

Morecambe Bay Partnership is a charity working for people, nature & heritage in Morecambe Bay and to keep Morecambe Bay special

Defending the Docks Project:

A small collection of oral history recordings, capturing WWII memories in and around Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, January 2023

Cumbria County Council, The Factory,
Castle Mills, Aynam Road, Kendal, LA9 7DE
Tel: 015397 34888

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

© Morecambe Bay Partnership

INTERVIEW NO: 01
 INTERVIEWEE NAME/S: Margaret Charnley
 YEAR OF BIRTH: 1930
 INTERVIEWER/S: Jenn Bell
 DATE OF INTERVIEW: Tuesday 17 January 2023
 LOCATION: Rampside, Cumbria
 SUMMARISER: Jenn Bell

0.00 – 2.26	Maiden name Eagram. Born in Hindpool, Barrow. Info about employment and family
2.26 – 7.08	Information about parents. Father, William Eagram, originally from Whitehaven, worked down the mines. Fought during WWI. Came to Barrow after the war and worked in the shipyard (called Vickers in those days) as a ship's painter. Mother was Caroline Littlewood. Information about grandparents. One sister called Hilda
7.08 – 7.52	Margaret's Uncle John lived on Walney and worked in the management at Vickers.
7.52 - 10.25	Margaret remembers the build up to war. As she was poorly in bed with scarlet fever the Zeppelin (Hindenburg airship) flew past her bedroom window. She thinks she was such a poorly child because her bigger sister used to drink her milk a lot.
10.25 – 12.45	On their battery powered radio war was declared. Margaret's father was building his own radio and during the bombing, a window in their house was blown in and the radio was damaged. Margaret remembers the school drill on gas masks.
12.45 – 15.25	Beginning of war was deemed quite exciting for Margaret as a small child. Gradually she began to feel different, during the air raid sirens, having to wear a siren suit and heading to the nearby shelter. A coal cellar was reinforced and used as an air raid shelter.
15.25 – 21.50	Air raid shelters shared with immediate neighbours. Taking turns to rest on a mattress and pillow. Margaret remembers a blast from Holker street causing vibrations and damage in their shelter – the lights went out and their shelter

	partially collapsed and they were trapped, covered in coal dust from coal that was left in the cellar. They all shared a bottle of lime juice and were stuck there for about four hours before they were dug out. They then had to walk down Holker street to the school where they were given drinks, a deckchair to sleep in and if they wanted something to eat they had to walk all the way up Abbey Road. Their house was badly damaged when the bomb was dropped on Holker Street.
21.50 – 25.00	Margaret's father had three sisters in Whitehaven. They spent a couple of nights in the rescue centre and then all went to live with Auntie Sarah in Whitehaven and stayed there for several months. They returned to Parker street, their original home, when it became habitable again. They moved house shortly after.
25.00 – 27.10	Father used to get the train back to Barrow to work at the shipyard. Sometimes he would cycle! He was a tough character. He survived being gassed in WWI, serving abroad twice.
27.10 – 28.59	It was a disruptive time for the family as a whole but a case of 'make do and mend'. They left the shelter and couldn't return back to their house so didn't have any of their own belongings. When they returned to Barrow, they soon moved to Hawke Street.
28.59 – 30.45	Margaret doesn't remember a huge interruption in her education during the war. She went to school in Whitehaven and then moved to the grammar school when they returned to Barrow. Her biggest break in education was when she spent time being poorly as a young child. She loved the school at Whitehaven as they taught manuscript writing.
30.45 – 32.37	Margaret remembers one of her friends moving to Australia (likely to be part of post-war immigration scheme). And being entrusted to push babies down the street for her neighbours.
32.38 – 36.30	Domestic life during the war – rationing. One egg per week. Meat, potato, one veg at meal time and salads. They weren't short of vegetables as they had an allotment. They kept hens too. Margaret considers herself lucky during that time and they didn't go short. They had herbs, the allotment, clothes made from a neighbour, ginger wine.
36.30 – 38.16	The American soldiers would give the children Turkish delights from the parcels they received from abroad. Margaret remembers the end of war celebrations.
38.20 – 39.04	Margaret's Auntie Sarah (from Whitehaven) – her husband James Campbell was killed during the war, before they went to stay with them to escape the bombings in Barrow. Margaret's grandfather was also living there at the time.
39.04 – 42.04	Talks about the Blitz being an intense period and being prepared. Seeing war damage. The land mine on Holker Street, across the road from where they lived. Parents losing people they knew.
42.04 -	The after effects of war. In 1953 when Margaret got married sugar and meat was still rationed. And during a holiday in Cornwall with baby Susan, Margaret filled a suitcase full of sugar to take back home, not telling her husband! Buying her pram, Margaret remembers saving coupons to make the purchase. Short skirts became popular.
48.00 – 48.37	Thanks

[End of tape]