

# *This is A Few Forgotten Women Story*



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

**Mary Churchill CLAPTON**

**J.W.V.A.D. 4<sup>th</sup> Northern General Lincoln (Military).**

Mary or May as she was baptised, worked as a Nurse at the 4<sup>th</sup> Northern General Hospital from 11 July 1916 until 13 June 1919.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Northern General Hospital occupied the former buildings and grounds of Lincoln Grammar School on Wragby Road. It became operational as a military hospital on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1914, and had 41 Officer beds and 1126 beds for other ranks.



May Churchill CLAPTON was born on 3 July 1894 to Edward Louis Churchill CLAPTON, a clerk in holy orders and May Vivian KEELING. She was baptised by her father at St Michael's Church in Battersea on 29 July 1894, with the family living at 38 Bolingbroke Grove, Wandsworth.

May's only sibling, Edward Vivian CLAPTON, was born on 17 July 1892, and was also baptised at St Michael's Church by his father on 14 August 1892.

May's father, Edward Louis Churchill CLAPTON studied at Harrow from 1877 to 1881, and then graduated from Oxford University with a Master of Arts degree in 1887. He married May Vivian KEELING on 23 April 1890 at Christ Church, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The couple were living in Battersea when Edward became licensed as curate of St Matthew's church in August 1890.

By the time of the 1901 census, the couple along with Edward Vivian and May Churchill were living at The Glebe, in Lee, London, where Edward Louis was

rector of Lee Church. Edward junior was aged eight and May was six. Also living with the family was their aunt, Charlotte KEELING, and two domestic servants.

In June 1909, May Vivian CLAPTON died, and although the registration district for the death was Lewisham, London, May was buried in the cemetery at Stamford, Lincolnshire. By 1911, Edward Louis was recorded at being the rector of All Saint's Church in Stamford, living at 8 St Peter's Hill in the town with his daughter May and three servants. May's brother, Edward was away studying at Harrow, like his father before him.

At the start of World War 1, Edward Vivian CLAPTON was serving with the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Essex Regiment as a Lieutenant, and in July 1916, May Churchill CLAPTON became a nurse at the 4<sup>th</sup> Northern General Hospital. It was not possible to find out any information as to when or where May did her training.



This photograph was taken in 1916, and therefore, could include May. It has not been possible to find out any information about the daily lives of the nursing staff, for example, did they live in, or travel to and from home?

At the end of her service at the hospital, it appears that May returned home to the Vicarage in Stamford, as the 1921 census shows her living with her widowed father, Edward, who was still the rector of All Saint Church. His unmarried sister, Sophia CLAPTON, aged 81, was also living in the vicarage, along with three domestic servants.

May's brother, Edward had left the army, and again, like his father, had become a Clerk in Holy Orders, and in 1921, he was a curate for the parish church of Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire.

Edward Louis Churchill CLAPTON died on 20 September 1929, and was buried alongside his wife in Stamford Cemetery. He left just over £26,000 in his estate, of which £8,000 was given to his son, Edward, and £100 was left to All Saints Church, the remainder was left to his daughter, May.

Following her father's death, according to the Lincolnshire Electoral Registers, for both 1930 and 1931, May was living at 30 St Paul's Street, in Stamford.

By the time of the 1939 Register, May had moved to Hertfordshire, and was living at The Haven, Meadow Way in Hemel Hempstead. She was recorded as being single, living on private means.

May Churchill CLAPTON never married and died at 4 Meadow Way on 12 July 1972. As part of her legacy, she gave £100 to Stamford School for an annual

Clapton Memorial Prize for Modern Languages, and another £100 to Stamford High School, for an annual Edward Clapton prize.

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