

So this is Terry Ford interviewing Ann Clouston at South Shield's Local History Group on the 2nd of October, 2023. Ann is going to talk about her two parents.

Ann Clouston:

My father, George, born in 1917, 31st of October, and he was in the Royal Signals during the Second World War. My mother was in the ATS, she did her recruit training at Fenham Barracks. They got married at St. Paul's, St. John's Church in Jarrow and got married in uniform during the war, which obviously saved a lot of money because things were on ration so it became difficult. However, the story, father's story is complicated in that he lived in Laburnum Grove in Jarrow and his mother lived there and then she was a widow. Her eldest son John, my father's older brother, was killed during the war in Caen. So she had no husband. Her eldest son was killed. Her daughter age 21 had just died with tuberculosis. So she decided to move from Jarrow and she went to West Wickham in Kent. So when she went to West Wickham in Kent, the house that she'd moved to was bombed three weeks after she'd moved there, and the only thing that was left standing were the gate posts. Her daughter, Doris, my father's sister, was killed and his youngest brother, Ronald, age 17, lost his leg. And you think, how much tragedy can somebody have in their life? And my grandmother survived all of that, was very deaf and used an ear trumpet, believe it or not, to hear better. But what a tragic story. She moved away from Jarrow because she thought that there was a lot of activity with bombing and things, and obviously felt that it was going to be safer living in Kent, in West Wickham and that was the story that happened there.

So my father was in the royal signals. He didn't like it. He didn't talk about it very much at all. He spent the majority of his time with the cherry pickers and he didn't like it. He thought that the officers were all didn't consider there men very worthy. But anyway, he did his time in the war.

My mam was posted to Whitby, she said that she used to make, she made the soldiers happy and that's because she was the pay clerk!

Obviously. Now have I got anything else? Obviously I've got his medals, I've got the photograph, I've got his pay book, my father's handbook and some pictures of when he was, because he was Sicily, Italy, Africa, and a picture, that's his brother's grave in Caen, his eldest brother John. So I don't know if any of that kind of stuff and his Bible, which was given to him by Knight Street, Methodist Church, was given his Bible, which he took, carried with him. It's got no bullet holes in. So is that the kind of stuff you want?