

# Victoria May Lyon 1897-1985

**Character in the Sherborne Pageant:** Victoria was one of four young attendants in the Final Tableau.

## Final Tableau

### Finale:

The entire crowd in the arena, to the accompaniment of the Massed Bands, and together with the audience now burst into the first verse of 'The Hundredth Psalm' and that changes into 'The National Anthem', the second verse of this being sung by an Alto Soloist in appropriate costume in front of the pedestal. At the beginning of the last verse all banners are unfurled and waved and all the crowd on the arena toss a shower of roses at the figure of Sherborne. The figure of Sherborne now descends from her pedestal, clasps her daughter's hand, and with her, leads a well organised procession of all the performers, the choruses, the crowds, etc., out by the left corner of the ruins, and so as quickly as possible, yet without indecent haste out of sight. Music must not cease until the last Yeoman has disappeared.

Victoria was the daughter of Claude William Lyon (1864-1943) of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and Edith May Shackleton (1867-1942). Granddaughter of William Hector Lyon (Vicar of Sherborne 1868-1907) and great granddaughter of Ralph Lyon (Headmaster of Sherborne School 1823-1845). Victoria was baptised by W.H. Lyon in Sherborne Abbey on 20 June 1897. She died in London on 27 December 1985 aged 88.

**Margaret Pearson writes from New Zealand:** My younger sister and I are trying to sort and cull some of the family memorabilia (in early 2020) and when I came across the Pageant collection I was inspired to Google and I found the Somerset & Dorset Family History Society with information on the Pageant and was delighted to be put in touch with Barbara Elsmore and consequentially Rachel Hassall, Sherborne School Archivist, both of whom were keen to know what was held so far away in New Zealand.

My parents came here to New Zealand in 1938 as some of the few non-Jewish refugees accepted at that time. My father was from Vienna and a qualified doctor. He and mother were intending to marry and he left Austria almost immediately after the Annexation. They applied for entry to New Zealand, Australia and Canada and luckily received conditional entry for New Zealand, or he would have been interned in Britain for the duration.



Victoria Lyon, or Victor, as she preferred to be called, was the eldest daughter of Claude and Edith Lyon. She was my first cousin once removed, my grandmother and her father being siblings. Claude joined the Royal Irish Constabulary in 1889 and served in various Irish police posts rising to the rank of District Inspector by 1893. He married Edith May Shackleton in Dublin in August 1896. I have a police notebook in which he recorded the history of their courtship in terms of an army campaign, complete with many fine line drawings, eg the "company band" employed to play outside the "enemy's " house, - a hurdy gurdy. He seems to have been quite a respected singer as I also have programmes listing solo items in public concerts. The family lived in Ireland until sometime in 1911 when the marriage failed and Edith and the girls established themselves at 32 Margravine Gardens, Barons Court, London where Edith lived until her death in 1942. Claude was known by my mother as 'the family's black sheep', though nothing specific was spoken of.

Victor had two sisters, Ethel Iris Alice ('Peg') and Phillipa ('Phil') and I met her for the first time in 1955 when my English mother and Austrian father took our family on a nine month trip from New Zealand to England and Austria. We lived in Victor and Peg's house at Margravine Gardens. They kindly moved upstairs to give us, parents and four children, ages 12, 10, 8, and 5, the lower two floors. We didn't see much of either cousin as they must have been at work at the time. Phil was the only sister who married.

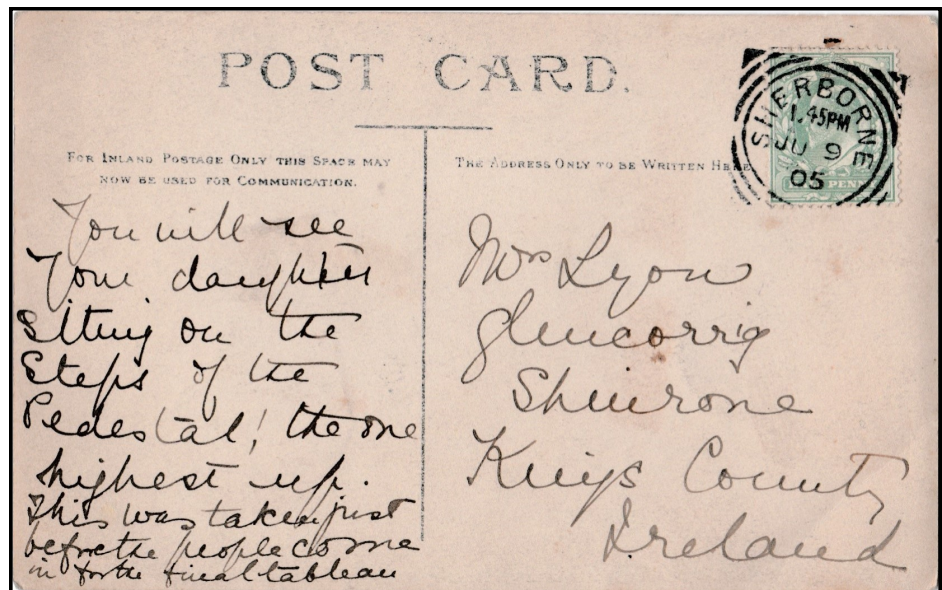


The Pageant must have made a huge impression on Victor as she saved copies of the words, the music score, a souvenir programme and several photographs. She must have been a privileged participant as granddaughter of the current Vicar of the Abbey. Her aunt, Mildred Bessie Constance Bamber (née) Lyon, my grandmother, also took part in the chorus. I have been able to send to the Sherborne School archive a personal postcard sent to Victor's mother, in Ireland, to add to the Pageant collection. Just how they came into my mother's possession I am not sure now but they are in great condition considering they are over 100 years old.

I have a vivid memory of one night in 1956 when Victor came home and found me still up "babysitting" watching "Saturday Night at The Palladium" on TV. I was officially babysitting but should have been in bed long before. (New Zealand didn't have TV at that time.) Later I met Victor several times on visits to England and she remains in my memory as a tall gracious lady. I have found since that she was a bank clerk, possibly with Barclay's Bank, as they were the executors of her will. I have a copy of it and she made generous gifts to several family members. She also had a passion for, and great skill in, the art of bookbinding and she gave me one of these books in 1979. On that visit my mother and I arrived from New Zealand via Hong Kong on the day of the Wimbledon's Men's Final and we watched it with her – me lying on the floor propping my eyes open after the flight. She was a keen tennis watcher.

Family histories are full of co-incidences. Victor's mother was born in New Zealand where her father, William Mansel Shackleton, was with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Military Train (Supply Troops) which at one stage were based in the Rutland Stockade, in my home town of Wanganui during the Maori Wars, which we now call the "Land Wars".

**Margaret Pearson (née) Schmidt.**



The postcard was sent to Victor's mother who appears to be at home in Ireland at the time of the Pageant.

On the left is Victor in 1938 at my parents wedding and then later on the steps at Margravine Gardens.

Below that is me far right on top of the tower of Sherborne Abbey with my mother, brother and sisters plus our guide.

