

MARGARET'S MELKSHAM CHILDHOOD MEMORIES



Photo: Peggy on her horse Mascot

Margaret Armstrong; known as Peggy whilst growing up. Born Margaret Tylee, 11th June 1923 in Melksham, Wiltshire. Her childhood years were spent at The Grove, a beautiful detached house next to St. Michaels Church and St. Michaels Church School.

Her parents were Charles George Tylee (born c1884) and Bertha Rose Perrett (born c1886). Margaret was one of 9 children, although 2 died at a very young age, and she was the third youngest child. Her father had stables behind the house and also had more horses stabled behind the Kings Arms and The Old Crown, he gave riding lessons. Her Grandfather, Charles Tylee Snr. ran Tylee's Garage, the site which is now occupied by The Factory Shop.

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Margaret's oldest sibling was Evelyn Violet May Tylee (born 1909), but always known as Violet, next was Charles James (born 1910), known as Jim, Roy Tylee (born 1917), Winifred Joan Tylee, known as Joan, then Margaret, followed by June Rosemary Tylee and last but not least Monica P. Tylee.

Margaret started school at the age of 4 or 5, at a Private Starter School in King Street, which was run by two sisters, Misses Smith, one of whom died but the other sister carried on running the school. This school was just past the National Spiritualist Church. St. Michaels Church School next door wasn't an option for the children, as their parents thought they might just walk out of school as being so close. She then attended Lowbourn School when she was 7 or 8 years old and continued her education until she left at the age of 14. Although passing her exams to go to Trowbridge High School, her education had to cease due to family financials, the family income from her father giving riding lessons was not enough to cover the cost of further education. But for three years Margaret attended night-school learning shorthand typing and bookkeeping.



(Tylee Family Carnival Entry – The Dancing Imps, at the Conigre, St. Michaels School in Background)

Whilst growing up Margaret's passion was always with horses and she loved riding, in-keeping with her Father's love of horses, he had been a groom colt breaker when he first lived in Melksham at Bowerhill Lane. Her Mother Rose was passionate about carnivals, every year she would enter a different float and would make everything, all year the house would be filled with paper tissue flowers. Margaret and her sisters hated all this and would try their hardest (but not always successfully) to get out of being on the floats, which always started from The Grove Garden. Once the Carnival for that year had finished her Mother already had in her mind the entry for next year.



For a while she worked in at L.J. Bigwood Ironmongers Shop which was on the corner of Church Street and Bank Street. This shop later became Loveridges the Jeweller, on the opposite side of the road was W. H. Smiths, which became Hyams and today is Kingstons Estate & Letting Agents.

She then got an office job in Perfex Photographic, which was on Semington Road/West End. This was followed by being a personal secretary in an office in Broughton Road; this was the site office for The West Midland Farmers Grain Silo Construction Company. The company then relocated to Gloucester and Margaret went with them, by then she was 18 years old.

With the break out of World War Two, Margaret joined up and enlisted with The ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service), which was the womens branch of the British Army during WWII. The ATS was formed in September 1938 initially as a Woman's Voluntary Service until 1949, when it was merged with The Woman's Royal Army Corps. In the beginning she was based up north somewhere, but her mother became ill and she was moved to Cheltenham and finally leaving near the end of the war to care for her Mother. Her father Charles had died in 1941 at the age of 57 after an illness, he had fought in the First World War. Bertha Rose remarried in 1954 to Charles Vines.

Margaret married John Armstrong and was living in Liverpool. But they had frequent holidays in Wiltshire and eventually John & Margaret moved back to Margaret's home town of Melksham, where they lived in Chalfield Crescent. Margaret and John had 3 children, Rosemary, John and Lynton.

Back in Melksham, Margaret did a part-time bookkeeping job in Bransons Motor Works which was in Melksham Market Place, the petrol pumps were actually on the pavement and the car showroom on the end took over from which was the old International Stores. (OPC Note: Bransons was actually where I first met Margaret, my first job when I left school and started working in the stores).



(Photo: The Grove, Melksham)



(St. Michael & All Angels Church – taken from The Grove, Garden).

(For more photographs view Tylee & Perrett Gallery on the parish page).