

INTERNEES

Christa Citron (1920–2014) – a promising career forfeited



Christa Citron had trained as a ballet dancer and was due to make her London stage debut on the day she was arrested. She never did make her debut and later said, 'Every time I see ballet, I feel half sad not to have been able to fulfil what I could have done.'

After a month in Holloway Prison, she arrived in the Island and was interned in Port St Mary. She recalled: 'Karin Berkler and I came to Miss Gorry on The

Promenade. We were in the attic, together in an old bed, surrounded by all the chamber pots. I wished I had stayed in Holloway.' Christa was involved in some dancing at the Ballaqueeney Hydro while she was in Port St Mary.

One year later, she and Karin moved to the Towers Hotel in Port Erin. She described Port Erin as a 'cultural centre' with German scientists, artists and doctors, who tried to do things for other internees. She danced: there was an English entertainments manager who arranged plays and dances in Collinson's Café and St Catherine's Church Hall.

Later, she met Iris Burton's mother, Mrs Henrietta McGlashen, who had seen her dance and invited her to stay at her house, 'Chatsworth', where she was very happy.

Christa worked in kippering with Karin – she stacked them and Karin put them into boxes. They also made things like cardigans, with diamond patterns, from Loaghtan wool, leather slippers, gloves and jewellery and these were sold at 'bazaars' (craft fairs).



Christa was repatriated on 31st August 1944 as part of the German exchange organised by the Red Cross. The ship to Germany passed close to Port Erin and everyone was waving. Landladies were in tears. Christa returned to Berlin, looked after her mother and never married.



Christa Citron became a close friend of Iris Burton and they wrote to each other for 50 years. They remained in close touch until Christa died in January 2014, aged 94. Christa returned to the Island in 1987 and 2005, staying with Iris, as part of the 'Wire & Wool' event – a re-enactment about the internment camp. In an interview with Culture Vannin, she said that her return in 1987 brought back happy memories because her time with Iris and her parents was like a home.