

ACROSS THE POND

by Miss Windsor



Hello, darlings!

Now, doesn't time fly! This time last year Miss Windsor was enjoying the 'highlights' of her explorative culinary journey in the USA! So, feeling rather reflective Miss Windsor's been 'sleuthing' through her resources to learn more about America's culinary 'goddess' from yesteryear – Fannie Merritt Farmer! Oh Darlings, such a poetic name never fails to make Miss Windsor 'chuckle'! Also, in true Miss Windsor fashion, she wishes to 'tickle your fancy' – Oh, I say, with Fannie's recipe for sponge cake.

Fannie Merritt Farmer is a celebrated culinary expert, teacher, lecturer, advocate of 'scientific' cookery and household management, author of six books, and pioneer of the North American 'measuring cups' and 'spoons' – Ooooh, what an inspiration! Thus, Fannie popularised this revolutionary 'breakthrough', which made recipes easier to follow whether you're a housewife, novice cook, or a budding professional chef! So, whatever your 'rank' in the kitchen, your efforts could stand an equal chance of producing a culinary 'masterpiece!' Oh dear, now Miss Windsor feels a tad 'peeved,' "Darlings, could it be possible her beloved Mrs. Beeton has a rival?" – We'll soon find out!

Now, a little insight into the life of darling, Fannie! She entered this world the 23rd of March 1857 in Boston, Massachusetts. At the tender age of 16 years old she suffered a stroke. This left Fannie paralysed, bed bound for months, and she remained an invalid for many years. However, thank the 'Lord' above, as she eventually learned to walk again, although with a slight limp!

Apparently, by her mid-twenties, she worked for the Shaw family, and this is where she developed an interest in 'food glorious food' – Indeed, a stepping stone for greater things to come! By her early thirties, Fannie enrolled in the Boston Cooking School and achieved excellence. Following her graduation in 1889, Fannie served as assistant 'director,' then she became school principal during the early 1890's.

During Fannie's appointment, fellow colleagues, pupils and friends 'egged' her on (translation: urged) so to speak, in order to prepare and publish her first book. So, in 1896, Fannie rewrote *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, which was originally written by Mary J. Lincoln. However, Fannie's revised version includes the standardisation of measurements, scientific and nutritional information, helpful hints for the young housekeeper, recipes for the sick, and many more improvements. Luckily, Miss Windsor's a proud owner of the 1909 edition, which she purchased during last year's USA culinary tour!

Darlings, now wait just a 'clock tick!' It has just occurred to Miss Windsor that Fannie's English culinary rival – Mrs. Beeton – was 'waltzing' around the 'foodie' scene a couple or so decades before her! Evidently, in 1861, Mrs. Beeton published - *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, which also includes recipes with measurements, house-keeping tips, cooking techniques, recipes for the 'sick,' and much more! – Sound familiar, darlings?

However, One must admit, Fannie may have the 'upper hand' here, as her unique, scientific approach was far more advanced than many fellow culinary enthusiasts of that era – including Mrs. Beeton! Nevertheless, both ladies wrote a 'bestseller' that became the go-to 'kitchen bible' of that period! Even in today's world generations of American and English folk still call upon their counsel to aid with the smooth running of the modern-day household – Now, isn't that spiffing!

In 1902, Miss Farmer retired from the Boston Cooking School, and with housewives in mind (never mind professional cooks!) she founded Miss Farmer's School of Cookery in Boston. Fannie famously quoted, "I certainly feel that the time is not far distant when a knowledge of the principals of diet will be an essential part of one's education. Then mankind will eat to live, will be able to do better mental and physical work, and disease will be less frequent" – Miss Windsor couldn't agree more! Thus, Fannie became a well-known figure in the realm of food preparation and nutrition for children, the sick/convalescent, the digestive system – plus many more topics!

Moving on gracefully, a few 'ticks' ago, Miss Windsor attempted to tantalise your taste buds with the thought of Fannie's sponge cake – Oh, I say! May sound a trifle bland, but don't be fooled by a simple title! Of course, with your delectation in mind, Miss Windsor performed her 'magic' and 'royally' jazzed up Fannie's cake – details soon to be revealed!

You see darlings, GENUINE sponge cake is prepared with many eggs, little flour, sugar, lemon juice, and without the aid of a 'raising agent' – "But, what makes a sponge cake rise?", you utter! Well, according to Fannie's easy to comprehend, scientific explanation, "Is made light by the quantity of air beaten into both yolks and whites of eggs, and the expansion of that air in baking!" – Thank you, Fannie!

Eager to have a go at re-creating this, Miss



Photograph of Miss Windsor taken by sharronwallace.com

Windsor leapt into her kitchen and commenced preparation. She then scanned the recipe, and noted Fannie's instructions - 'beat egg yolks until thick and lemon-coloured', and 'whites of eggs beaten until stiff and dry' - "By using a 'manual' Dover egg-beater - 'not on your NELLY'!", Miss Windsor shrieked! Darlings, One presumes you'll understand Miss Windsor's shock if you've ever tried beating, by hand, egg whites until stiff and dry - Such an arduous task! Gone are the days when One could spare precious time beating egg whites to a peak, with just sheer patience and 'elbow grease'! – The mind certainly boggles!

Therefore, Miss Windsor who's known to follow cooking practices from bygone days feels semi regretful for succumbing to the aid of modern technology - namely a 'Kenwood' food-mixer and an electric hand-whisk! (One hopes Fannie would approve!) Now darlings, as Fannie's recipe calls for beaten egg whites plus yolks, One thought best to have both devices running in tandem - Oh, dear! Unfortunately, Miss Windsor failed to muffle such 'rocket'! So, she quickly learned to appreciate the interesting compilation of mechanical goods that erupted like the classical 'purr' of

a lawn mower, accompanied by the piercing 'blare' of a revved-up motorbike – Oh, how 'serene'!

You'll be pleased to know, Miss Windsor followed Fannie's recipe to a 'T', apart from her instruction to use a Dover egg-beater! Nevertheless, Miss Windsor produced yet another culinary triumph! Baked in a slow oven using two vintage sandwich tins, they turned out just perfect – light, fluffy and 'dove feather' soft! The perfect foundation for Miss Windsor's finishing touch, to be slathered with 'Tiptree' raspberry jam (Wilkin & Sons Ltd) and sandwiched together with 'Rodda's' Cornish clotted cream, then a light dusting of icing sugar – Voila! Please do visit www.misswindsor.uk - for Miss Windsor's 'version' of Fannie's recipe for sponge cake!

Darlings, Miss Windsor bids you farewell as she dashes off for a cup of tea, and a jolly good old munch on Fannie's sponge – Oh, I say! Until we meet again, One would be delighted to make your acquaintance via Instagram, Twitter and Facebook (@misswindsoruk).

Cheerio,
Miss Windsor X

WHAT'S GOING ON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Al-Anon

Every Wednesday, 9:30AM-10:30AM
432 2nd St., Langley

If a friend or relative has a problem with alcohol, you can find solutions for yourself at Alanon.

Al-Anon Group

Oak Harbor

Are you troubled by someone's drinking? Al-Anon group can help. Call Laurie at (360) 675-4430 for meeting information.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Every Day, 12:00PM & 8:00PM
432 2nd Street, Langley

For more information, call (360) 221-2070

American Rhododendron Society

Fourth Wednesday, 7:00PM

Coupeville Firehouse, 1164 Race Rd.
Coupeville

For more information, call Stephanie at (360) 678-1896.

Breastfeeding Support Group

Third Thursday, 10:30AM-11:30AM

Pregnancy Aid, 816 Camano, Langley

You can bring your own lunch if you'd like, tea and muffins are provided. Pregnant Moms welcome. Call Pregnancy Aid at (360) 221-4767 for more information.

Bingo

Every Monday, 7:00PM

Elks Lodge, Oak Harbor

Open to the public. For more information, call (360) 675-7111.

Blind Support Group

Fourth Tuesday, 2:00PM

Oak Harbor Senior Center

A support group for people with impaired vision. Learn and share techniques to be more

mobile. For more information, call Paul Bovey at (360) 544-2561 or (360) 679-8293.

Conversations of War and Return

First & Third Fridays, 7:00PM-8:30PM

Trinity Lutheran Church, Old Building, Freeland

Veterans Steve Durbin and Chuck McIntyre host a room of conversations for veterans, family members and caregivers. They need to hear your stories. Contact Chuck at (360) 579-1059 or Steve at (360) 678-2928.

Coupeville Chess Club

Second and Fourth Fridays, 6:45PM-9:00PM

Coupeville Library

All skill levels welcomed. Please bring a board if possible. Spread the word and come down for some leisurely play. For information, call (631) 357-1941.

Debtors Anonymous

Every Sunday, 6:00PM

WGH Board Room, Coupeville

If you are having problems with money and debt and think that you may be a compulsive debtor, the program of Debtors Anonymous can help you. No situation is hopeless. Find the solution that leads to solvency and serenity. Debtors Anonymous is a 12-step program based upon the 12-steps first developed and used by Alcoholics Anonymous. Call (515) 451-3749 for directions to location or for more information.

Divorce Care and DC4kids

Every Sunday, 5:00PM

Living Word Church, Oak Harbor

A support group for people dealing with separation and divorce. For more information, call Larry at (360) 969-0552 or Lisa - DC4kids at (360) 672-4239. Living Word Church is located at 490 NW Crosby Ave.

WHAT'S GOING ON CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



Thank you for reading! Please recycle the Whidbey Weekly when you are finished with it.

