried her hand at running a boarding house, and once took on a teaching job at a private school, which meant working in her own term-time.

Teaching found her in trouble again. Her ideas were too unconventional for her employers this time. She insisted upon teaching children history by making them write plays.

It was perhaps her first venture with children, but it was not to be her last. All her life, Dr. Helen was to take a lively and practical interest in children.

With five children of her own, she can speak not only from her medical knowledge but also from personal experience.

But she does not believe in tying children to mother's apron strings. Her own two youngest sons (she has four altogether) have spent their summer holidays touring Scotland and Wales on their bicycles. Another son has been in Canada at the Scout Jamboree.

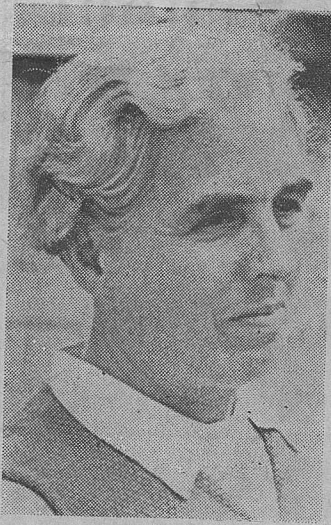
She has no objection to the mother going out to work, providing the children are well cared for while she is away.

"But I don't believe in equal rights", she said, not mincing words. Why not? Because a man is a man, and a woman a woman.

"If a woman's doing the same work as a man, running a doctor's practice, for instance", she said, "then she should have equal pay. But I can't possibly see how a woman can do the same work as a man in a factory".

NOT A SUFFRAGETTE

Married women with children



of the Girl Guides.

A move to Nailsworth found her suddenly a member of yet another organisation—the Women's Institute, and she is now a member of the County Executive, organising talks for the under-30's.

OWN TIES

Although she has visited America, Holland, Italy and Belgium with her husband, she has her own ties with the continent. It was she who first went across to Germany to arrange the Anglo-German exchange visits between German and English children five years ago.

But she says the large number of foreigners who are coming daily to work in this country, is a thing to be deplored rather than applauded.

"I have nothing against black people, for instance", she said, "but I think the number who are being allowed to come in and work in this country, is, to say the least, short-sighted".

Britain would neither be able to feed them nor house them. Anyway, if Britain's own men worked hard enough, she should not need foreigners.

Her great interest in Nailsworth U.D.C.—she topped the poll and became chairman this year—stems from the nation's housing problems.

That public work by women is important she does not dispute. A women's point of view is invaluable, she says. "If more women designed houses, how much better they would be".

Mr. J. Lionel Daniels, chairman and managing director of T. H. and J. Daniels Ltd., Lightpill Ironworks, has accepted an invitation to become a member of the West Regional Advisory Council for broadcasting.

Dec 4th
1953

It would seem that the only thing she shared with her husband was the Congregational Church to which both belong. Dr. Daniels herself is a lay preacher.

But that is not so. She takes a great interest in her husband's work, and often visits the factory.

And although her family come first in all things, her medical career runs it very close in her heart. "I miss it all very much", she says.

NOT A SUFFRAGETTE

Married women with children cannot give as much as a man can to her job, either, she argues. No, she would not have been a suffragette had she lived in 1906.

Frank and straight-forward, Dr. Daniels has won many hearts with her calm logic and easy manners. Although piercingly intelligent, her eyes suggest both tolerance and understanding, wrought perhaps by her early years on a panel practice in the slums of Nottingham. She vividly recalls the garbage-filled gutters of the streets.

Marriage had not come into her plans until she met Mr. J. Lionel Daniels, of T. H. and J. Daniels at a Student Christian movement in Birmingham University, but when she came to live in Rodborough with him, it was the virtual end of her medical career.

She confined her talents to welfare work and started six centres in the district. She took part in nursing and Red Cross work, and was often the examiner or the lecturer at local meetings.

One of the first girl guides in Birmingham, she started a ranger troop in Rodborough. Many of her girls are now officers in the district, and she herself is District Commissioner