

Barbara Anne Gammell

1894-1977

Barbara, born on 2 October 1894 at 5 Gloucester Place, Edinburgh, was the second child and eldest daughter of [Sydney](#) and Alice Gammell. When she was five, the family moved to Drumtochty Castle, which her father had recently inherited, and in 1905 the family moved to Countesswells. Growing up in Drumtochty and Countesswells, she was never sent to school, but received her education by attending the lessons her brothers received from their governess before they were sent off to school. Although she never had the opportunities of a formal education, she was an accomplished pianist.

During the First World War, Barbara volunteered as a nurse. Voluntary nurses worked under the overall supervision of qualified nurses, but at a time when so many injured soldiers needed care, having no formal nursing qualifications was no impediment. Nursing was something she got a huge amount of professional enjoyment from and her support for nursing was a life-long interest.



On 5 January 1926 she married Lt-Col Lionel Edward Hill OBE, MC at St Devenick's Church, Bielside, Aberdeenshire. She had met Lionel through her sister in law Gertrude (who was Lionel's first cousin). After they were married, the couple moved first to a house in Forfar at 2 the Vennel. Barbara's sister [Joanna](#) was reported to have said that although she knew Lionel was hard up, she really didn't think it was suitable for her to have to "live in a slum". In effect, the Vennel (an old Scots word for a Drain) was Lionel's old bachelor pad, close to his office and perhaps wasn't the most glamorous of places. Things improved when in about 1930 they moved to Overdale, a house on the southern edge of Forfar, the town where Lionel's company, Don Brothers, had its main factory. She remained here until just after Lionel's death, when she moved into Little Gate, a house a short way down the hill from

Overdale.

On 18 July 1927 she had a daughter Margaret Anne Robertson Hill (always known as Anne), and on 10 May 1929 a son Michael Henry James Hill.



In the 1930s, as well as bringing up her family, Barbara was very active in local voluntary societies, organising the local Brownie (junior branch of the Girl Guides) pack and being “Brown Owl” (ie leader) of the pack in Kingsmuir, a small village just to the south east of Forfar. She was also Vice-President of the Kingsmuir Women’s Rural Institute (the forerunner of the Scottish Women’s Institutes), and a strong supporter of the Forfar Nursing Association. She was also an active supporter of the Mothers’ Union and the Lifeboats. She was also a devout member of St John’s (Scottish Episcopal) Church on Forfar.

Lionel was Provost (the equivalent of a mayor) of Forfar between 1937 and 1943 and no doubt Barbara supported him in that role.

On the outbreak of World War Two, she added the Red Cross to her many activities and in 1943 was in charge of the Angus Red Cross Depot.



Lionel and Barbara (on the left) at their son Michael's wedding in 1961

Barbara and Lionel’s house also became a focus for the wider Gammell family. In April 1938 they held a grand party to celebrate her youngest sister Joan’s engagement to Eric Ivory. During the Second World War, they hosted Barbara’s brother [William](#) and his family

who had moved north to avoid the growing threats of war to their home in southern England. Their son, Iain, was born at Forfar on 30 November 1940. And it was to Overdale that her youngest brother [Edward](#) returned in 1942 to recover after his time as a Japanese prisoner.

Lionel died on 2 October 1969 and Barbara on 5 November 1977. Her ashes were interred behind the altar of St. Palladius church at Drumtochty.