

Title: Muriel Sutters Interview

Creators: Rick & Julia Goldsmith

Project: 'The Close in Living Memory: Hereford Cathedral Close oral reminiscences'

Subject: Autobiography, Living and working around Cathedral Close in Herefordshire, Heritage

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Identifier: Muriel-Sutters

Interview Date: 2010, Hereford

Interviewee: Muriel Sutters (speaker, female)

Interviewer: Marsha O'Mahony & Julia Goldsmith (speaker, female)

Camera & Sound: Richard Goldsmith (male)

Producer: Julia Goldsmith

Language: English

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Type: Video

Width: 1440 pixels

Height: 1080 pixels

Scan type: Progressive

Stereo/Mono: Stereo Mixdown

Duration: 16 min 47 seconds

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Transcript:

(00:00)

Muriel introduces herself, born Muriel Saddler, in 24 Broad Street which was owned by her grandfather Walter Pritchard and he lived there with his wife Eliza Pritchard and their family. (00:29) Muriel was baptised in the Cathedral on the 2nd January, and went to school at the high school until she was 17 then moving to Cardiff for 2 years, after that going to work in London. Muriel was in London for the whole of the war until she got married in 1945, she came back to Hereford and was married in All Saints where her husband had worshipped for many years. (01:21) Muriel worked in the civil service in London, but has always enjoyed coming back to Hereford - she kept in touch with a few people but now at the age of nearly 90 she no longer knows of anyone who she went to school with.

(02:08)

Muriel's grandparents, Walter and Eliza Pritchard, owned Pritchard and Sons in High Town which later moved to Kings Street. Muriel used to go in there quite often to see Walter, or his brother William or sister Ada, who both worked in the shop. Muriel's mother remembers when they had a whole lot of tailors who would work there all sat in a circle on the floor in one of the upstairs rooms. (03:00) Muriel says her grandfather was born before his time really, he just loved any innovation and anything new that came along and was one of the first to have a car and one of the first wireless licenses in Hereford. (03:25) He was just interested in anything technical - he even made a hot air balloon, sewing it in the cellar of 24 Broad Street from pieces of silk and filled it at Pritchards shop with coal gas and flew it across the city to the riverbank on a rope. Though unfortunately no one went in it! (04:20) Any sort of flight interested him - he spoke to one of the Wright brothers, going across to Paris to see him, and he used to study birds to see how they flew. Aeroplanes, Gliders, Balloons, anything like that was fascinating to him. (04:55) He was also a great fly fisherman, and photographer, and a member of the Woolhope club - a very interesting man though Muriel didn't think anything of it as a child, only realising since what a fascinating person he was. Walter's son Percy inherited a lot of that interest in everything too.

(05:26)

Muriel's mother was the eldest in the family and she worked in the telephone exchange, marrying Muriel's father at the end of the Great War who was in the Royal Engineers. Muriel was born in Broad Street and then they moved up to Breinton Road later on where she lived until she was 17. From there she would walk to the high school everyday, coming home for lunch then going back to school, there were no school lunches in those days at all and you would go home to lunch. So at the age of ten she'd walk a fair way 4 times a day - in all weathers! (06:30) Muriel's grandmother was on the route home from school, so she used to call in and have a bovril toast in front of the gas fire in the breakfast room where her grandmother would sit, having a quiet moment until Muriel arrived. Muriel was very fond of her grandmother, she was a very comforting sort of person and was lovely to be with.

(07:01) The first floor of her grandmother's house was occupied by a Mrs. Peppercorn who was a widow of a clergyman who had a parish somewhere in Herefordshire. When Muriel went in to see her grandma, she would be asked to run up to Mrs. Peppercorn with the evening paper - and Mrs. Peppercorn would always have a nice drawer of expensive almond

sweets which Muriel was often told to help herself to when she went up with the evening paper. (08:00) She also gave Muriel a lovely necklace which she still has to this day that is green with little flowers that everyone loves. Mrs. Peppercorn had a son, Arthur, who became rather well known as he was a railway engineer, one of the big steam engines was named after him 'Peppercorn', and one of those engines has actually been rebuilt recently made from scratch from his plans - and they have been doing the tour of England with it. (09:10) When Muriel was in Somerset she rode the train on one of the little country lines and was told that Arthur Peppercorn's grandson was on the train, she hoped to meet him but never did.

(09:30)

Muriel always used to look forward to the Mayfair coming, remembering they were able to watch from the windows from her granddad's place on Broad Street. Muriel recalls going on the helter skelter and what they used to call the 'big horses' not the little quick ones. She doesn't think they ever bought any of the trinkets or 'fluffy stuff' but they went to it and thoroughly enjoyed it. (10:20) They would watch them setting it up and taking it down and there was so much to watch and great fun for children - and she's glad it's still going on. They have one in Oxford called St. Giles fair in the first week of September too that goes on for a few days.

(10:44)

Muriel's grandfather had several good friends, one was Mr. Morgan who was the librarian and the curator of the Museum, they used to have this wire that ran from the Library straight across to 24 Broad Street - though Muriel doesn't know quite exactly what they used it for. (11:31) He had a daughter, Penelope, who very kindly used to wait on the steps of the library for Muriel to arrive from Breinton Road on her way to school (she started at the high school when she was about 9 and a half) and accompany her on the way to school for her first few weeks or months until she settled in. (12:18) Muriel thinks that Penelope went on to become the curator of the Cathedral's Chained Library but isn't fully sure.

(12:34)

Muriel's grandparents had 6 children, her mother Elsie was the eldest and worked in the telephone exchange, Doris was the next one and worked in A.C Edwards shop which was the first shop to have a curved glass window which made a great hoo-hah in the town. The next child was Edgar who became blind when he was 21 and stayed at home to begin with and when they moved he did a bit of smallholding. Then there was Phyllis and Margery who were twins, Phyllis worked in an accountant's office in town and Margery worked in a solicitor's office in Bridge Street. She saw them all a lot and they were quite a close family in that sort of way.

(14:04)

The family all came home at lunchtime, everybody did in those days, and have a sit down after lunch where Muriel was forbidden to move or speak almost in case she disturbed them.

(14:34)

Muriel was out at Pandy with her family walking along the riverbed with a steep bank at the side when she noticed a little bit of a pot sticking out of the side. Her grandfather, for the one

occasion of his life, hadn't brought his camera - so he left them there, drove into Hereford and came back with his camera to take a photograph of it. It is in the Museum somewhere.

(15:30)

Her grandfather was a very keen photographer taking photographs of the family over quite a number of years - Muriel remembers on one occasion he asked her mother saying 'Elsie will you gather the children please I want to expose a plate' and of course they had to stay absolutely still for about a minute for this photograph. Back in those days they would have developed the images themselves as well.

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This film was made by Catcher Media for the Hereford Cathedral Close project in association with In Our Age and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

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