

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This is one of a series of stories about those who served with the Voluntary Aid Detachment.

The Life and Legacy of Margot Lilian Lee-Potter

Margot Lilian Lee-Potter, born on April 10, 1896, in Batley, West Yorkshire, witnessed a period of profound change and turmoil throughout her lifetime. Her story, deeply rooted in the social and historical fabric of England, reflects the resilience and contributions of women during times of both peace and conflict.

Margot's early life, as recorded in the 1901 census, shows her residing at 3 Cemetery Road, Batley, with her parents, Samuel and Isabella. Samuel Lee-Potter was a medical practitioner, a profession that undoubtedly placed the family in a position of some social standing. The household later moved to 1 Cemetery Road, as noted in the 1911 census, and by this time, Margot's younger brother, Patrick Brunton, born in 1904, had joined the family.

Tragedy struck the Lee-Potter family in June 1912 when Samuel died from injuries sustained in a motorcycling accident at Hollings Hill. This event likely had a significant impact on the family, both emotionally and financially, as they navigated life without the patriarch.

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years of age, and was married.

DOCTOR'S FATAL ACCIDENT.

A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned at Saltaire, yesterday, at an inquest on Dr. Samuel Lee-Potter (42), of Batley, who was injured in a motor cycling accident at Hollings Hill. The doctor, it was said, was on Saturday travelling between 30 and 40 miles an hour when his machine skidded.

During World War I, Margot's life took a turn towards active service. On March 28, 1918, she joined the Red Cross as a full-time shorthand typist, residing at Rock House in Batley at the time. Her dedication to the war effort is further evidenced by her service at the Heavy Woollen District War Hospital in Dewsbury until at least April 1919. The war not only marked a period of immense contribution from women like Margot but also brought personal joy amidst the chaos.

On May 14, 1918, Margot married Captain Norman Wild, M.C.R.G.A., son of Mr. John J. Wild of Tver, Moscow. Their wedding, a notable event, was attended by about a hundred wounded soldiers from the Staincliffe Hospital, who formed a guard of honour outside the church. This touching gesture highlighted the couple's connection to the military community and the broader war effort.



Following the war, Margot's life continued to be marked by service and family. By 1939, she was living at 5 Cranshaw Gardens, Pudsey, with Norman, who managed a sheepskin tannery. Their family grew with the births of their son, John David Russell, on December 21, 1919, and their daughter, Isabel Mary, on August 27, 1923. Margot's post-war contributions included work with the Royal Voluntary Service, focusing on Urban District Duties, demonstrating her ongoing commitment to public service.

However, the shadows of war touched Margot's family once again during World War II. Her son, Lieutenant John David Russell, serving on H.M. Submarine Traveller, was reported overdue and presumed lost after the submarine likely struck an Italian mine around December 4, 1942. This devastating loss echoed the broader national experience of grief and sacrifice during the war.

Margot's later years were spent in quieter settings, moving away from the turmoil of her younger days. She passed away on May 13, 1980, in Kenton, Newcastle upon Tyne. Her life, spanning 84 years, was a testament to the strength and resilience of a generation that endured immense challenges and changes.

The historical context of Margot's life offers a window into the broader experiences of many women in early 20th century England. From the turn of the century through two world wars, women like Margot navigated personal loss, contributed to national efforts, and helped shape the social fabric of their communities. Their stories, often woven into the larger tapestry of history, provide invaluable insights into the era's social dynamics and the pivotal roles women played.

Margot Lilian Lee-Potter's legacy is one of service, resilience, and adaptability. Her contributions, both in her professional capacity during the war and her personal sacrifices, reflect the indomitable spirit that defined a generation. As we look back on her life, we are reminded of the countless unsung heroines whose lives and efforts have shaped the world we live in today.

Sources:

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