

## Scarborough Sea Wall Heritage Trail Project

**Interview with Pamela Lee talks about her family, her childhood and a special moment involving a tunnyfish.**

**Interviewer and transcriber: Huw Roberts**

Today I'm talking to Pamela Lee. Pam was born and bred in Scarborough and her family has a long history with the town. She has a number of interesting memories, one in particular that I'm very interested in. But first I want to talk to her about her Great Grandfather, George William Rutledge, and he was captain of Scarborough Football Club in the early 20th century.

*Pamela, please tell me what you know about your great grandfather.*

Well, obviously I never met him, but it's tales from my granny and my mum. He was born in Huddersfield. His Mum was Irish and they came over to England. This was in the 1880s when things were very hard in Ireland. They got as far as Huddersfield and he was born in the workhouse there. One of the stories was you had to get your child out of the workhouse. You had to find £5 so it was quite a difficult time for them. But they managed to get over to Scarborough eventually, where he lived for the rest of his life and we grew up in the old town. He was from a Catholic family and he went to Saint Peter's School I should think. But most of the tales are from when he met Granny. They got married and had seven children. Previous to that, he went into the Boer War in 1901 and he was there about two years and then he came home. He was a general labourer finding jobs where and when.

He was a very keen footballer and he joined the Scarborough Football Club which they had just moved to Seamer Rd, apparently at that time and that's where he played football and he was there from about 1903 to about 1915, when he got to be the captain of the team by that stage. But then the war came and my grandfather at 36 was called up in the beginning of 1916 and unfortunately, in June 1916, he was killed in the Battle of the Somme. Even my mum didn't have many memories of her father, she was only nine years old.

*Thank you for that. Now you grew up in the 1950s and as a young girl lived in that wonderfully named area of the town, Paradise, and in particular in the houses known as Paradise Row. For how long did you live there?*

I was born in 1938 and we moved from Paradise Row in 1943 because we were all housed into better housing conditions because the house in Paradise Row was a two up, two down with an outside toilet. Nothing much of a garden, a small yard in front with a little fence round. We were moved into a three bedroom house with an indoor toilet and bathroom, which was luxury at the time. Both my grandparents lived in Long Westgate where my mother and my father grew up next door to each other, actually. They also moved into the more modern houses. So from there on I lived on the Barrowcliff Estate.

*I'd like to talk to you now about your memory of something that you experienced as a young girl down at Scarborough Harbour. It was in the days of tunny fishing and it was at the time when the sport of tunny fishing was dying out. Tell us about what you experienced.*

Dad took me down there, and we were all anticipating this landing of a tunny fish and there were crowds and crowds of people and they had built a shed, but they had a tarpaulin over the top of it, and there was an entrance in and an entrance out, and then inside, the tunny fish was laid on a trestle table. When they brought the tunny fish ashore, yes, it was all great excitement. It was seemingly to us, huge. They weighed it on a large contraption from the tail, lifted it up and weighed it. Sorry, I can't remember the weight of it but it looked very, very big to a little girl of six. Then they

took it down, it was glistening, very shiny, they put it into the shed and then people had to queue up and you had to pay sixpence to be admitted. It was a great excitement.

*Obviously there was a lot of hustle and bustle around, what were the smells like?*

Very fishy, not unpleasantly so as I remember, but yes, very strong smell of fish because obviously it was on the end of the pier and all the pots, the lobster pots were there.

*Your dad took you in, did you both have to pay a tanner to get to see it?*

Do you know, I don't know whether they charged for me because my dad obviously paid but I do know it was sixpence the entrance fee.

*Pamela Lee, many thanks for sharing your family memories with us today and in particular for that memory relating to that tunny fish. Scarborough was the UK headquarters for tunny fishing at that time and at one time held the record for the heaviest tunny fish caught anywhere in the world..So it was quite a sight, and one that no one will ever see again. Thank you very much indeed Pam.*

Interview recorded by Huw Roberts in December 2023.



Front centre: Pam Lee's great grandfather George William Rutledge, Scarborough F. C. Early 1900s.



*Five tunnyfish being weighed at the harbourside at Scarborough*