

LOCAL PEOPLE

Iris Burton, Port Erin artist



IRIS BURTON (on the right of the picture) was brought up at "Chatsworth", a boarding house in Bay View Road, Port Erin, run by her mother.

When the internees arrived, Iris was 15, attending Douglas High School.

Rumour was that EVACUEES would arrive from Liverpool, and Iris' mother, Mrs McGlashen, was not told the new occupants would be INTERNEES. Chatsworth had nine rooms and could accommodate 16 visitors.

Boarding house keepers were instructed to look after internees well, but not to fraternise (become friendly). Iris' mother decided they should be treated like her own family. As she wished to learn German, this was the chance of a lifetime and she insisted "No English is to be spoken in this kitchen." She picked up the language quickly and even the budgerigar spoke German.

At first, there was chaos, but after a few months, things settled down. Iris says, "There was a lovely atmosphere, and we would all listen to the 9o'clock BBC News together."

One evening, her Dad was sitting in his chair, with eight to 10 internee women in a circle. The National Anthem was played before the News. He stood up. One by one, the circle did too.

He said, "Thank you very much for standing up."

They replied, "We only stood up in deference to you, not for the King." He later admitted to Iris, "I only got up to look for a cigarette!"

Iris has been married to Jim for more than 60 years and they opened and successfully ran "Trend", a shop still operating in Port Erin. Iris is an outstanding artist, and has known Dr John Bethell, Director and Founder of The Erin Arts Centre, since he was a teenager.