

# Margaret

The Wilsons were a sept of the Gunn Clan which came from Norway. The Tartan:- Black with several greens, orange stripe. Clan Motto- "**Peace or War**"

Those of you about my age will have your own stories of the Second World War from very different parts of the world. None of it was pleasant. On Friday night at 9.35 T.V.1 there is the 3rd part of a programme about the air warfare over Britain in 1940. I was a fifteen year old at school and studying for my matriculation examination, living in a village St Mary Cray in Kent. Most of what you may see in this programme would have been played out over my home. I went to school and frequently spent some time during each day in the air raid shelters trying to keep up the studies. When the holidays started we were at home of course and often caught out fetching messages from the shops etc as the sirens went. I lived close to Biggin Hill an aerodrome very involved in this part of the war and watched the dogfights and the planes shot down overhead. Some of those shots I remember very well and have seen them previously in news clips both then and more recently. A year later I was going to dances at "The Daylight Inn" an English pub only a short walk from where I lived and very popular with the airmen from Biggin Hill and no doubt had a dance or two with some of them, they were very young, very excited over their battles in the air and it was very sad when we missed them at the dances but were a bit afraid to ask.

## Girls can do anything

In 1941 after obtaining Matriculation I was given the opportunity to go to Northampton Engineering College in London. There were five girls from different schools in the London area and 25 boys in the course. We were all approximately the same age and the girls about my own educational standard or maybe better. The course we took was for a few months and carried a diploma. It was a crash course and designed to bring students up to speed for work in design and application in various wartime projects. For every exam or test we were given, we the girls were invariably in the top ten. Subjects were mathematics (calculus level), applied maths, electronics, several classes on the more practical subjects such as soldering and welding, commonly taught in boys schools. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the time there and was very happy when the diploma arrived and I was offered work in a factory involved in the research and wartime production. The factory was in Hayes in Middlesex and part of the old EMI previously making gramophone records (the old vinyl type). I worked for some time on the first klystrons which were being developed for what was then called 'radio location' renamed later by the Americans as Radar. Towards the end of the year I returned home and then obtained employment with a local factory Koltsler Brandes in the Advance Development Dept. (A.D.D.) Until D day on 6th June I worked on the development of a pulse-modulated transmitter/receiver which was being produced for the invasion of Germany. My work ended when the equipment was installed in a van with a great deal of work completed by the engineers in A.D.D. There were about thirty in total in the dept. all men with some of them working in other parts of the factory but on part of the production of this equipment. Several days before D day a corporal from the Canadian Air force was allocated to take over the van and help with the last installations in company with the engineer who was my boss. He came and worked alongside me in the Lab. as I finalised the wiring of the last few chassis. He drove the van away and that was the last I heard of it! The rest as they say is history. The war ended and I found myself with a new boss who was not (apparently) keen on having a woman working in this all male department and I was very gently and kindly persuaded to take other work as a librarian. My interest in this waned and I moved to registry work at BOAC. Then decided to go to South Africa. with the help of one of our engineers from K.B. whose wife was an old school friend of mine. A few months later I started work in Durban alongside said engineer who got me a job where he was working. Again an all male establishment. Met Derek and stayed there until my first baby arrived. Most of my working life has been in what would normally be regarded as a male occupation. I have never found much resentment with co-workers although some have been puzzled as to why I would want to do it. I must admit I have always liked the work I was employed to do, especially the more practical aspects. Some female friends I suspect have thought me a bit weird, but this never deterred me, I did what I wanted to do. Maggie

---Best Wishes Maggie---