

MEET THE CLIFFEHAVEN FAMILY

PEGGY REILLY is in her early forties, and married to Jim. She is small and slender, with dark, curly hair and lively brown eyes. As if running a busy household and caring for her young daughter wasn't enough, she also runs the local uniform factory and still finds time to offer tea, sympathy and a shoulder to cry on when they're needed. She and Jim took over the running of Beach View Boarding House when Peggy's parents retired. When war was declared and the boarding house business no longer became viable, she decided to take in evacuees. Peggy can be feisty and certainly doesn't suffer fools, and yet she is also trying very hard to come to terms with the fact that her family has been torn apart by the war. She is a romantic at heart and can't help trying to match-make, but she's also a terrible worrier, always fretting over someone – and as the evacuees make their home with her, she comes to regard them as her chicks and will do everything she can to protect them.

JIM REILLY is in his mid-forties and was a young engineer in the last days of the first war, where he served alongside his elder brother, Frank, and father Ron. Now he's fighting for king and country in India and Burma. Jim is handsome, with flashing blue eyes and dark hair, and the gift of the Irish blarney he'd inherited from his Irish parents, which usually gets him out of trouble. He enjoys the camaraderie of being a soldier, but the conditions and dangers he's encountering in the jungles have somewhat dampened his enthusiasm, and he treasures the letters and cards from home.

RONAN REILLY (Ron) is a sturdy man in his sixties who often leads a very secretive life away from Beach View now that his experience and skills from the previous war are called upon during the hostilities. Widowed several decades ago, he has recently married the luscious Rosie Braithwaite who owns the Anchor pub. Ron is a wily countryman; a poacher and retired fisherman with great roguish charm who tramps over the fields with his dog, Harvey, and two ferrets. He doesn't care much about his appearance, much to Peggy's dismay, but beneath that ramshackle old hat and moth-eaten clothing, beats the heart of a strong, loving man who will fiercely protect those he loves.

ROSIE REILLY is in her fifties and has recently married Ron, after her husband died following many years in a mental asylum. She took over the Anchor pub twenty years ago and has turned it into a little gold-mine. Rosie has platinum hair, big blue eyes and an hour-glass figure – she also has a good sense of humour and can hold her own with the customers.

HARVEY is a scruffy, but highly intelligent brindled lurcher, with a mind of his own and a mischievous nature – much like his owner, Ron.

DORIS WILLIAMS is Peggy's older sister and for many years she has been divorced from her long-suffering husband, Ted, who died very recently. She used to live in the posh part of town, Havelock Road, and look down on Peggy and the boarding house. But her days of snooty social climbing and snobbishness are behind her. Having lived with Peggy at Beach View Boarding House after bombs destroyed her former neighbourhood, Doris has softened and although she's still proud of her connections to high society, she's also on much better terms with her sister and the rest of the family. But despite all this, Doris is still rather lonely, especially with her only son now married and moved away. Could her recent change of heart also lead to a new romance?

FRANK REILLY has served his time in the army during both wars, but now he's been demobbed due to his age and is doing his bit by joining the Home Guard and Civil Defence. He's married to Pauline and they live in Tamarisk Bay in the fisherman's cottage where he was born.

CORDY FINCH is a widow and has been living at Beach View for many years. She is in her eighties and is rather frail from her arthritis, but that doesn't stop her from bantering with Ron and enjoying life to the full. She adores Peggy and looks on her as a daughter, for her own sons emigrated to Canada many years before and she rarely hears from them. The girls who live at Beach View regard her as their grandmother, as does Peggy's youngest, Daisy.

ANNE is married to Station Commander Martin Black, an RAF pilot, and they have two small girls. Anne has moved down to Somerset for the war, teaching at the local village school.

CICELY (Cissy) is a driver for the WAAF and is stationed at Cliffe aerodrome. She once had ambitions to go on stage, but finds great satisfaction in doing her bit, and is enjoying the new friendships she's made. She has fallen in love with a young American pilot, Randolph Stevens, but now he's been sent to Biggin Hill, they rarely see one another.

BOB and CHARLIE are Peggy's two young sons, who are also living in Somerset for the duration. Bob is serious and dedicated to running the farm, while Charlie is still mischievous, and when not causing trouble, can be found most of the time under the bonnet of some vehicle, tinkering with the engine.

DAISY is Peggy's youngest child, born the day Singapore fell. She can sleep through air raids and simply adores pulling Ron's wayward eyebrows. She and Harvey are best of friends, but she has yet to truly know her father, or her siblings.

RITA SMITH came to Beach View after her home in Cliffhaven was flattened by an air raid. Rita is small and an energetic tomboy who is a fully qualified mechanic, having been taught from an early age by her father. She can usually be seen in heavy trousers and boots, and a First World War leather jacket and flying helmet.

FRAN is from Ireland and works as a theatre nurse at Cliffhaven General. She has been living with Peggy since before the war, and has become an intrinsic part of the family. She plays the violin at the Anchor for the sing-songs, and has fallen in love with Robert – an MOD colleague of Anthony Williams.

SARAH FULLER and her younger sister, **JANE**, came to England and Beach View after the fall of Singapore. They are the great-nieces of Cordelia Finch who has welcomed them with open arms. Sarah works for the Women's Timber Corps, and Jane has now left Cliffhaven for a secret posting where she's deciphering codes.

IVY is from the East End of London and was billeted for a time with Doris where she was expected to skivvy. She's stepping out with Fire Officer Andy, who is the nephew of Gloria Stevens who runs the Crown pub in Cliffhaven High Street. She and Rita are best friends and the untidiest pair Peggy has ever met – other than Ron and Harvey.