

Barbara Watson

Summary of interview recorded on 29th June 2013 by Rebecca Fowell

Barbara was born in Cherry Street, Tilty, and now lives in Little Easton

Barbara, born in 1935, was four years old when the Second World War began, and was around ten years old when it ended. Her father worked on a farm, which had German and Italian prisoners of war, which required him to carry a gun. Her mother would bring the prisoners drinks; the German prisoners were very nice and repaid her by making wooden toys as a thank you.

In the back garden was a home-made air raid shelter, and whenever the siren went the family would go into the shelter and have hot chocolate with their elderly neighbour. Her father would stand outside listening for doddlebugs [V-1 flying bombs], listening hard in case the noise stopped.

Living in the countryside the rations did not affect Barbara too much. At school they were given orange juice, cod liver oil, milk and a chocolate drink. Her family had their own chickens and rabbits. Her father grew all his own vegetables, so her family never went hungry.

When the gas masks were fitted, Barbara hid under the table in fear. She had to have a big black mask while her younger sister, Monica, had a red Micky Mouse gas mask which upset the siblings. When her baby sister Sally was born in 1944, the family was given a baby gas mask, which was a large container into which the baby was placed.

Barbara's Mum and Dad both owned bicycles, but they mostly walked everywhere. However, when visiting her grandparents in Little Easton her father was allowed to use the farm's horse and cart.

She attended Great Easton Primary School, which she walked to, meeting her friends through Duton Hill along the way. Whenever a siren went everyone hid, under a tree or in a ditch.

Her mother used to stand and count the planes go, and when the planes came back everyone rushed outside to count how many had returned.

At the bottom of Duton Hill, along by the river, Barbara also remembers there being two big bomb craters.