

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story is one of a series that relate to women and girls who were associated with The Mount School, York, as pupils, teachers, or other members of staff. This project began in June 2023, as part of the York Festival of ideas.

Mary Elliott Thorp

Mary Elliott Thorp was born 11th November 1884 in Liskeard Cornwall, her birth was registered in Liverpool, England, Quaker Register, 1635-1958 even though she was born in Cornwall. She attended Mount School and was a member of Liverpool Friends, her date of application was 16th December 1898 and her date of admission was September 1900. In the 1901 census she is listed as a boarder at Mount School age 16.

She married Reginald Herbert Robson in Liverpool in 1908; Reginald was born 28th June 1877 in Darlington Durham. In the 1891 census Reginald Herbert Robson was a pupil at Ackworth School Yorkshire age 13, the school was

founded by John Fothergill and others in 1779 as a boarding school for Quaker Boys and Girls. In the 1901 census Reginald Herbert Robson was Teacher at Friends School Rawdon Yorkshire, which opened in 1832 by the Society of Friends initially for 40 boy pupils only, girls were able to enrol in 1836. In the 1911 Census Mary Elliott Robson was listed as a Teacher of Music at Friends Boarding School Saffron Walden, and her husband Reginald Herbert Robson was Listed as School Master Friends Boarding School Beachwood Borough Road Saffron Walden Essex.

Friends School Saffron Walden was founded as part of the Quaker's Clerkenwell Workhouse in Islington London in 1703, 50 years after George Fox Founder of the Religious Society of Friends. The workhouse was for children and the elderly and the school moved out in 1786. It was now in Clerkenwell and now known as the Friends School, the new building was damp and ill suited to teaching and learning. In 1825 the school began operation in Croydon Surrey, the property was an elegant house on the West Side of Park Lane Croydon, with 120 places for students who began school at the age of nine. As a result of concerns around typhoid in Croydon the school began to look at other alternatives Saffron Walden being one. Plans were approved for a new building to accommodate 150 children the new premises were opened on the

19th August 1879. (Information taken from Wikipedia, and Children's Homes.org.uk). Reginald Herbert Robson died 31 December 1951 in Southend-on-Sea, Mary Elliott Robson died 10th March 1963 in Midhurst Surrey

Mary and Reginald had four children:

Edward Herbert Robson born 3rd July 1912 in Saffron Walden, Captain Edward Herbert Robson was killed in action on 23rd October 1944, burial in Florence War Cemetery is situated in the Tuscany Region of Italy. He served in 5th Bn Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment he was Mentioned in Despatches.

Capt John Elliott Robson born 22nd June 1917 in Reading Berkshire, in the 1939 Register he is listed as a University Student at Cambridge, he served in the Royal Berkshire Regiment (Princes Charlotte of Wales) he died 7th October 1944 buried in Gradara War Cemetery Pesaro, Provincia di Pesaro e Urbino Marche Italy.

Peter T Thorp Robson born 15th September 1920 in Reading Berkshire, he married Elisabeth Foss in 1948 Holborn London. He served in WW2 and is mentioned in UK, London Gazettes WW11 Military Notice 1939-1943 date 24 August 1943, he is also listed in UK, World War Allied Prisoners of War 1939-

1945 in Camp location Spangenburg Hesse Germany he was in the Royal Signals as a Lieutenant POW number 2156. He died 12th June 1984 in Willesden London, burial 21st June 1984 Kensington and Chelsea London.

Patrick Hastings Robson born 27th September 1923, in Reading Berkshire. He married Marina Hainsworth 1956 in Fulham London. He served in the Royal Navy as Temporary Midshipman 30 April 1943 taken from UK, Navy Lists 1888-1970 Patrick Hastings Robson died 5th October 1992 in Nottingham burial date 11th November 1992.

Mary Elliott Thorp's parents were Dr James Herbert Thorp born 1856 in Leeds and Annie Sturge Elliott born 1861 in Liskeard Cornwall, they married 26th July 1883 in Liskeard Cornwall. *Western Morning News* article:

Friends' Wedding at Liskeard of Dr Herbert Thorp of Liverpool to Miss Annie S Elliott. James Herbert Thorp emigrated with his wife Annie Sturge Elliott and son John Elliott Thorp and Daughter Margaret Sturge Thorp.

Dr Thorp worked as a Physician at the Richmond Road Mission in the slums of Liverpool, the family were committed Quakers and can trace their Quaker membership back to the seventeenth century. They arrived in Adelaide then

journeyed to Hobart where James Herbert Thorp was invited to fill a temporally post as the headmaster of the Friends School in Hobart to advise Quakers in Tasmania about the consequences of the Australian Governments Conscription Policy, and became involved in the Anti Military Service League. (More information can be found on Wikipedia about the Thorp family)

Dr James Herbert Thorp died 14th March 1919 burial Hobart, City of Hobart (West) Quakers Tasmania age 63, he is listed in Australia Cemetery Index 1808-2007, also listed in US,UK and Ireland Quaker Published Memorials 1818-1919. Annie Sturge Elliott/Thorp died 14th November 1931 in New South Wales Australia.

They had five children: Mary Elliott Thorp was the first child.

John Elliott Thorp born 5 November 1866 Liverpool, he married Beatrice Ethel Phillipia Gore-Jones 2nd July 1919 in St Marks Church Buderim Mountain Queensland Australia recorded in U.S Quaker Periodicals 1828-1929 The Australian Friend, he died 19th September 1959, he was buried in Centennial Park Cemetery Pasadena, City of Mitcham South Australia.

Annabel Windsor Thorp born 29th May 1888 55 Shaw Street Liverpool the family home. Annabel Windsor Thorp was married twice her first husband was

John Watson they had two children, following his death in 1915 she remarried John Stewart Farnfield MD Surgeon on 7th March 1917 at All Saints Hastings. John Stewart Farnfield was born 12th September 1877 in London he died 5th December 1960 at the Royal East Sussex Hospital Hastings. They had one child William Stewart Farnfield born 1st April 1920 in Sussex he died on 24th March 1997 in Folkestone. Annabel Windsor Thorp died 4th April 1970 in Uckfield Sussex.

Margaret Sturge Thorp born 12th June 1893 Liverpool, she married Arthur Watts 1st October 1925 in Chatswood New South Wales Australia, Arthur returned permanently to the Soviet Union, even though Margaret did not share his fascination with things Russian, She remained in Australia they had no children and divorced in 1936 (More detailed information can be found on the University of Tasmania Item 47 Pocket Diary 1975).

She left Queensland for Welfare Work overseas in The Friends War Relief Victims Relief Committee and Quaker Teams under the British Red Cross. She was a Peace Activist and a Labour Activist in Australia. (More detailed information can be found on Australian Dictionary of Biography).

Dr Joseph Herbert Thorp born 24th July 1895 in Liverpool, Attended Bootham School in York age 16, this is a Quaker Boarding School founded by the Religious Society of Friends and opened on January 1823 in Lawrence Street York.

During WW11 he served in the Second Australian Imperial Force, and the British Red Cross and order of St John he was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal. He was an Orderly, Friends Ambulance Unit, Train X1, attached to B.E.F France, Sailing in September, joined unit in London, 30th November 1915, and crossed to France 25th January, in 1916 served with Ambulance Train conveying wounded from Casualty Clearing Station to Base Hospitals till 3rd February 1919, then returned to Australia. (Taken from the Australian, University of Sydney Biographical information including World War 1 1880-1980). He married Ada E Cavage 1929 in Sydney New South Wales. He died on 13th May 1994 in Springfield New South Wales Australia burial Falconbridge Cemetery New South Wales.

Marilyn Smee

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