

## **Scarborough Sea Wall Heritage Trail Project.**

**Frazer Armitage – On the welcome which visitors to his parents' Scarborough guesthouse received.**

**Interviewed and transcribed by Huw Roberts**

Today I'm talking to Frazer Armitage. Frazer's grandfather bought a house in Scarborough overlooking Peasholm Park. Later they converted it to operate as a family guest house. It would have been typical of several hundreds of such guest houses operating in the town. Frazer grew up in that house, which continued as a guest house throughout his childhood.

*Frazer, would you tell us a little bit about the house conversion.*

Thank you, Huw. was OK, thank you. Glenroy guest house was positioned between Peasholm Drive and Peasholm Gardens looking directly over Peasholm Park in the North Bay of Scarborough. So it was an absolutely excellent position. It was originally a four bedroom house with a very large loft and it was the loft that was then converted by my grandparents into three extra bedrooms, giving a total of 7 bedrooms. These bedrooms consisted mainly of a double bed and a hot and cold water basin. Bedroom number four, for instance, had two double beds. Bedrooms 3 and 5 have a double bed and a single bed. Bedroom six had two single beds, so it was designed to cram as many visitors into the property at one time. At its height, it was able to accommodate 18 visitors in total.

Downstairs there was a family lounge, but mainly there was a visitors lounge within a larger range of chairs or emergency chairs at some points if we did have a full house. And there was a small dining room which accommodated around six tables where people shared their meals and breakfasts. A fairly large kitchen for my mother to cook her meals and a small table where we would also have our family meals. The typical visitor to Glenroy, they would be encouraged to stay a week by my father and they would arrive usually by train or coach at about 2 pm on a Saturday afternoon in the summer. They would all have booked their room in early January. Dad always used to enjoy January when the phone started to ring after New Year's Day and he'd be able to fill in his cardboard booking sheet filling up the guest house. Some of them would arrive by car, but not many and in fact there was a small grass verge outside the front which would accommodate around three cars. Visitors would then be introduced to everyone, but it was more like a family friend, a welcoming every week from my mother, the same visitors who came year on year for the same week every year from what I can remember.

Each morning I had the job of running downstairs and ringing the breakfast bell, which was always fun at 8:45 and they would all come down for their breakfasts. Breakfast would include corn flakes. There was no choice, it was cornflakes or no cereal and then a full fry up, bacon, sausage, fried egg, beans, grilled tomato. Again, no deviation, the same breakfast for seven days and with some cold toast and a pot of tea. My father said coffee hadn't been invented in the 70s and 80s when I was there. Everyone had tea. After breakfast it was really encouraged to try and get people out of the house as quickly as possible so they could go and enjoy the delights of the North Bay of Scarborough. It was never well taken if they hung around in the front room, and especially if they tried to put the telly on. It was not an option my dad preferred. We would then rush around through all the changing of the sheets, washing the sinks, cleaning the toilets and then Mum would prepare for an evening meal. Mum would pride herself on her evening meals. It would be all home cooked food for the main meal and pudding. They would actually receive a four course meal at 5:00 PM every night. The meal will include a soup starter at different flavour everyday, then a hearty meal, always including meat, or homemade pie or shepherd's pie. The homemade sweets including lemon meringue pie, sticky toffee pudding, that type of thing and then a cup of tea and the rich tea

biscuit. Again, no deviation from the type of biscuit. Again as soon as evening meal was finished, a lot of the visitors would go into the guest room downstairs and maybe watch the TV, the 6 o'clock news. But again it was encouraged for them to go for a stroll round the North Bay so we could get them out of the house. By 10:00 pm those that had actually drifted back to the house were offered an optional tea and biscuits service, whereby we charged a small fee to cover the cost of the tea bags and again, the Rich Tea biscuits. Other than Sunday evening meal was served at 5:00 pm, but on a Sunday the guests would be treated to a full Sunday roast from 1:00 pm. Again, this would include the Sunday starter of a bowl of soup followed by a round of Yorkshire puddings and then a roast beef Sunday lunch with all the trimmings. This would then be followed again by a hearty pudding and a cup of tea and Rich Tea tea biscuit. This enabled my parents, me and my brother and sister to have the Sunday afternoon off.

The season would start running from Easter, so around Easter time people would start rocking up and it would go through the entire season until it finished towards the end of September after the annual Scarborough Cricket Festival. We had a range of visitors, but mainly the visitors from what I can remember would be from the South and West areas of Yorkshire. We also had a number come down from the North East and we also had the Scottish fortnight where we'd have a load of visitors for one week from Edinburgh and the other week from Glasgow. I always think the reason that they came back was for those hearty meals and the fact that my mother, she was from Rotherham, my dad was from Leeds so they had a whole load in common with the owners. My mother had actually been the daughter of a steelworker from Rotherham, hence the type of visitor that would turn up every Saturday.

*Thanks for that. Is it true that during the time when your grandparents ran the guest house, some visitors would actually be accommodated in one or two houses up the street.*

That's correct, Huw. I always remember, not next door, but the next door but one on Peasholm Gardens, Mrs Emily Rowbotham. She would put up two or three visitors each year if they wanted a certain week and we were full. They would come down and cram into the dining room for their breakfast and evening meals and in repayment, Mum would always cook Emily a Sunday dinner.

*What a wonderful scenario. Thank you very much, Frazer.*

Interviewer: Huw Roberts