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# STORAGE

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NESTON & PRENTON



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## Continuing our serialisation of Geoff Andrews' fascinating book, *Memories of a Lifetime Past*, about the life and times of Parkgate fishermen, Chris & Jim Peters

While shrimping in the *Cilla* down off Ffrith Beach, Chris and Jim saw a very young boy walking along the shore and seeing they fishing close in, he thought he could walk to them. But all along that beach there are hollows and the little lad went down one – the waves knocked him over but he kept on going and Chris shouted to him to go back.

Fascinated by their boat, he kept coming and was continuously knocked down till he didn't come up. Chris said: "So I left our Jim to look after the boat and I jumped out, up to my armholes, waded ashore, picked the lad up out of the water and carried him up over the railway line to a house. It was a good job I saw this house, cos I didn't know where I was going with him. After explaining the situation to them I left to get back to the boat. Our Jim was up the mast looking for me. I waded back, stripped off, wrung everything out and put them back on. We didn't get back till 9 o'clock that night and when we did get back there were reporters waiting for us and we found out the lad's name was Christopher."

During the war, Chris and Albert were fishing off Rhyl and the fish had been plentiful. At the end of the day Chris wanted to come home, but Albert made some excuse to stay, so they had to stay, as the authorities wouldn't allow any boat back in the river after dark. So they settled down for the night at anchor.

Then it came and blew a gale and they had to lap the anchor rope to stop it chaffing in the cheeks. "What a night we put in," said Chris. "I kept telling our Albert we should have gone home. We were glad to see the morning come; the wind had died right down, so we said we'd have another haul of fish, when we got the net in, there were just two little dabs in it, the gale in the night had cleared all the fish!"

During the war they fished in a restricted area, as this was the only place where they could catch any fish. The navy came and warned them off time and time again, till in the end they were all rounded up and sent to Liverpool to spend time in gaol or pay a fine. They said they would go to gaol first, but the womenfolk, not wanting their men to be convicts, paid the fines. I think they still sneaked back to that area, till it was fished out.

Chris said: "When we lived in the big house, upshore, (that's what he called Crosby house), my dad used to buy pigs from Flint and we would sail across in the boat, and bring 'em back.

"We had ponies to hawk the fish around and hens, ducks and a big orchard. We used the ponies for cockling and musselling, as well. I remember one horse who wouldn't pull the cart if you put too much on it. We would have to take some bags off before he'd attempt to shift 'em, and another pony used to fall down in the shafts every time he heard a loud noise, our Job said it was a war horse, trained to lie down at the sound of gunfire, then he would clap his hands and the horse would fall down."

Chris told me how he set stake nets out in the gutters when it was dark, as the watchmen were very keen in those days and the stake nets were illegal. He took his sister Ethel sometimes to get the fish out of the nets and she would nearly give the game away by laughing.



## Swing Era

Swing Era's inception came in 2010 when four older members of The Heswall Concert Band took the decision to start a swing band based on the extensive experience they possessed as professional or semi professional musicians playing in the regional dance bands of the late 40s and 50s.

They thought it important to bring back the great live sounds of those halcyon days when they played nightly to packed dance halls with the popular tunes of the day as well as the tunes of the great American bands such as Glen Miller and Duke Ellington.

Sadly, virtually all of the nightly dance halls had closed by the start of the 60s and the twist and disco dancing in late night clubs to records or smaller guitar based groups took their place; but the dance halls and the cinema's were really killed off commercially by television and their conversion to bingo halls. It was a sea change in life style for younger people which is still with us today.

Swing Music is a special genre in its own right and is the precursor to BeBop and all other forms of modern jazz which have become the preserve of a far more eclectic audience than the mass appeal that swing music was in it's day.

The band contains the standard reeds, brass and rhythm sections of the great bands to play their arrangements. It is our mission to provide pleasurable entertainment with live music of this genre to audiences of all ages and musical tastes for either concert or social functions of any kind.

Whilst there is great acceptance of our music from older members of the public we find that many younger people are enthused with the prospect of hearing or playing our music and as older members retire younger musicians are taking their places very successfully as the band goes from strength to strength.

Swing Era are available for bookings. For more information call Fred on 0151 651 1196 or 7946 583476.