

## PREMISE

*I have always been interested to study the Inner Wheel History and reflect on the figure of Margarett Oliver Golding, the Founder of the Inner Wheel, a Female Organization become, over the years, the most important in the world.*

*For some time I had in progress the updating of the first edition of my book "**THE INNER WHEEL SPIRIT**", published in 2010. During my work, I had the need to find the birth date of Margarett Oliver Golding, indispensable to attribute to our Founder one Asteroid in her name (see the article published in this web-site, News, 13 August 2014 "In the Deep Space an Asteroid dedicated to Margarett Oliver Golding").*

*Unfortunately, in all the books on IW History in my possession, the date of birth of Margarett was never reported. Then, after consulting the Association Secretary/Administrator of The Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in GB & I, I have bought through AbeBooks the text "Annals of a Parish", A Short History of Hay-on-Wye", 1994, author Geoffrey L. Fairs, not founding in it, however, any reference to Margarett.*

*So I contacted directly the town of Hay-on-Wye, receiving a kind response from Mr. Nigel Lewis, Hay Town Clerk & Clerk to the Council, who put me in touch with a local genealogist, Mr. Alan Nicholls, Chair of History Hay Group.*

*The light on my path!*

*His answer, fully cited in the paragraph 2, is of great interest to reconstruct some important data about Margarett, including her genealogical tree.*

*However, to be absolutely sure of this news, which rewrites something of the history of our Founder, I have acquired her certificate of birth and marriage.*

***The city of birth of Margarett Golding Oliver was not Hay-on-Wye, but Blaenau Ffestiniog, Merioneth, Wales. The date, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1881. The place, 134 High Street.***

*With great joy and legitimate satisfaction, I advance a part of the third Chapter of the new edition of my book "**THE INNER WHEEL SPIRIT 2**", being published, to celebrate, also with this news, the Inner Wheel World Day 2015, 91 years after the foundation of the Inner Wheel conducted by Margarett Oliver Golding.*

*In this part of the Chapter III, in addition to the important news quoted, you can read other equally important information on the figure of Margarett, able to enrich our knowledge on her life.*

*Finally, my sincere and deep thanks, to our IIW President Abha Gupta, for the opportunity given to me in publishing the two paragraphs of the Chapter III.*

*Luisa Vinciguerra, Turin, January 2015*

# MARGARETTE OLIVER GOLDING, THE FOUNDER, THE VISIONARIA

From "THE INNER WHEEL SPIRIT 2"

CHAPTER III, § 1, 2.

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## 1. Margarett Golding, the Founder.

The Founder of the Inner Wheel, Mrs. Oliver Golding, (née Margarett Owen), was of Welsh extraction. A recent survey conducted by Alan Nicholls, genealogist, Chair of Hay History Group in charge of the investigations, required to satisfy the request of information I sent to the town of Hay-on-Wye, would allow to determine the exact place where Margarett was born as well as her year of birth, thus far unknown.

However, to be absolutely sure, in rewriting something about the history of our Founder, I have acquired her certificate of birth and marriage. *(These can be viewed at the end of this article.)*



The city of birth of Margarett Golding Oliver was not Hay-on-Wye, but Blaenau Ffestiniog, Merioneth, Wales. The date, 20th November 1881. The place, 134 High Street.

Blaenau Ffestiniog, Merionethshire, is a slate mining town in Gwynedd, North Wales. Margarett was the daughter of William Owen and Sarah Roberts. William Owen, born 1853, worked in the Gas Supply Industry as did his father Edward Owen. Sarah Roberts was born 1857 and her father, Llewelyn Roberts was a master woollen weaver and was born in Abererch, Caernarfon.



Blaenau Ffestiniog, located in the mountain of Snowdonia, the town was once a centre of the Welsh slate mining industry. This industry declined during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Blaenau Ffestiniog is part of the traditional county of Merionethshire. The mountains around Blaenau Ffestiniog form the watershed between the River Lledr flowing to the North (a tributary of the River Conwy) and the River Dwyryd flowing to the West.

Margaret Owen married to Oliver Golding in 1905 at Barton-upon-Irwell ([1]), Lancashire. He was born in Sale, Cheshire on 1879 and his job, registered during the census of 1911, was that of Brewery Cashier.

Although we do not know exactly when, Margarett's family certainly moved and established in Hay-on-Wye, Brecon (now Powys), where her father worked as a gas engineer and spent in this business all his life.

The town of Hay-on-Wye lies on three borders. The national boundary with England, and the county boundaries of Brecknockshire and Radnorshire run through the town. Typically of Hay, the county boundary is marked by the famous River Wye. The third boundary is that with the Brecon Beacons National Park, in whose corner Hay sits.

The town has always held an important place in the region, being on the road to Brecon, once the most important town for miles around.

This is where Margarett spent her childhood and adolescence, a place certainly important for her life. A town which today hosts a little sign in her loving memory, a donation by the Inner Wheel. In 1975, a tribute commemorating the formation of the first Inner Wheel Club, in the form of a teak seat, bearing a descriptive plaque, was presented to the town of Hay-on-Wye, to pay homage to Mrs Golding, by members of District 5. It stands outside the town's Library.



Moreover, we know that Margarette, as she was a young woman, trained as a nurse, becoming a sister at the London Hospital for Tropical Diseases ([2]).

Even if later she was retired, her profession was very useful during the 1914/18, the First World War. Certainly, the years of service in the nursing profession were important and fundamental to create in her the desire, the willing to help the suffering humanity.

And finally, Manchester, the city where Margarette spent her adult life. Manchester, an important city.

Located at the confluence of the Rivers Irwell, Irk and Medlock, at the foot of the West Pennines, Manchester underwent its greatest expansion in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when, under the push of technical innovations, innumerable textile companies established there making it one of the most important cities of the English industrial revolution, partly owing to its damp weather, ideally suited to cotton processing. Manchester (most of the nation's wealth was created in this region during the Victorian times) played a decisive and leading role in the world textile manufacture, a position it maintained and held until its decline in the 1960s. So, it was undoubtedly textiles, and other associated trades, which dominated and created a dynamic city, whose very symbol is the worker bee – a feature of the city's coat of arms and an emblem repeated in mosaics all over the floor of the city's Town Hall.

Her husband being a Rotarian of the Club of Manchester, founded in 1911, Margarette could enjoy the breath of Rotary just in those years when it was establishing in Great Britain. And be infected by the values it was spreading.

In such a context all Margarette Golding's different souls well emerge and reveal: the business woman, the philanthropist; and, most important for us, the founder of the Inner Wheel.

As regards business, Margarette proved to be a shrewd business woman. Joining a firm already run by two ladies in the field of nurse uniforms, she immediately gave new impulse to the activity, improving the production quantity and quality. We can somehow include Margarette in those middle class women who first started feeling the effects of the new ideas about the role of women; where women were no longer passive subjects, rather they played an active role in the industrialization, influencing its trend and nature. A study by A. Redford ([3]) shows that the 50% of manufacture production increases were also due to the demand, both internal and colonial, for uniforms; as well as for cleaning women, laundresses, nurses, retailers, housemaids, etc. ...

In 1919, the year after the War ended, Margarette Golding bought all shares and took over as Managing Director of the company. A company which, in the meantime, had further expanded, run by nurses for nurses, located in Stockport, Cheshire. And, as a sign of her assuming this new role, Margarette changed its name in '*Nurses Outfitting Association Ltd.*', holding this position until she died. In the following years, new progress was achieved and the firm merged with other firms engaged in similar business activities, always remaining in Stockport, however, and incorporating in its name the word 'Danco', derived from 'Doctors And Nurses Complete Outfitters', the trade name of the old firm.

A further characteristic of Margarette Golding's eclectic and many-sided personality was surely philanthropy, a feeling of love and interest toward the others which translated into actions of effective solidarity. On this regards, writes Millicent Gaskell in her book 'Home and 'Horizon' that 'Even the facilities of her commercial enterprise were utilized, for at the factory in Stockport, thousands of yards of material were provided and cut out, to be made into garments for crippled children and needy persons by the members of the Manchester Club, a type of service work which was pursued by this and other Clubs for many years([4])'.

She was then particularly close to the Manchester Girls' Orphanage and the Ancoat Hospital, to which the Inner Wheel Club of Manchester donated the Mortuary Chapel.

She also did a great deal for the Girl Guide Movement, in which she held the office of commissioner.

### 1.1. Margarette Oliver Golding, the Visionaria.



Mrs. Oliver Golding,

These were the prerogatives of the woman who offered her talents and her passion to the Inner Wheel. Because, of course, Margarette was not only a nurse, a business woman, or a

‘philanthropist’. Margarette had the courage to take a great project upon herself and, gifted of a far-sighted vision, she lavished in it a contagious and true enthusiasm and spent herself completely.

To delve into the Spirit of the Inner Wheel from its very beginning is a fascinating research, though difficult. Just as it is difficult to reconstruct Margarette’s personality, which certainly was very interesting, of a volitional woman, yet also able to be sweet and funny, as we can catch by her letters and speeches, whereas the scarce photographic documentation shows a rather severe look of her.

Intelligent, versatile, successful business woman, good communicator, inspired by the determination and courage typical of focus-oriented people. In Margarette the Inner Wheel found the right leader at the right time. We have already spoken of the large number of Clubs and Committees of Spouses which were active in those years. Anyway, we must give her charisma the credit for having given a structure to the Inner Wheel throughout the period between 1924 and 1939, with the number of affiliates increasing, showing a strong interest and a notable sensitivity in the development of the mission which Margarette had delineated. It was just like a cascade effect, a progressive awareness and a significantly growing number of members willing to play a decisive and positive role in society, all united by the strong will of participating in the charity, yet setting themselves also as a propulsive power of the social changes England was undergoing in those years, as undisputed protagonists of the commitment toward public benefit, still without joining in Feminism.

Without Margarette, ready to breathe life into the new organization, nurture it during its infancy, iron out its teething troubles inspiring confidence and trust, guide it through its formative stages and see it solidly established, the Inner Wheel, today, would not have reached its 91 years of bright existence but remaining among those many Clubs or Committees destined to limited time and space and then go back in the shadows.

She died in 1939 having seen the 100<sup>th</sup> Inner Wheel Club formed. On 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1940, a commemorative plaque was presented at the Stretford Memorial Hospital, where she died and donations in her honour were used to buy furniture for the nurses’ quarters.

The City of Manchester has honoured Inner Wheel by erecting a Commemorative Plaque on the founding site at 47, Lower Mosley Street, Manchester – now the Bridgewater Concert Hall.

An accurate, even difficult, research allowed to find out the historical venue where the Inner Wheel was born, and place there the Commemorative Plaque. It is only fourteen inches in diameter, made of patinated bronze with etched enamelled lettering, so hopefully it will not wear out or look less than pristine for many years to come. This has taken twenty long years of negotiating through the corridors of power, so the Members are rightly proud of their achievement. Because there are strict rules regarding these Commemorative Plaques – namely, you are only permitted to have the City Crest at the top followed by the name, information and date. Ours comes under the ‘Famous Women of Manchester’ category, costing the sum of £860.00.

Lower Mosley St, Manchester. Construction of The Bridgewater Hall commenced on 22 March 1993, but the idea of a new concert hall for Manchester dates back to the reconstruction of the Free Trade Hall in the 1950s after wartime bomb damage. The Bridgewater Hall held its first concert on 11 September 1996 and was officially opened by Her Majesty The Queen, accompanied by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, on 4 December that year. With the opening of this magnificent venue, a symbol of its artistic health and enterprise, Manchester's civic and cultural history entered a new phase, continuing the unrivalled tradition for the city of fine civic building, of architectural and artistic patronage and of amateur and world-class professional music-making.

47 Lower Mosley St, Manchester. Even if since the far 1927 our original venue par excellence does no longer exist, and we, today’s Inner Wheel, won’t be able to find it unchanged, and visit it, touch it, imprint it in our memory, we remain bound up with it, with that place, that day, that Woman, with all Founders of Manchester Club and, 91 years later, we keep on celebrating their bravery, their faith, their determination.