

W&M19 - Joe O'Loughlin

**SPEAKERS**

Joe O'Loughlin, Susan Kelly

**Joe O'Loughlin 00:00**

I was born in 1932 and grew up then during the war years.

**Joe O'Loughlin 00:04**

To go back like to the early memories of the war years, I think one of the first memories I would have would be at school in Belleek and seeing a map of Europe and the border after Poland was invaded and on the map was Warsaw and a big saw cutting Poland in two. That would have been one of the early memories.

**Susan Kelly 00:26**

Did your teachers talk to you about what the map meant?

**Joe O'Loughlin 00:30**

Ah not terribly much you know but enough.

**Joe O'Loughlin 00:34**

Then after a couple of years when the Americans decided to come here, the team of four or five soldiers called at the school and gave us all chewing gum and ginger snap biscuits. I presume under the, under the table like that the Master got a bottle of whiskey (both laugh) but we didn't see that of course.

**Joe O'Loughlin 00:57**

Then, at home then, the early memories would have been listening to William Boyce, who was known as Lord HawHaw, he was a native of Galway or his people were from Galway, but he was American born and he used to broadcast from Berlin; "Germany calling". My father got a little wireless and he would broadcast several times...

**Susan Kelly 01:20**

Do you think most people listened to that? Yeah,

**Joe O'Loughlin 01:22**

Oh, they listened to that certainly and at this stage when he was broadcasting, both Hitler and he knew about the flying boats on Lough Erne and he talked about the swans on Lough Erne.

**Susan Kelly 01:37**

Oh gosh.

**Joe O'Loughlin 01:38**

And this, this was the way he was referring to the flying boats, so obviously the Germans knew that these flying boats were there you know.

**Joe O'Loughlin 01:46**

The only involvement that you would have made any difference, would have been the blackout regulations you know.

**Joe O'Loughlin 01:48**

Then of course you'd go across the other side of the river from Belleek and you were in Co. Donegal and there were no blackout regulations there.

**Susan Kelly 01:54**

So, you would have been, as you say, in darkness, and then just very close by there would have been lights and everything on?

**Joe O'Loughlin 02:00**

Lights and everything like that.

**Susan Kelly 02:02**

Was that, did people talk about that? Was that an issue?

**Joe O'Loughlin 02:05**

Ah it wasn't really an issue like, once rationing was imposed like people were worried more about certain goods were reasonably plentiful in Northern Ireland and certain other goods were reasonable plentiful across the border. So, it was an exchange

**Susan Kelly 02:21**

It was easy for you you to go across the border.

**Joe O'Loughlin 02:25**

You got the best of both worlds.

**Susan Kelly 02:26**

Yeah.

**Joe O'Loughlin 02:27**

Tea was reasonably plentiful here and very scarce across the border in the 'Free State'.

**Susan Kelly 02:33**

Yeah

**Joe O'Loughlin 02:33**

Whiskey would have been scarce here and reasonably plenty [in the Irish Free State,] there was an old lady from Tyrone whose family had a pub in Bundoran.

**Joe O'Loughlin 02:40**

She used to travel by train up to Dungannon to see her family and the poor old dear liked to keep herself warm in the wintertime, she had, you know, one of these crockery hot water bottles to keep her warm on the train.

**Joe O'Loughlin 02:51**

And of course she got all the sympathy of the customs man and that sort of thing. Up to Dungannon, her hot water bottle full of whiskey (both laugh) it was emptied out, dried out; and then it was filled with tea [leaves.]

**Susan Kelly 03:06**

But when you crossed the border you didn't have to go by train at all, you would have just hopped over the fields?

**Joe O'Loughlin 03:11**

No, we just, we used to cycle, or you know, you go to Ballyshannon, butter was plentiful, in there you'd get butter and all.

**Susan Kelly 03:17**

So it barely even counted as smuggling.

**Joe O'Loughlin 03:19**

Well, it was in an amateurish way you know, it

**Susan Kelly 03:22**

There wouldn't... sorry, there wouldn't have been anybody customs, keeping an eye on

**Joe O'Loughlin 03:28**

Oh yeah.

**Susan Kelly 03:29**

Would there? So you could have been caught

**Joe O'Loughlin 03:31**

Then the police, the RUC here, they did customs duty in Northern Ireland as well but funny enough like the British Customs Officers were far more tolerant than the Free State guys.