

LOCAL PEOPLE

Joyce Corlett – in her own words

I've lived in Port Erin all my life and my memories are mainly of Bradda.

I was born in 1938 and in 1942, when I was old enough and we were going to church on a Sunday night, I remember the barrier across the bottom of Tower Road, and I had to have my own ID card. The fellow in the sentry box was a neighbour, but I still had to show my card every time! We used to nip across the golf course from Bradda and no one would bat an eyelid.



I think we did very well during the war, because my grandma had a little shop and we had a market garden. We didn't feel threatened until we went to school. We were outside the boundary of the camp and went into the internment camp area to get to school; it felt special and an adventure.

Along with our market garden we had chickens and other produce and we'd send a box of items to my grandma in Douglas every Monday on the train, and she would send stuff back to us from the pork butchers on a Saturday. There were never any questions asked about what was in the boxes; this went on throughout the war.

I remember another barrier at Station Road Chapel.

I had to remember to bring my ID card when I started school on a Friday. I got my pocket money and we went to Mrs Harrison's with pennies to get a few sweets before we went back up to Bradda. My father was an ARP (air-raid precautions) Warden and in charge of the coastguard. The phone used to ring and he'd go charging out. I had no idea where he was going and when you're a child, you don't ask questions!

My friend's father had a shoe shop and I was jealous of her, because she had beautiful cardigans with flowers on the front, made by the internees. The internees were very creative. Several local people had internees living with them and kept in touch for years, some had only one bedroom available and a couple of internees. Beatrice Qualtrough in Malmore, a boarding house on

Port St Mary promenade, had internees and she did a programme for the BBC as some internees had come back to meet up with her.

I remember a few people; Iris Burton's parents had internees and they were different as about 90% didn't speak English.

At first, internee husbands and wives had been separated, which caused quite a bit of anguish in Port Erin at one time, but it settled down. Some of the internees kept in touch with their landladies for many years. I didn't know anyone as I was only five when the war ended. I do remember them being called 'friendly aliens'.

I can remember a bomb being dropped in Baldwin. I was staying at my grandmother's and heard the bomber going over. It fell on farmland and fortunately it didn't hit anyone.

As children, the war didn't make much difference to us in the Isle of Man, we still played, went to school. We had a very charmed wartime. I've still got my original ID card and my ration card.