

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: 05
 INTERVIEWEE NAME/S: Alfred Fishwick
 YEAR OF BIRTH: 1937
 INTERVIEWER/S: Jenn Bell
 DATE OF INTERVIEW: Wednesday 22 February 2023
 LOCATION: Blackpool
 SUMMARISER: Jenn Bell

| | |
|--------------|--|
| 0.00 – 2.30 | Alfred Fishwick. Born 1937 at Scotch Street, Barrow-in-Furness. Married at the age of 19. Apprentice bricklayer, national service in Oxford for 2 years 10 shillings per week (used to hitchhike home), then eventually became a self-employed Builder in and around Barrow. Alf now lives in Blackpool with his wife Joan. |
| 2.30 – 5.50 | Alf's father (think his name was George Fishwick) left his mother before Alf was born. Alf had an older sister. He saw his father once during divorce proceedings. Alf's mother was Alice Hellon. She got remarried to Bill Borda. Grandparents on Alf's mother's side – Grandad Jack. Family home in Scotch Street consisted of Alf, his older sister, mother and grandparents. |
| 5.50 – 7.40 | Mother Alice worked as a welder in the shipyard (Vickers-Armstrongs). Grandad was a fitter in the shipyard. For Christmas he got lead soldiers that his Grandad made for him and his mother brought him home a pair of the blue welding glasses she wore at work and he was over the moon. |
| 7.40 – 9.25 | Alfred was looked after a lot by his Grandparents. He was kept busy with his Grandad's garden at Roose, going 'codimucking' before school – picking up horse manure off the road and putting in a bucket, ready to take to his Grandad's allotment in a wheelbarrow – the garden was about 2 miles walk away from his house. He remembers his sister being kept busy too. |
| 9.25 – 11.36 | At the age of 4 or 5 Alf remembers the sirens from the air raids. They had an underground shelter but it was so small his Grandad and Grandma wouldn't use it |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| | so they used to pack in the cellars of the local shops, sat in the darkness. |
| 11.36 – 14.31 | Alf remembers seeing the Trevelyan Hotel getting bombed. They later used the site as a bonfire for bonfire night. He also recalls seeing Christchurch damaged, the local baths and the railway station, and a lot of destruction along Abbey Road. After the war as boys they collected shields from the church and played with them in the streets. |
| 14.31 – 16.30 | As a small boy, Alf didn't think he really understood what was going on. He went to school on Thwaite Street up to the age of 8 and then the Alfred Barrow school until he was 15. He doesn't remember missing a lot of school but recalls being given a bottle of milk at the nursery and going to sleep. |
| 16.30 - | 7.30-5.30 was the working day at the shipyard so his mother and grandad were a way a lot in the day. His mother died when she was 58. His grandparents eventually had to move from their house in Scotch Street to make way for the building of the Marks and Spencer shop. He thinks this is what killed them, as they both died about 12 months after they'd moved. At this time Alf, his mother and his sister were living in Lumley Street in Barrow with stepfather Bill. |
| 19.05 – 20.52 | No bomb damage to the house they were in on Scotch Street but he remembers some houses being demolished further down the street. In the town centre houses were demolished (possibly Hall Street) to build a huge water tank (to put the fires out during the explosions?)– They swam in it after the war. |
| 20.52 – 23.25 | Alf was evacuated to Keswick with mother and sister Isobel. Mother became a housekeeper for the family they stayed with. He remembers stood at the platform at the station in Barrow and then when they got out of the station in Keswick they walked up a big hill (could be Chestnut hill or Penrith Road). |
| 23.25 – 24.45 | Saw and describes the barrage balloon at the railway station. Mentions the 'Coppernob' train that was taken away to protect it during the war. |
| 24.45 – 26.50 | They spent some time at Alf's Auntie's house that lived in Roose when the bombing was very heavy in Barrow – they spent the night under the hedges when the planes came overhead. Alf mentions some pillar structures being built at Roose during the war. |
| 26.50 – 27.53 | Allotment helped to provide food, Grandad had hens. Tripe. |
| 27.53 – 30.18 | Looked after by Grandma during the day, or at school. Had to tear up newspaper for toilet paper. Codimucking with a bike when he was older, made it easier. Collecting straw from the local brewery to mix with the codimuck to take down to the garden. Never stopped as a child. |
| 30.18 – 32.55 | Growing up as a lad post-war – messing about amidst the damaged houses. Bomb damage. No money for toys so all the Dad's used to make these lead soldiers for the children. |
| 32.55 -33.18 | Had to wear a gas mask but can't recall much about it |
| 33.18 – 36.01 | Going in a Lancaster Bomber at Walney airfield, sat in the cockpit – after the war. Doesn't remember the smokescreens and family didn't talk about the war in later years. Alf recalls what he does remember about his father, originally from Preston and worked as a rep – that's probably how he met Alf's mum. |
| 36.01 – 37.15 | Evacuation day stood on the station with his ticket |
| 37.15 – 38.00 | Vivid memory – The burning of the Trevelyan Hotel |
| 38.00 – 40.42 | Concrete structures outside Roose |
| 40.42 – 41.47 | End of war – celebrations in the street. |
| 41.47 – 43.21 | After the war – queue for bananas was a mile long outside the vegetable shop. Coupons for food and sweets, but there was never much choice for toffies (sweets). |
| 43.21 – 44.54 | Vicar of the church got killed fire watching. And two workers at the shipyard were |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| | killed when a crane at the shipyard toppled over. None of Alf's family was killed. |
| 44.54 – 46.23 | Alf liked school. He was married at 19 to Sheila. Then did his national service. Sheila and Alf had one child that was stillborn then went on to have daughter Helen, who now lives in America. |
| | <i>After note: after recording Alf told me after his marriage to Sheila he married Mary. Mary died of cancer. In his late 70s he married Joan</i> |
| | |

[End of tape]