

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



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

Edith Eileen Godson – South Lincs V.A.D. 38

Edith served approximately 50 hours at the Sleaford Red Cross Hospital from 22 August 1916 to 20 November 1916. The property was in the possession of the Marquis of Bristol before opening its doors for patients in November 1914. Edith Eileen was the second daughter of Ernest Henry and Sarah Ethel GODSON. She was born on 16 July 1894, and baptised in the parish of Heckington, Lincolnshire (best known for its eight-sailed windmill, the only one still standing in Europe) on 10 August the same year.

Ernest Henry married Sarah Ethel in the parish of Helpingham, Lincolnshire (just two miles from Heckington) on the 1 June 1890. Ernest was a solicitor, and the son of Joseph GODSON, a farmer. Sarah was the daughter of Felix TOMLINSON, also a farmer.

Ernest and Sarah had five daughters - Gladys Maud born in 1893, Edith Eileen in 1894, Olive Ethel in 1896, Norah May in 1900, and Elizabeth Iris in 1902.

In the 1901 census, the family were living on Boston Road in Heckington, along with three domestic servants. Ernest Henry was working as a solicitor.

By the time of the 1911 census, Edith Eileen, along with two of her sisters, Gladys Maud and Olive Ethel were at boarding school in Folkestone. The only information which could be found about Eversleigh (or Eversley) School on Coolinge Lane in Folkestone was a photograph of the building, and of the main hall, requested to be taken by the head of the school, Kate White, in 1911, the year that the sisters were students (Historic England BL21379/BL21398)

At aged 22, Edith Eileen went as a volunteer to the Sleaford Red Cross Hospital and undertook housework, rather than nursing, for around three months.

In the 1921 census, she was living at home with her parents, and two of her sisters, Olive and Elizabeth, and although the girls were adults, none of the girls were working. Ernest Henry was still working as a solicitor, and died in 1928, leaving an estate worth £100,000.

There was an entry in The Midwives Roll for 1935, for Edith Eileen GODSON. She appears to have passed the Central Midwives Board examination on 10 March 1933. Nothing could be found regarding where she worked after graduating.

However, in the 1939 Register, Edith was a partner in a nursing home at 20 Marsh Lane, Stanmore in Harrow, Middlesex, with Christabee Mary PING. She was also recorded as being an 'air raid warden'.

Again, unfortunately, no further information could be located about the nursing home.

Edith Eileen GODSON never married, and died on 22 December 1975 at Forest Oaks, Brockenhurst in Hampshire, a few months after her sister, Gladys Maud, with whom she had been living.

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