

LOCAL PEOPLE

Mona Quillin - landlady



Mona was born and brought up at the Four Roads in Port St Mary. She went to school along with her younger sister Mary at the Four Roads School for Girls.

Mona trained in confectionary and worked in Port Erin at the Allandale Café. In 1932, they moved to Cronk Wyllin on the Promenade in Port St Mary and Mona and Mary ran the guest house whilst their father worked as a stone mason.

In May 1940, they received notification they were to receive 22 women and children internees of varying nationalities. These included a few Nazi sympathisers. Mona recalls looking out of the window, witnessing several internees “goose-stepping up and down, saluting and embracing each other”, also using the bathroom after a couple of the internees and finding a swastika drawn in the steam on the glass of the bathroom cabinet. It was a worrying time for the locals as news from Europe wasn’t good.

In the early days, there was little or no rationing, so they just had to learn to live with and share their home with ‘enemy aliens’ and as one internee put it “in Germany we were Jews and in England we were Germans”.

One day their father caught a conger eel after crabbing at Pooil Vaaish and Mona and Mary flatly refused to use it. The internees, however, produced soups and stews with it and used “every morsel”!

The internees prepared the majority of the food and introduced Mona and Mary to delights such as Stollen and other savoury potato dishes. The cupboards in the kitchen and their own bedrooms had to be kept locked and generally the house was never left unattended - someone always stayed in.

Photo taken on the steps of Cronk Wyllin. Back: Florence Bracon (Scottish); Mrs Hetty Pinchoff (Austrian); Teresa? (German); Mary Quillin Middle: Mona Quillin; Rita? (Austrian); Monica Demola (Bavarian); Paula, sister of Rita (Austrian) Front: Hetty Pinchoffs' children. (Courtesy of Mona Quillin)



All their internees were gone after two years and Mona

and Mary worked in the NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institute) at the Balqueen Hydro until it was closed. Mona recalls that they kept in touch with one of the internees who remained in England when she was released from the camp, but after a number of years her communications stopped.

Mona and Mary bought the Perwick Hotel in Port St Mary, which they ran successfully for a number of years until it was sold. They travelled to many parts of the world when they took annual holidays whilst running the hotel and when they retired, they settled in Port St Mary.

Mona celebrated her 100th birthday on 26th March 2015 and lived in her own bungalow in Port St Mary until her death, aged 102, in July 2017