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IVAN D MARGARY



I D Margary (on right) with King Gustav of Sweden and Miss K M E Murray at Fishbourne, 9th November 1968

Ivan Margary was born on the 23rd November, 1896, at 21 Kensington Palace Gardens, into a military family. His maternal grandfather also died at this address on May 12th 1896, so possibly Ivan's mother had inherited it. Donald Larnach, his grandfather was born in Caithness and went to Australia in 1834. He became a banker and financier and when he returned to England he became chairman of the London board of his bank, Director and President of the London Joint Stock Bank, a director

of the Indemnity Mutual Marine Insurance Co, an investor in other colonial banks and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. He bought the Brambletye Estate in East Grinstead, was High Sheriff of the County in 1883, he owned land in Suffolk and the colonies and when he died his estate in England, apart from that in Australia, was £619,935.

Ivan's grandfather, Alfred Robert, who married Georgina Adams on the 12th June 1852 at St James, Westminster, had served in the 26th and 54th Royal Sussex Militia, retiring with the honorary rank of Major. In the 1850s he purchased Chartham Park, moving from the Bournemouth area. His son, also Alfred Robert, Ivan's father, and the eldest daughter, Sarah Clementina, were born in Kingston, Ontario, about 1854 and 1855 respectively. The younger daughter, Caroline Matilda Elizabeth, was born in 1857 in Eastbourne.

Ivan Margary's father married Elizabeth Walker Larnach on the 17th June 1893.

In the London Gazette of 28th June 1881 he is shown as being on the Reserve of Officers as a lieutenant, but gazetted to be Captain in the Royal Sussex Artillery Militia as from the 29th June. In 1896 his signature appears as the approving officer on Enlistment Forms, showing him to be a Colonel.

Margary's father and mother, always known as Lily, moved into Chartham Park in 1892 when his grandfather died. His grandmother lived with them until her death on the 11th June only about five months after her husband.

From 1764 the heads of the family had been Liverymen of the City of London. Ivan Margary's great-grandfather, Joshua John Lloyd Margary, was Master of the Worshipful Company of Salters in 1832, as was his father in 1871 and at the time of his death Ivan was also a senior member.

Early membership of the Company covered a surprising range of professions but in 1918 the 'flagship' of the Company was formed – the Salters' Institute of Industrial Chemistry which, in its earliest years, was especially concerned with helping young chemists returning from the services after the First World War. Today the aims are to encourage careers in the chemical and allied industries and the teaching of chemistry. By the early 1980s its work had extended to curriculum development, supporting the Science Education Group of the University of York.

On the 1st October 1852 a grant of arms was made to Joshua Margary – a blue and silver shield charged with three daises, i.e. marguerites for Margary. However there was apparently a family tradition that they were descended from the de Marguerys one branch settling in Dorset and another in London in 1680. It is said that it is from this latter branch that the Felcourt Margarys were descended.

From the reminiscences of Edward Budd, who lived in the Grange opposite Chartham Park an interesting if elusive scene of the social life during the time of Margary's grandparents can be recreated. It is just a little cringe-making with rather obsequious remarks such as the Budds being 'accepted by the local gentry', but it reflects the age.

Margary's aunts were obviously in the habit of visiting the Budds, and Caroline, who appears to have been known by her second name, Matilda, was staying with them at the time of the 1871 census. The two families attended an 'amateur' concert at the National Schoolroom on the 14th January 1873. This was in aid of funds for the choir. The performances were by 'a party of amateur ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood and the choir boys'.

There is a brief reference to the marriage of Ivan's father, reported in the East Grinstead Observer: 'Marriage of Colonel Margary of Chartham Park and Miss Larnach of Brambletye.....Bridesmaids included Miss Matilda Margary, who wore a white dress with pink satin bodice, veiled with cream guipure lace, hat of white chip, trimmed with lace, marguerites and pink roses. The bridegroom presented each bridesmaid with his crest in diamonds, a marguerite brooch and a bouquet of pink roses and marguerite'.

Neither sister married and both died young, Matilda on the 19th March 1904, at 47, and Sarah only the following month on 30th April, aged 45. There are some details of the former's funeral contained in the Budd reminiscences. The two sisters were buried with their parents in the family vault in Lingfield churchyard and there is a plaque in the church in their name and above it one to their parents, Ivan Margary was 8 when his aunts died.

Ivan was privately educated and would have had a childhood of gentle privilege in the tranquillity of the Surrey countryside. In 1913 he went to Exeter College, Oxford, to study chemistry. This was soon interrupted by the First World War, that appalling event that was to change so many lives, completely ruin lives and end so many others. Looking at village war memorials one cannot help but wonder how it was possible that young men, taken, like Margary, from such peaceful surroundings and lives of simple predictability, could have coped with the horror in which they found themselves.

However, before considering Margary's war service there is a small discrepancy due, it seems, to an ambiguity in some earlier notes, which needs resolving. It has been thought that he served in Gallipoli, and was wounded there, but the description he gives himself of the wound and how he received it are contained in a small pocket diary he kept and from this it is clear he was in France not Gallipoli. Also, if he had gone to Gallipoli he would have had to have been in the 1/4th Battalion but he enlisted in the 7th, as a 2nd Lieutenant, then becoming a Lieutenant. It is confusing because in 1914-1919 the Royal Sussex Regiment had more than 14 Battalions, some on home defences, others fighting in different areas of the War. The 7th was the first Service Battalion of Kitchener's New Army to be formed in the Royal Sussex Regiment and one of the first of the whole of Kitchener's Army. It began recruiting in Chichester on 12th August 1914.

Margary's entries in his pocket diary are terse; there is more detail in a book he finally wrote on his return to Oxford. In the latter his description of his first embarkation for France is almost as if he is going to the Continent for a holiday: 'On a lovely summer day, June 20th, 1916, Father and Mother accompanied me to London to see me off after spending a few very pleasant days of 'overseas leave' together

.....the platform was crowded with other people seeing friends off and I think most people's feelings were a little strainedat last, with much whistling the train drew out of the station amid a great deal of waving and cheering'. He then refers to arriving at Folkestone and then sailing to Boulogne on the SS Princess Henriette at 3.5 p.m. 'Fine weather and good crossing'. They arrived at 5pm when he 'explored the town and dined at the Louvre Hotel'.

From the 22nd to the 27th June he was marched to and from No. 1 Training Camp. His comments are laconic, 'Five days of marching to do hours of drill, PT, bayonet fighting, bombing, gas, all on the softest of dry shifting sand. The Camp was known as the Bull-Ring on account of the position and the bullying nature of some of the instructors'. Edmund Blunden, the war poet, was also in the Royal Sussex, in the 11th Battalion, and he also gives a description of his first day at the training camp. 'I associate it' (i.e. Etaples) 'with 'The Bull-Ring' that thirsty, savage, interminable training ground..... I found myself on the sandy, tented training ground. The machine-guns were thudded at their targets for the benefit of those who had advanced through wire entanglements against such furies equally with beginners like myself.'

On the 21st July Margary developed influenza and was removed by motor ambulance to the Duchess of Westminster Hospital at Etaples. On the 5th August he went to No. 40 Infantry Base Depot and from the 20th August he was in the trenches. He had a period of 'bilious sickness' from the 13th - 18th September, which was trench fever.

He gives little away regarding conditions and feelings except for the 4th October when he writes of being 'shelled day and night very accurately with HE shells'. In his book he gives more details, writing that the shells were close to and in the trench, that men were constantly being buried and dug out, that it was continuous through the day and night. He mentions nothing of fatalities and injuries but does remark that when they were finally relieved even those not suffering from shellshock could not control the trembling of their hands.

On the 12th November he went on leave, back to the Louvres Hotel, then on the SS Onward to Folkestone, to London and so to Chartham Park, but he was not home for Christmas. He returned to France on the 21st December on the SS Victoria, rejoining the battalion on the 23rd.

On the 19th January 1917 he thought he had sprained his ankle (probably skylarking with a friend) but it was, in fact, broken so he was shipped back to England again on the SS Formosa, to Southampton Water and to the King Edward VII Hospital, 9 Grosvenor Gardens, then on the 2nd February he was at the hospital at 19 Belgrave Square. On the 7th he was home at Chartham Park, with his leg in plaster. Between the 12th March and the 7th June he seems to have been on home service, travelling between Chartham and Newhaven. On the 8th June he travelled to Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Folkestone. He walked round to see the damage done by an air raid and visited Dover Hill to see the landslide at the Warren. Then he sailed on the Henriette again to Boulogne and went to the Hotel de Paris. On the 9th June he was at the 40th Infantry Depot again and on the 15th rejoined A Company. Until August he experienced once more the periods in the trenches, alternating with rest periods.

It was on the 17th August that he was 'shot in the neck and back'. At least, that was what he thought had happened and apparently kept asking if his head was alright. He had been hit by two bullets, one in the back close to the top of the spine, the other had glanced off his helmet at the neck, leaving a large dent. He kept the helmet to always remind himself how lucky he had been that day. He arrived back in England on the hospital ship Grantally Castle and was taken to Lady Radnor's Hospital at Longford Castle.

He makes no comment regarding the seriousness of the wound but he did not return to France until the 16th November, 1918, five days after the Armistice. Not only was he fortunate that the helmet saved his life, the other bullet although near the spine had done no permanent damage, although he had restricted movement for the rest of his life.

His time in France now was spent going to football matches, visiting the cinema, doing a great deal of walking (he was a great walker) and taking photographs with a Kodak camera given to him by his father. For a time he was Orderly Officer and there were marches and Brigade inspections.

On the 31st January 1919 he returned to Southampton, went by train to Wimbledon via Basingstoke, marched up Wimbledon Hill to the Common and No. 1 Dispersal Unit Camp. He was demobilised at 4.45 p.m., got on the train to Clapham Junction, then to Victoria, then East Grinstead via Oxted, and walked home to Chartham Park. He was 22.

He returned to Exeter College in April 1919 to resume his chemistry studies but as with so many who had experienced the War he was deeply troubled. He wrote that 'I found my mind was encumbered with a host of reminiscences of events on active service. To ease this burden and make way for other matters I decided to write it down in narrative form. I had always kept a diary of my movements and had continued to do so in FranceIt must be kept in mind how different were the conditions in that War. References to battalion transport imply horses and mules with their vehicles. Marching on foot was the normal progress except where motor lorries were provided by the French Army for special long journeys. The aeroplane was still in its infancy.....Troops camped in masses in the open fully expose. At home we had no telephone and only horse carriages so that contact with home was very slow and difficult.'

He made no further comment whether he had really been able to come to terms with the effects of the war. He completed his degree in 1921 and certainly set out to fill his life with activity. If there was any feverishness in this only he knew..

Meteorology was his first interest and he had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society in 1913. As he began to collect the threads of his life together again he resumed that interest and was to serve on its Council from 1933 to 1936, submitting several papers to the Society's Journal between 1924 and 1934. He contributed to the Society's annual Phenological Report (i.e. the study of the recurrence of natural disasters) and, with others, to the 'structure of the atmosphere', which involved an enormous amount of work until just before the 2nd World War.

He assembled and tabulated nearly 500 reports from observers all over Britain, and maintained weather reports for East Grinstead. The annual Margary Lecture commemorates his work.

He was also interested in botany and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1927. He does not appear to have published any articles but donated generously towards the publication of the Journal. From 1928 to 1938 he made detailed observations of the Norfolk Coastal erosion and was made an Honorary Fellow in 1973. When he accepted a Diploma from Lord Shackleton to mark his research into Roman Roads he said that the study reflected geography and geology and he accepted the honour on behalf of all archaeologists interested in that form of work. In fact Margary was very reluctant to accept any form honour. He refused an OBE feeling that he had done nothing to justify it.

In 1927 he also joined the Sussex Archaeological Society and so began the subject for which he is best known – Roman roads, mentioned above. He had discovered a section of road on the family estate but when a year after joining the Society he submitted an item for the Notes and Queries there was a rather sniffy response – ‘Mr Margary has submitted finds from his site. I can find nothing Roman’. Well, he was young, perhaps it was felt he had some temerity in putting forward what was, after all, a theory, so soon after joining, but he was persistent and, like all good scientists, he acknowledged the onus of proof was on him. Up until then the major roads were known, Watling St, Stane, Ermine, the London to Brighton and London to Lewes etc., but Margary maintained that there was a vast network of subsidiary roads and even more minor tracks which served villas and industrial sites.

Eventually he was able to prove this and arranged Society tours of his sites. He began to be accepted and people turned to him for information, help and advice on their own sites. He became a major authority. In 1955 he published ‘Roman Roads in Britain’ and later ‘Roman Ways in the Weald’, apart from endless papers for the Society’s Collections and Notes and Queries, on a wide range of subjects apart from Roman Roads, e.g. turnpike roads, the ‘Bow Bells’ mileposts (18th century cast-iron posts erected along the Eastbourne and Lewes roads by the turnpike trusts. These were required by law), military kitchens, Parliamentary surveys of Ashdown Forest, etc. He was a member of the Society’s Council for 42 years and its Chairman from 1946 to 1964, then President from 1964 to 1967.

In 1932 elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and served on the Council 1948/9 and again 1950/60. He was on the Finance Committee from 1965 to the end 1971.

In 1949 he was on the British Council for Archaeology Executive Committee and was Vice-President from 1955-58.

Also he was President of the Sussex Records Society and the East Grinstead Society.

Returning to Chartham Park and to family matters – from 1923 the bailiff and manager of the home farm was Mr James Turner. The farm was mixed, with pigs and

chickens but specialised in breeding Sussex Cattle, a practice Ivan Margary was to continue and in 1958 and 1959 the Chartham Sussex Herd was judged the best and won prizes for individual animals.

In 1927 he inherited a fortune, together with Yew Lodge, the estate next to Chartham, from his Uncle, Sidney Larnach, his maternal grandfather's third son, the two older sons having died in 1880 and 1919. On the 2nd January 1932 he married Dorothy Jolly in Dormansland Church. The Lingfield Fire Brigade was the Guard of Honour. The couple made their home at Yew Lodge.

The property was given the name Yew Lodge sometime between 1871 and 1881. Before that it was known as Little Felcourt Farm although prior to enclosure of the common this was the name of what is now Felcourt Farm. The age of the yew after which it is named is not known for certain. In 1908 the property was bought by Sydney Larnach and enlarged. Many of the features remain in the grounds. His initials SL are over the main door

As Margary and his wife had no children they decided to use his fortune to help and give pleasure to organisations and individuals. He cared for his staff, he financed the Lingfield Fire Brigade, the North End and Felbridge Cricket Club (the field on which they play was given by him) of which he was President, he gave Felbridge its village hall, and land to the St. John's Ambulance Brigade for their hall. He was a great benefactor of this local church, St John's, Felbridge.

He was generous to all the societies to which he belonged as he was also to the Kent and Surrey Archaeological Societies. He bought land at Wych Cross which he gave to the National Trust and supported their many appeals. Together with the Pilgrims' Trust, an American Charity, he ensured that Avebury and Windmill Hill were secured for the National Trust but his greatest act of generosity was with Fishbourne, where he first bought the land and gave it to the Sussex Archaeological Society. He then financed the digging, the protection of the finds, the buildings, the access road.

He paid for the restoration of the Quadrangle at his Oxford College, Exeter. It was opened by Archbishop Lord Fisher of Lambeth on the 3rd October 1964.

He endowed the Margary Trust for field work, and the residue of his estate was left to the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Geographical Society and the three Archaeological Societies. His archive was lodged with the Sussex Archaeological Society.

All the financial help Margary gave was done unobtrusively. Only those to whom the money was given knew who the donor was. Very few knew the extent of his help and generosity.

With regard to Chartham there are documents referring back to the 12th century. The name is Saxon meaning 'homestead by the common' which refers to the common land which was enclosed in 1809. The original house was small but when it was bought by Mr G B Roupell about 1827 a larger house was built on the site and the parkland laid out. When Margary's grandfather acquired the property he made further improvements, as did Margary's father. In 1920 Margary and his father created

a 2-acre garden in one of the marl pits, with a water feature, bridge, rhododendrons and azaleas. Trees were planted to commemorate special events – Armistice Day, births, weddings.

Margary's father died in 1936 and he inherited the property when his mother died four years later, when the house had to be hurriedly cleared. It had been commandeered by the military who occupied it throughout the war. Margary remarks that 'the panelling and staircase treads were boarded over but otherwise the house had to suffer very heavy usage.'

Living in Yew Lodge Margary considered Chartham Park to be surplus to his requirements and in April 1944 he suggested to Westminster Hospital, of which he was a Governor, that the house could be used as a men's convalescent home. When the Chairman, Sir Bernard Docker, and Mr Powers came to visit the 'poor old house' as Margary describes it, 'was looking at its worst – grimy, dishevelled, crammed with troops over whose backs we, almost literally, had to crawl in going round the rooms; and there were Nissen huts on the unkempt lawns'.

The 23rd Armoured Brigade had occupied the house before going to El Alamein.

There was a further visit to the house by Mr Power accompanied by the Matron, Miss Smyth. D-Day had just occurred and the house was empty of troops. After the experience of the earlier visit when the house was a scene of such excessive activity, and knowing it when it was a family home with servants, Margary must have found the deserted building eerie. On that day, too, the first V1 ominously passed over the house.

There was a long drawn out process to changing the use of the house and work did not start until October 1945. Queen Mary, patron of the Hospital, came to inspect the conversion and the first patients were admitted on May 3rd. No rents were charged.

In 1963 the WRVS set up an old people's home which ran until 1986 at a peppercorn rent 'if collected'.

If it is the study of Roman roads for which Margary is best remembered it was Fishbourne which was his own particular project and his financial support and personal involvement were prodigious. It is extremely doubtful that another such benefactor would have been found and without such help the project would have foundered.

Fishbourne is a mile west of Chichester. Early in 1960 a mechanical excavator was digging prior to the laying of a water main. Since 1805 Roman material had been found on the site and local archaeologists were keeping a 'watching brief'. Eventually huge blocks of masonry were dislodged, together with tesserae and pottery of the Claudian period and it was obvious that a proper excavation should take place. Reading Margary's own account of this you would have no idea that he was responsible for buying the land and financing all that followed.

The Chichester Civic Society Excavation Committee took responsibility and undertook all the purely archaeological work but no director was available locally and Professor J G D Clark recommended Barry Cunliffe who was reading archaeology at Cambridge. Work began at Easter 1961. Margary bought the land from the farmer-owner who remained co-operative and keenly interested throughout the long excavation.

The dual responsibility of it being organised by the Civic Society but sponsored by the Sussex Archaeological Society could have caused problems but in fact the relationship was very harmonious. Unfortunately, from a three way correspondence between Margary and his friend, George Burstow (another member of the Archaeological Society), on the one hand, and between Barry Cunliffe and Burstow on the other, it is clear that unfortunately there was a personality clash between Margary and Cunliffe, with Burstow in the unfortunate position of holding the line between them. It seems to be a perverse reflection of Margary's experience when first joining the Society. He felt that Cunliffe regarded him, as Margary remarked to Burstow, as 'an old dodderer' which he naturally resented. It is easy to understand the problem. There was Margary, in his seventies by the time the project was completed, archaeologically strictly an 'amateur', but who had built up his knowledge over the years with particular emphasis on the Roman period, a scientist in his own right and meticulous in his research and recording – and no one knew, of course, that the whole project was financed by him. On the other hand there was, a new graduate, regarded as brilliant, new into the world of archaeology, bursting with new ideas and methods he was anxious to put into practice but needing to learn the caution required, which was known by an older man. It is a great pity the situation arose but Margary appears to have dealt with it with his usual natural courtesy and was generous in his praise of Cunliffe.

The local king at the time of the Claudian invasion was Cogidubnus who was very much pro-Roman, willing to adopt the Roman-style, a supporter of Vespasian and so able to live in his sumptuous home. It was far larger than the excavated area. Some of the site was already under houses and road by 1961. Some time after Cogidubnus died the Palace had been divided into a series of separate houses. Margary likened it the the way large houses are now divided into flats. Towards the end of the third century AD the building had been destroyed by fire.

The most spectacular aspect of the excavations were the mosaics, the early ones being black and white, but those of the second phase coloured and beautiful.

The official opening was on the 30th May 1968. Margary must have been very proud. He had nursed this ambition through the years, faced and resolved the difficulties and, at last, it had been brought to fruition. As is included in the summary in the Sussex Archaeological Society's Notes and Queries of November 1968, 'After fire and terror had driven its inhabitants away the Palace was again a living place full of interested visitors and wonderful evidence of the great vision of Mr Margary whose generosity and determination had made this fine achievement possible.'

An item in the Winter 2005, 26th issue of the 'Fishbourne Village Voice', states that a new development of 8 houses off Mosse Gardens 'currently being built by Crayfern

Homes, will be known as Margary Close, in honour of I D Margary without whose help the Palace may have disappeared under a housing estate'. Margary would have appreciated the irony of that!

Margary died on the 18th February 1976. The service was in St John's Church, Felbridge. He was cremated and his ashes scattered. There is a memorial to him in the church. There is also a tablet to his mother, and one to his father, dated 1936, regarding the dedication of an organ in his memory. There is a further tablet one referring to the organ Ivan donated when the existing one was replaced in 1973.

Margary's wife died shortly after husband on the 22nd May 1978 and after a period of uncertainty Yew Lodge was acquired by Rentokil Ltd, together with the surrounding grounds, a cottage and outbuildings, the kitchen garden and outbuildings for the purpose of using it as a Company Residential Training Centre. It would have been a great pity if the house had been divided – it is a fine building of exceptional quality inside. It is still used as a training centre but is also a hotel/restaurant.¹

With regard to Chartham Park, in 1985 the WRVS were forced to close the home and the estate was bought by an Iranian (who was also responsible for the Atrium Cinema in East Grinstead) with the intention of turning it into a golf club, with the house as the Club House, but this fell through. He stripped the house, leaving it in a ruinous state, then one of those acts of co-operative Fate occurred that seems to happen in these circumstances, and there was a fire. There was to be no 'Fishbourne' rising from the flames for Margary's own family home. It was demolished. A Japanese consortium tried next with no success and finally the course was developed by an American company. The car park is on the site of the house.

Margary was a kindly, compassionate man. He seems to have been able to settle finally into the role of a country gentleman, quietly following all his interests, running his estate and the farm. His correspondence was vast – with strangers who wrote for advice, with acquaintances where an exchange of letters regarding some particular query or discovery could last over a long period and with friends, all these exchanges being conducted with an air of quiet courtesy. As for Chartham, the final development has created a beautifully landscaped golf course. The special trees and some of the original garden features have been preserved. With the health club it gives pleasure to many people. With his philosophy Margary would have approved of that.

(During the second World War Margary re-enlisted and was sent to the unit at the P.O.W. camp on Lingfield Racecourse. He also toured camps, interviewing the prisoners.)

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¹ Now owned by Scandiahus, 2010

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