

## Reverend Emma Rosalind Lee (1884-1959)



Reverend Lee was born on 10 January 1884, the younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Grosvenor Lee of Edgbaston, Birmingham. Grosvenor Lee was a solicitor in the family firm and his brother a respected button-maker in the town. The Lee family is well recorded and can be traced back to 1545.<sup>1</sup>

After leaving Edgbaston High School, Lee went to Newnham College, Cambridge. She worked as a V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment) during World War 1 and became a Minister after the war in 1919. She travelled widely, visiting America, New Zealand and Australia.

Lee was a member of the first committee of the British League of Unitarian Women in 1908 and took an active role in its development, becoming its National Secretary in 1929.

Lee was aware of a looming crisis and in October 1938 she went to Prague with John McLachlan, another Unitarian minister, to set up and run the 'Friends Refugee Office',<sup>2</sup> after instigating a fund to help refugees from the Sudetenland. It was in Prague that Lee met with the late Sir Nicholas Winton and Eleanor Rathbone, later a Member of Parliament, and toured numerous refugee camps to evaluate conditions.

Lee served on the Unitarian General Assembly Council and was elected President in 1940, the second woman to do so.<sup>3</sup> She held a number of influential positions with the Unitarian movement and worked with refugees throughout her lifetime.

She became a minister at Stourbridge Unitarian Chapel in 1946 until 1953, a portrait (shown above) can be found of her in the chapel.

Lee died quietly in her sleep on the 3 November 1959, aged 76.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.genealogy.ianskipworth.com/lees](http://www.genealogy.ianskipworth.com/lees) Accessed 8 January 2016

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan John, *The Wine of Life – A testament to vital encounter*, Sheffield 1991, p71

<sup>3</sup> Stevenson, Margaret, *The Inquirer*, 21 November 1959, p346

<sup>4</sup> Stevenson, Margaret, *The Inquirer*, 21 November 1959, p346