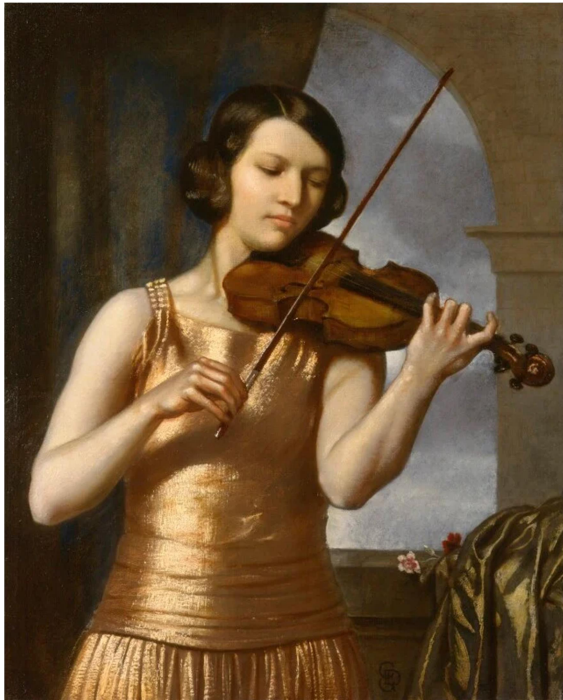


## The Musical Ladies of Dayspring and Garden House

For over two decades Ewelme was home to three internationally acclaimed classical musicians. In 1939 two already famous violinist sisters, born into a musical family from Budapest, visited their friends Lord and Lady Somervell in the Old Rectory and quickly formed an attachment to Ewelme. In 1940 they paid £600 for Daysprings, a small property with attached land situated on the hill behind Mr Howell's High Street garage. They lived in Ewelme until 1958 when they left for Florence to retire.

These talented sisters, Adila (1886-1962) and Jelly D'Aranyi (1892-1966) were great nieces of a renowned violinist, Joseph Joachim, who bequeathed a Stradivarius violin to Adila, his pupil! Adila married Alexander Fachiri, but she was widowed in 1939 with a young daughter. The sisters' European careers as duettist concert violinists moved them in high circles, and they counted Princesses Helena Victoria and Marie Louise - two granddaughters of Queen Victoria - as friends. Politicians Asquith and Balfour, and authors Huxley and Siegfried Sassoon were amongst their admirers.



Left: Jelly d'Aranyi and right Margaret Ritchie

In 1952 they built Garden House to house a music room in their grounds, and many famous composers and musicians visited them in Ewelme. Composers Vaughan Williams, Ravel and Bartok dedicated works to Jelly and Gustav Holst's *'Double Concerto for Two Violins'* was written for the sisters. Jelly also had a partnership with her lifelong friend, the pianist Myra Hess. Lady Hambleton in her village memoir, believed that Edwin Elgar was in love with Jelly, if so, an emotion not returned.

The property continued to be associated with another musical lady, a renowned operatic soprano singer Margaret Ritchie (1903-1969). Miss Ritchie bought Garden House in 1958 for £5,800 where she entertained famous musicians and singers such as Joan Sutherland. Miss Ritchie was a versatile artiste. She played the part of a real-life singing star Adelina Patti in the film *'Pink String and Sealing Wax'* and also sang on the soundtrack of the 1948 film *'Scott of the Antarctic'*. Classical singers attended her classes in Garden House, and she is remembered for founding a Summer School in

Oxford in 1960. Sadly Margaret Ritchie died of throat cancer in 1969 at the age of 66. She is buried in the new churchyard in Ewelme.

A full history of the ladies was written by Jenny Howe in appreciation of the cultural heritage attached to Garden House which became her family home in 1986. Jenny was herself a professional cellist and had searched for over a year for a house with a large music room. Garden House was perfect. To complete the circle, in 1987 Jenny formed the D'Aranyi String Quartet with colleagues from Oxford, rehearsing at Garden House and performing in the area. The Howes left for France in 1997.

The full history of the musical ladies and the properties written by Jenny Howe is available in the Village Archive (file 13.9) and they are also covered in 'Glimpses of an Oxfordshire Village by Anne Chisholm' pages 94-98. The Village History website [www.ewelmevillagehistory.uk](http://www.ewelmevillagehistory.uk) features the ladies under 'People/Famous People'.

*Carol Sawbridge, Ewelme Village Archive*