

**MORECAMBE BAY PARTNERSHIP HEADLANDS TO HEADSPACE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 2015-2018**

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

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FRONTSHEET

INTERVIEW NO: H2H2015.9

INTERVIEWEE NAME/S: Jackie Bailiff

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1941

INTERVIEWER/S: Sarah Hymas

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 22/10/15

LOCATION: Sunderland Point / Morecambe

TRANSCRIBER: Michelle Cooper

Summary of Interview:

No of Tracks: 1

Main Contents of Transcript (Brief Description):

Track 1 - Life growing up in a fishing family.

- Father running a pharmacy during wartime; being raised by her father; freedom as a child; family businesses in Morecambe; her Dad's love of fishing as an 'amateur' and his boats; fishing over on Piel Island; her interest in fishing as a young girl; the different species fished for and different equipment used.
- Reflections of Piel Island in the 1940s and going to the pub – a magical experience
- Fishing holidays with her dad and being spoiled by women on the island.
- Fishing techniques – mackerel, full description of trawling and how the nets worked; being allowed to sell fish and keep the money; Dad a salmon

fisherman too; shrimping techniques; weaver fish also known as 'stang fish'; Potting shrimps; catching Tope (shark)

- Mischief in dinghies – getting it stuck in the pier
- The boats her dad owned – Swallow, Nora and what happened to them.
- Specialness of Nobbies
- Trying to understand fishermen's accents
- Memories of old Morecambe - the Tower ballroom and places in Morecambe
- Fishermen's nicknames; Being well integrated into fishing community
- Grandma's tales – the pier burning down, fishermen's tales
- Grandmas' song about the Matchless disaster (she sings it)
- The Moby Dick; burning down of the Alhambra and Moby Dick
- Long lining; 'Snig pikes' – for catching eels and personal stories – treading on eels in the kitchen! Eel nets. Boiling eels in milk; catching mullet and bass on Piel; pulling in nets with block and tackle ('taigling' it)
- Interesting fishing words
- Why she loved fishing so much
- A close encounter with a naval submarine in Barrow channel; the dingy on the back of the boat
- Walt Bell – boat builder.

Well so I know nothing about you Jackie, so I wondered if you could start off by just saying your name and where you were born and a bit about your early life

Okay, yeah, well my name for the last forty years or so has been Jackie Bailiff. I was born Jackie Brookes in 1941 and I actually lived at Bare but my spiritual home was central Morecambe because Dad had a pharmacy at the top of Queen Street next door to the Queens Hotel. In those days shops were open from 9 in the morning until 7 at night and then he went all around town delivering prescriptions to little old ladies and I sort of fit where I touched Bare because I didn't have a mum so I had an awful lot of freedom as a child running wild round Morecambe which was great. I loved every minute of it. And it was a very special time to be growing up in Morecambe because I guess because it was...er... I don't remember too much of it during the War, although I can remember bits and pieces. I can remember erm Dad going out on Fire watch every night. Because he was a pharmacist it was a Reserved Occupation so he wasn't in the Forces but he had to be a Fire watchman so that's

where he was every night. I remember him going out in his uniform to the Fire Station and I remember the sirens going and being frightened because that told me that something bad was happening even though it wasn't necessarily. It was planes going over. But I can remember that. Er it was no good news for my family because while poor old Dad was at the Fire Station Mum er who was only 19 was down at the Floral Hall having a good time with the GIs and when I was three she cleared off to America with a GI so I was left with my Dad which gave me an amazing upbringing really and I mostly thrived on happy neglect you know benign neglect. He let me have so much freedom when I think back now er but you know, I don't know, it was wonderful to grow up in Morecambe at that time. He took me on the boat with him everywhere....

The Boat where? His boat?

Well yeah, it was ...he was pharmacist by trade. He was a fisherman by inclination. That was my Dad. Every minute

Okay. What was his name?

Frank Brookes.

Frank Brookes? Right.

His parents - one had come from Leeds, one had come from Bradford, their parents had bought boarding houses in Morecambe. They met as like seventeen year olds here. They had two boarding houses on the prom. His er Grandad was a....had [Landows?] (They were called Brookes) on the Prom and they lived on Lord Street, Townley Street and the Prom between them so they were all Poultonites. Grandad was a Saddler but he fished too but Dad was just crazy for it. Oh that's my Grandfather up there in his little 'Midge'.

In 'Midge'

Yeah.

So that's your Grandad Saddler. So he obviously took your Dad out fishing

Yes but not enough, my Dad was keener than he was.

Oh okay.

Oh yes, my Dad was absolutely er...I can remember the first trawler we had when I was about 4 when we got it and I can remember him buying it, I can remember going on my first trip when I was five over to Piel Island being wrapped up in the sail and being stuck in the forecastle to sleep.

Just the two of you?

Yeah. When I was five.

And how big was this trawler?

24 foot. Yeah. 24 foot. [mumbling]. It was a Crossfield's boat...

It was a what sorry?

Crossfield's boat. It was one of ...a real...one of the real traditional trawlers but it was a smaller...Crossfield's boats came in all shapes, not all shapes, all sizes and it was so it was a sail but it wasn't the best of sailers because it had a transom stern instead of a...you know they have a round counter at the back? Well it didn't have that it had a transom stern. But it was built by Crossfield's and it sailed. But Dad only sailed when the wind was in the right direction. He wasn't a sailor he used engine for trawling and fishing but he did masses of fishing. But he was an amateur.

Right

But he knew all the fishermen and he was one of 'em really.

So what else do you remember about that trip to Piel Island? What were you fishing for, for example?

Well we weren't specifically. My dad trawled really. He had shrimp trawl and he had em, not at the same time, he had fluke trawl. Then he would have a shrimp trawl depending on what time of a year it was. But when we went over to Piel we were generally fishing for mackerel, kebbing for cod and anything else that we could

Did you say "kevving"?

Kebbing. Yeah "kebbing". With a hand line, you know, on a square thing like that, about "so big" [gesturing] with a line wound round it and a weight, like a lead, which you used to get made in our kitchen.

Your Dad made the lead?

My Dad used to make the lead and it had a hollowed out bottom that he filled with grease so when you let it down you could check what the bottom of the sea was - whether it was sand or stone or what, because by what adhered to it when you pulled it in you could tell that it was.

And what was the point of knowing what the bottom of the sea was ...?

To know what the fish was. He was a really clued up fisherman.

So a different kind of bed would mean a different sort of fish?

Yeah. Sand, shingle, rock, you know, we to catch tope, this was all over the other side of the Bay though....

Yeah, up at Piel...

Yeah off Piel, and up the back...Mackerel fishing up the back, up Walney side and er

On the inside of Walney?

On the outside.

On the outside of Walney?

Yes on the outside of Walney. Yeah. Round the bottom of Walney and up the....and there was a Seldom Seen by where we used have a crawl net and catch tope. The first trip I ever went...

Tope? I've never even heard of them...

Oh. They're amazing. Ha!

How do you spell that?

T-O-P-E

T-O-P-E? Ok

Yeah. And they are shark basically. The biggest one we ever got was 80 pound.

Wow

...but they're anything from about 10 pound up

And we did that. I was so keen when I think back about it for a lass. I was really into all of it.

So what did you like about it? What was it?

It was an adventure. It was just...it was just...exciting all the time. I suppose I liked being with my Dad. Later, that first trip I remember when I was five, I can remember.....I wish I could remember what I had for dinner last week but I can't but I can remember everything I did as a kid. Piel Island it was late in the season and it was...

So when you say late in the season...

That was not this time of year. But it would have been like September or something like that and....

So you were 5. So that would have made it [19]46?

Yeah, that's when we got a Swallow. [inaud]

The boat was called Swallow?

Yeah that was Swallow and we went to the pub on Piel Island er and there was just..I was blown away it because there was no electricity, there was just oil lamps and it was creepy... like something out of Wuthering Heights... open the door, you know, when we went in. And this chap, the landlord and his wife, we went into a barn - there's about three or four other people fishermen or people there I don't know who they were, and there were some kittens on a hearth, I can remember a fireplace. These kittens on a hearth. And a glass of lemonade. And they were all telling...these fishermen were a yarning erm and I was like that, and I bit a lump out of the glass. And I felt so embarrassed. Aargh! What have I done! I'm going to get chucked out, you know, and of course they didn't. They were "oh are you alright?" "Yes course I'm

alright" and my Dad saying "oh we better pay for the glass.." "No course you won't"...They were really lovely and welcoming. And then I can remember thinking how wonderful it was with all these oil lamps and everything around. It was just like magic. Being on an island. You know...

Yes. So do you remember how long it took you to get there?

Yeah. Well. Not precisely that day. But it generally took, it generally took 2-3 hours.

From Morecambe?

Yeah from Morecambe. Yeah not more. If you'd have been sailing it could have been more variable but we had the engine.

Yeah. And would you time it with the tides as well?

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Absolutely you would.

You wouldn't try and fight them

Oh no...

So you always had the tide with you then?

My Dad always talked tides and I do in a way. You know. "What time are we going...?" "Oh an hour's ebb..." "Oh right Dad. What the hell time is an hour's ebb?" You know!

What did he mean by "an hour's ebb?"

Well when the tide had been going out for an hour

Oh okay

Or an hour's flood. Or whatever we were doing it depended on what time we set off was the state of the tide...he hadn't even looked to see what time we were going, he knew we were going at, you know, as it was usually before high water actually when we were going over to Piel, summat like that you know.. So yeah, oh, yeah we had all that to deal with. And after we'd been in the pub that night we rowed out and we

slept on the boat and my Dad wrapped me up in the sail and stuck me up in the forecandle. We had an oil lamp on the boat too and later on we used to go for weeks with my Dad in the summer. Later on, well, he used to take about three weeks off in the summer off the chem., get a locum in and go.

And where would you go for three weeks?

Well we went a lot to Piel we had loads of friends on Piel and I used to sleep in the pub sometimes because I made a bunch of mates. He used to he just used to let me run wild basically. Erm we went to the Isle of Man, we went to Ireland, we went to...

Were you fishing as well?

Yeah. But not all the way. We would mackerel fish of course but he had ...if you were mackerel fishing you couldn't go so fast because you slowed down to mackerel fish

So tell me how you mackerel fish.

Mackerel fish: you have usually...we had about 4 lines out. Two over the back and two over the side on a pole. It didn't have to be a fancy fishing pole just to keep it out from the boat like that [gestures]. The line was not very thick. Just like thick twine you know, and then on the end of it there was, on each one, there'd be about....I can't remember how long..., maybe about five yards of nylon or gut in those days. And for bait to start off with he used a bit of silver paper out of a cigarette packet but as soon as you got a mackerel...I feel a bit weird now....you shaved a bit of its silver off and put that on the hooks so it looked like a little fish. You know. And you were either in the mackerel or you weren't. And if you were in them you'd get about up two or three hundred at once, so we ate mackerel...

So the two of you would have two or three hundred mackerel

Yeah. But we didn't keep them all, obviously. You couldn't keep them all.

Did you throw them back alive?

Sometimes...

Most of the time you just lost them?

Usually we were going to...on...we didn't get that many every time. Sometimes it'd be twenty and we used to feed the whole of the Island really, Piel Island. He treat me like a lad really. When I was older, like eleven, twelve, he used to...I'd long ginger plats, he used to tie my plats the day we set off so tight with a bit of rope on the bottom and he never used to look at my hair again for whole rest of holiday [laughs]. And I loved it and he used.... to oh crumbs...Social Services'd have him now!

[laughs] But back then I mean, you know...

It was lovely! We had a right good relationship! He used towe'd have flagons of water. At the chemist's shop we had an off-license so we used to take big flagons of cider with us. And I've had, more than once, several times, mackerel just headed and gutted, boiled in a bucket of cider. Because we'd run out of water. [laughs...]

And what's that like?

I ate it cos I was hungry! Don't think...

But maybe it is not the best way of cooking mackerel!

Crumbs. It would never pass... it would never sort of get on...Sort of the Great British whatever it is.. Definitely not! But it was only occasionally. He didn't bother about such mere things as food a lot of the time, you know. It was just...we'd have a big chunk of cheese and a mouldy loaf. That was it. He didn't fuss for my benefit. It wasn't always just me and him. He had quite a lot of other friends with him. When we were at Piel, all the women in the cottages used to spoil me like mad. Because I was like a little waif really. I was a substantial waif - I wasn't a skinny little waif, but I was mum-less...

I was going to say, yeah, they will have seen you....

Spoiling. But I was only mum-less up to a point. I had a wonderful grandmother.

Right. And she was local?

Oh yes. She brought me up really. She was my Mum. You know so...

But wasn't into fishing?

No. she was holding the fort at the bloomin shop wasn't she? She wasn't a chemist but Dad used to call her his unqualified success. She was really good in the shop you know. And so she held the fort there.

Right

Yes a great old childhood in Morecambe. It was the best place in the world to grow up. It's like some kid these days growing up in Ibiza or something like that. When you used to be away, if I was away -Grandpa used to take me to the Isle of Man- people say "where do you live?" "Morecambe", "Oh you lucky thing. You live in Morecambe? Oh she lives in Morecambe! Oh wow!"...They didn't say "wow" in those days. It was a thing to be envied was living in Morecambe you know. Whatever happened....I don't know.

I think it has got something still. It may not be quite as glittery as it once was...

I think it has bottomed out and I think it is coming back. I will never be what it was. It will never come back like that. But places have made...like Whitstable you know, yeah.

So tell me about the other fishing techniques.

That was mackerel fishing. Trawling you'll know about won't you.

Act like I don't know anything.

Alright. Trawling which all the Morecambe fisherman did and Trevor and Margaret [Owen] still do down here and there might be Charlie Edmondson [*she possibly means Ray Edmondson*] at Morecambe does. Still a few that do it. But yes er...The boats are usually the Crossfield boats which were built specially for trawling. Very special. They've got a very low counter which means that the back, there's only about "that much" free boat between the water and the top of the....

That's about a foot then is it? You'd say? About a foot?

Less than that. Six inches something like that. When it is steaming, when it is going you know. They fish with an Otter Trawl.

Which is what?

It has two otter boards which are about half the size of this rug. About that big. I'm not very good at guessing.

That's about a foot and a half square?

They're not square they're oblong.

Oh ok. Two foot by a foot and a half I'd say.

Yeah like that. Metal were round it to weigh it down. Made of wood and then two ...I've got photos of these somewhere....then two hinged 'V' shaped things like with the ropes tied on. And when the trawl is [?] the tail end goes first. How shall I explain this? The trawl is 'v' shaped like that and the tail end is the narrow bit, which is laced up to not let the fish out but when you bring it in you open that [and] let the fish out onto your deck.

So they go in the wide bit and get stuck in the net

Basically. Yes. I'm not explaining it very well. When it has gone overboard, the otter boards space out like that and kind of drift apart. The shape of them and the way the rope's tied on. Otterboards open the mouth of the trawl.

I understand. Yes.

There's a rope that goes along the bottom edge, a heavy rope, which goes if you are trawling, that's why you need to know what the bottom is because you don't want to trawl on rock, erm...when you are trawling this rope, the foot rope it's called, bumps along the bottom and the fluke, which is what you are after normally when you are trawling, but you get other stuff in, bobs along the bottom too, bobs into the net, can't get out cos the tail end is laced up. There's different meshes as well. There's a standard mesh for well this type of trawl, but when you get to the tail end, that is a very fine mesh so when you get to the tail end you can tell when you pull it in, vaguely how much you have got in there. And then by the weight of it you know, as it is coming in. They go in and then you trawl. My Dad knew all the best places, brilliant places to trawl. He could always land right on fish and he would trawl for about three quarters of an hour. Half an hour. You'd leave the trawl out

And would he move? When you say trawl. He would actually move?

Yes you're moving. Yes. Cause about full, maybe not quite full throttle. Because it's slowing the boat down now obviously. Now when you want to haul, that's [] drag. And then when you want to haul you round up onto the trawl to take the weight off it er there was no winches or anything. You just pulled, you know, like that. My Dad would pull...

And you would pull?

No I didn't. I was generally told to "get out of t'road" when I was little. Later on yes, but not when I was little because it was quite hectic because you had to let go of the tiller knock the engine into neutral, big old clanky Kelvin engine into neutral, and then haul. Get the otter boards on the deck and then, which side I can't remember. One side he put the fish, he got the tail in. There was a fish box on one side. It was just a compartment across the deck that you took your fish, dropped 'em into it and then they would immediately take off again and put the trawl out again unless we were going home.

So the fish in the fish box would they be dead or alive?

No they are alive and kicking.

And so they're flapping about like crazy....

Absolutely.

They didn't have a lid on it?

No no no. The box would be about that deep so nothing much would get out.

So a foot and a half or so

About that. About a foot, the sides of the fish box on the deck. And they were a good size. They were wide decks. The decks were like that, so again this hearth rug, the box'd be nearly as big as this hearth rug. Maybe not quite as wide. And then you started your fish. You sorted out what you'd got then, you know, once you'd got trawl in again. You didn't have to, you could sort it out there and then if you wanted but the drill was to get going again then sort...

I guess to always keep the trawl in the water...

Well you might as well as you've still got to steer the boat so you might as well have the trawl out and then you sorted it and I used to love doing that.

So that was your job, the sorting?

Well I helped.

So what did you do? What did you love about that?

Well, you had to chuck back all the little ones under a certain size about 10 inch I think or something like that. So everything under that went straight back into the water. You chucked out, there was always loads of seaweed, there was loads of shells, there was crabs but not edible crabs you know, just...

Tiny wee ones you mean?

Yeah. Well, up to about that [gestures] you know, stuff that had to go back in, and then mostly there'd be flukes, plaice, whitebait, sole occasionally. Sole was good because they were a nice fish, although my dad didn't sell them. Never sold any. He used to let me sometimes

And then would you keep the money?

Yeah. When I was a teenager, he used to let me, you know, very often. I did it once or twice.

Your voice has changed saying that - what was it? What was the thing about selling fish?

Erm...it always felt a bit naughty I don't know why.

Did it?

Yes. I don't know why it would; it was like...I don't think it was illegal or anything.

I wonder why? I wonder if it was just the earning a bit of cash, a bit of money...

Yeah I think it was. It was quite a good thing to do. To be honest I didn't really....we were not that strapped for cash, we were...so my Dad never sold his fish. He gave

them to loads and loads of people that he'd take 'em to, and stuff like that, but he never did it for money. I think it might have been...I don't know, he never said it was a point of honour, but it might have been. But he was a right good fisherman. Even the fishermen....

So, a point of honour to not sell his fish

I think so...that was never said.

But then maybe that also ties in with you feeling a bit strange

Maybe I felt diffident about it. Yes, I did feel different about it. Yes. I had opportunities to I used to take. Especially on Piel Island we used to take 'em 'cause there were loads of trippers everyday on Piel and we used to string 'em up, put 'em on a string, and they were always beautifully fresh you know, we'd no refrigeration but they were straight out of sea, you know, caught that day and bring 'em on to the Island, flog em, that's when I did most of it. Didn't do much at Morecambe maybe...I don't know why not but I didn't. It wasn't about...somebody always ate them. They were never wasted. Oh no they were not wasted.

Good.

My Dad could catch anything. He was a salmon fisherman as well

He was a salmon fisherman?

Up the river yeah. A member of the....

With a haaf net?

No. No he never had a haafing licence because you had to be a bona fide professional fisherman to do that. He used to catch 'em up the river, up Lune Fishing Club, you know, up Lancaster Anglers. That was completely different, sort of ball game, but that just fits in with...He was an all-round fisherman who knew how to catch fish. He was, he was always an oracle when it came to fishing.

Do you know how he knew where the fish were?

He was a smart guy. He was pretty smart and he loved it. He did seem to have a sixth sense about it. And even the bloomin fishermen would say "well where's Frank going?" you know, and he was quite proud of that I think.

[laughter] Followed by the fishermen of Morecambe! Excellent. And you say he caught shrimp?

Yeah shrimp, that was...

So how does that work?

Same shape of trawl but it is a much finer mesh obviously, same shape and it doesn't have the otter boards, it has a beam, a big beam across and a loose, well, rope, but it is like that [gestures] so it makes a mouth shape same as the ..but it doesn't bump along the bottom, it...or does it? I think it does. I think actually I'm wrong there. It's near the bottom anyway; it's either on or within an inch or two of the bottom for the shrimps. I should know that but I can't just think. But it has, oh now then; I'm mixing myself up here. I don't know whether the beam...no the beam is on the top and then it's loose under. Anyway that's very similar.

And you do the same thing haul them into the box?

Yeah tip 'em in and then on the boat you have a boiler which they called a 'telegoram' [?]. I don't know why, but it was a boiler but they used to put the tea can in it as well. They'd take a white tea can put it in the boiler to hot the tea up and then as soon as the shrimps had been riddled,

In the boiler?

No the shrimps were riddled on the deck...

What does riddled mean then?

Oh in a riddle. You know like a sieve...yeah?

Oh yeah.

A round sieve like that. Like you might do soil or stones in the garden something like that. I've got one of them in the garage - a riddle. And you pulled out everything that obviously wasn't a shrimp that you could see, you know. There wasn't usually many

flukes or anything like that in. It was mainly shrimps and crabs and stuff. You used to get stang fish occasionally but they were another story.

Stan fish?

STANG - fish. They were weavers. And they are a terrible stinger. I think that's why they call them 'stang fish'. And if you got stuck with the stang fish you were ill you were really ill. They are still weary on them. Fishermen are always wary of stang fish.

When you say you were ill, how long were you ill for?

Oh you were in excruciating pain really excruciating pain

Whole body? Or local.

Yes whole body. Well localised but it kind of spread through you. They always said it was the worst thing you could imagine but men are soft aren't they? I don't know whether it was as bad as childbirth or anything you know, but they always said it was the most excruciating pain, but I never got stung. My Dad did.

And how long would that sting last for? That pain?

It was about twelve hours I think and anyway after that he used to tip on the boat an antidote. He had a syringe of antidote so he must have got that via the chemist shop. He never needed it but that was a thing to be reckoned with.

So, you'd riddle them...

Yeah you'd riddle them and the little ones you'd chuck back. You're not to take anything under a certain side, the riddle side. You riddle it over the water like that so that everything little goes back in.

Oh Okay. Yeah.

And all the little crabs and everything goes back in. And seaweed. And all the muck and the mess. And then after that you boil 'em. You put 'em in...they don't take long. You have you water boiling and then the minute it's boiling you tip 'em in and then when it comes back to the boil, you just give them a quick stir and they turn pink and

they're out. You don't over boil them and they keep better like that. They don't all. Some bring them home and then boil them you know.

Oh ok. So then they keep for longer once you've boiled them

Yeah not much longer. They want boiling fresh. They pick better if you keep 'em a long time between them dying and you boiling 'em. They don't pick as easily...

You mean take the shells off?

Yes yes. So if you want them to be quick pickers, you boil 'em quick, you cool 'em quick, you put 'em quickly into a net and haul 'em over the side...

In to the water

Boil 'em cool 'em and then when you get the home everybody sets to around the table and picks and that was Sunday nights for me in many a long year.

Sunday nights.

Yeah in the winter.

Picking the shrimps?

Yeah picking the shrimps.

And then what would happen to the shrimps?

Then well we didn't get...we'd pot em. So that was like done in the kitchen. But we were not doing this as professionals. We were not doing this on a big scale.

So how many of you would be potting err picking

Picking well maybe there'd be Grandma, Grandad, me, Dad and maybe a couple of mates. And I used to bring my mates around as I used to get bored doing this so I used to try and make my mates come down and do it as well

And then you'd pot 'em and keep 'em

They don't keep. We used to give 'em , eat 'em really.

Eat them or given them away

Eat 'em.

So do they not keep very well as ..?

They'd keep for a week.

A week. Ok

Potted shrimps. We didn't have a fridge. We had a larder with a north facing old fashioned larder. They kept for a week in that. I don't think people worried as much as we worry about stuff like that.

What keeping you mean?

That's why we potted em it seals the air out, you know, the skin of butter over the top seals the air out. I was taught to pot shrimps and my dad...

Who taught you to pot shrimps?

Me Grandmother. And me Father shop sold shrimp seasoning that was, erm, supposed to be a secret recipe that was passed onto him by his Pa. So they used to come and buy shrimp seasoning all it was nutmeg, mace and cayenne and that's all it was.

In the pharmacy?

In the pharmacy yeah. You used to buy it by the scoop - a scoop of shrimp seasoning

So tell me how you pot shrimps?

Ok. I still do it. I buy 'em down at Trevor's. Whenever anyone's coming they always want shrimps. Ok so you get 'em and they're boiled but not potted. So they're cooked basically. So they don't take much. All you want to do is seal them really form the air. So you'd put them in some hot...you're supposed to clarify the butter, I can't be bothered always I don't always but you should do really

Do you know what difference that makes?

Yes it ...They're not as wet. If you don't clarify the butter you cool 'em on some kitchen roll and that will soak up the wet. You know when you melt butter you've got like a white at the bottom and you should get rid of that really. Anyway. You put your butter in your pan and you boil up these shrimps really quickly couple of minutes on really hot quick quick quick stir-fry and they just curl like that. Not for long but its sufficient for them to curl and you spread 'em out to cool in those days we used to put them on trays in your larder but here you just bung 'em in your fridge spread out on a plate or two, then you pack 'em in to whatever you want to pack 'em into. Little pots or if you want if you're having someone round to dinner you'd put 'em in a bigger pot to share and then pack 'em in quite tight. You'd put your mace...oh I forgot. You put your shrimp seasoning in when...

Your special recipe...

Yeah but anything'll do - a grate of nutmeg, a pinch of mace er bit of ordinary pepper'll do. You don't want to overdo it I don't think but er it's mace, nutmeg, cayenne is the original recipe you know. Not a lot. So you've got these seasoned and cooling packed into dishes then you melt your butter. You can either very carefully spoon it or leave the white in the bottom, or you can go to the trouble of pouring it off and doing it. It doesn't matter really as long as you don't get all the white and then you scoop it off. You've got your shrimps nice and cold which we couldn't in the olden days, but nowadays you can make them really cold so as soon as you put your butter on it sets, you know. Now if it's not that cold, you get masses of butter, you really do cos t sinks down you know, it's not that...these days it wouldn't be viewed as really healthy would it?

No but I was thinking that's...A mass of butter in there wouldn't be a bad thing.

Oh it's lovely! But if your shrimp tops are nice and cold like you'd bunged them in the freezer for five minutes or something like that, your butter as soon as you spoon it on, it sets, and you've got a crust. You just want a butter crust on the top. But is supposed to sink down a bit cos you've sealed all your air out. I think that's the theory of it.

Yes. And is the butter the only thing you could do that with, sealing the air out, with butter? Could you use anything else? Cos is it the flavour as much as anything?

No I think Grandma used to use bloomin margarine. She said it set harder. But I'm a butter fan I wouldn't use anything but butter. I can't think what else you could use really that'd taste the same. Do you mean like oil?

Well I don't know I was just wondering what else...

I'm sure you could I'm sure it would work but that is the traditional way of doing it. I'm sure you could but you'd get a different flavour. Maybe do it with olive oil and garlic - lovely!

It wouldn't set though you'd feel it...

But you freeze it these days don't you

Yeah

This is all from the days when we didn't have freezers and stuff.

Yeah

You wouldn't even dream of doing potting things these days except for something different and it's a new flavour. You just freeze it.

Yes so that was potting shrimps.

And what else did you say that he...

Mackerel.

Yeah you've told me about Mackerel...

Tope. That's the next one

Oh that's right. Tope. The shark...

Yeah blimey. Erm. We used to catch these over on, there were several places over on the other side of the Bay, just off Piel and Walney, notably Seldom Seen rocks which has got a black and white Seldom Seen buoy on it, erm, which the rocks are

awash at low water, but at high water... and we used to go all night and anchor. Now I never did that just with me Dad and I, I don't think I can remember ...we usually had somebody else with us. Anyway, wed anchor all night and go to bed. And the line would be a big hefty sea rod. Two of them, one at each side.

You'd have the lines out overnight?

Yes all night anchored we would be. And we'd have some supper and go to bed. Then, if I remember rightly, the end of the lines, the end of the rod, was big hefty lines these, and fluke for bait so they were big. They were bloody big you know. Fixed in a bucket so if you got a bite, the bucket, it couldn't leave the cockpit cos it was tied in, but the bucket would rattle in the cockpit to wake you up, yeah, and that I mean that...how was lucky was I to be able to do that. I just loved it!

So then what happened? If the bucket rattled and then

The bucket rattled I remember getting stuck one night in the cabin doors trying to get out of the cabin and into the cockpit and me and me dad and his mate were all
[laughs]

[Interviewer laughs] Like the three stooges wedged in the door....

I remember that! And it was such fun. They used to fight like hell. I've got photos of lots of tope experiences. Not much help to you but I have. I've got photos of them on the deck - a bloody shark. I can't just think where there is one now, there's one on the stairs, and I - this was a bit of a cheat really - I won a, in "inverted commas", they put this tope into the News of the World Fish of the week competition. And I was there and I was well in up to the elbows in catching this tope but they gave me the credit for this tope and I won, I won the 'Fish of the Week Competition'

Excellent

Yeah but I felt guilty because I hadn't done the whole thing. Had I hell - it was the size of me! My picture was in the Visitor and all the rest of it with this bloody tope on a broom handle next to me and I was old at this time, I was about 11 and I was a little fatty and it said "stalwart Jacqueline Brooks"...and I didn't want to be 'stalwart Jacqueline Brooks!' [laughs] I felt right daft about it you know. Yeah it was a big fish. It was as big as me. Bigger.

Wow. So then it would just be reeled in, reeled in on the line...

Yes reeled in. It was like sport fishing was that.

And then what? Obviously it would be thrashing around...so was it a quick.

How would they kill it?

Knock it on the head like they do the salmon. They have a priest, what they call a priest, which is like a 'like that' but bigger a big thing that they bang them on the head with.

I love the name - priest.

Tis a funny name in't it. Have you ever talked to Margaret and Trevor [Owen] they know more about it? Way more than me about the salmon fishing. Haaving. They're haaf netters.

Oh are they. Well maybe I should talk to them at some point.

Yes. Margaret she's the only...

Are they up for chatting? Are they friendly?

Oh yes. Yes. They're experts. I'm just an amateur...with memories you know...

But it is all important though. All the memories for this project. It's all about oral history and what people got up to around fishing.

Yeah what I got up to is nobody's business!

Tell me some more stories...

I used to row about it dinghies erm that were tied, fastened up to the jetty to the wooden jetties. We had one. Well me grandad had one, me dad had one. And we had the big boat anchored off. Moored off. You know. So I was forever taking the boat, the dinghy, around. I said to a school mate after school one night, "c'mon we'll go for a row". So we got in and tide was going out and she wanted to go under the pier and I was always going under the pier but there were places that you went and places that you didn't go really. Anyway, for some daft reason, the end of the pier

was all lots of criss cross -lots of things like that -and the tide was ebbing and we stuck the dinghy like a bird's nest up in the pier and we had to climb down and we left the dinghy up there. My dad went mad. Cos we'd climbed down the pier and left it stuck like a bird's nest you know. And my Dad went mad at that.

So then what happened? Did you have to go back and get it next tide?

Next tide, yeah. Next tide he went and got it. Played hell at me he did.

So what other boats did he have? You say he had this erm this...er...no that was your grandad 'Midge'[?]'...your Dad had 'Swallow'...

Dad had 'Swallow' and then that got smashed up in a gale in 1952.

So no one was in it?

No it was on its moorings and it broke its moorings. I've got photographs of that too. It smashed up on the sea wall as boats sometimes did. Not often. It was a tragedy when they did. Erm. So he was looking for another one and he found one, called the 'Nora' which erm now has been restored and it's quite a famous boat. It's in a museum somewhere. The Nora.

What was Nora or 'The Nora'?

Nora was Crossfield's. Nora was er... [looks for the Lancashire Nobby book]...this bloke, this Nick Miller, got Nora in the end and there's quite a bit about Nora in here. She's in here somewhere. And quite a lot about Morecambe and about fishing in the old days. So he got Nora. My dad eventually sold it to a lad called Richard Palmer. And Richard Palmer passed it on to Nick Miller who restored it and wrote this book. And he's an expert

So Nora is a 'Lancashire Nobby'

It is. But we never called 'em that. We always used to call 'em trawlers or prawners or sprawners they used to call the big 'uns

Sprawners were big ones. What made a big trawler?

They weren't that big. Nora was 30foot and I think they went up to about 35. So they weren't that big. Just looking to see if there is a picture of Nora in here. But it's of no consequence really cos...These boats were also at Liverpool and Conwy

So what was so special about these boats for this area?

They built by Crossfield's and they were very special to this area on account of the fact that they were quite shallow draught so if they came aground it didn't damage them. They had this low counter which was very good for shooting the nets off the end of, not having to winch cos they don't have winches etc.

And to pull back in again...

And pull 'em back in especially. They could sail like witches. Quite a lot of them ended life as a yacht conversion eventually. In fact we had Nora had a cabin on. They didn't normally have a sleeping cabin on. Me Dad got what was then [?] an old fisherman to build, he was a good boat builder, and he built a cabin on it and it was very rudimentary. It had two sleeping berths and I used to sleep up the front but they were shallow draught, they could sail, they were built to trawl sailing. I mean later on even in my day they were all engines but they would still trawl under sail if the wind was right. My Dad would if the wind was perfect erm I.e. off wind, across us, like that, so it would drive us forward, he would knock the engine off. The minute it wasn't right, and a lot of the fishermen were like this, the minute, .they like to save a bit of money so they would knock the engine off if they could, but latterly they didn't bother even putting the sail up they just...they took the sails off. But Nora, when me Dad got her, erm he got her off Johnny Mount, the Mount family were a big fishing family, and yeah and then we her for, oh god, until me Dad got too old to use her really. She got a bit big for him.

So you only remember the two boats 'Swallow' and then...

Yeah we only just had the two but we had them for a lot of years.

Yeah. I love your phrase she could sail like a witch.

Yeah that's just a saying in't it...

I've never heard it before.

Funny I just come out with that didn't I?

You did. So I mean there's no more story to that phrase then? Do you remember where you got that? Where it came from?

No it's just a description. Just a description. I don't know I don't know. It's just what they said about a boat it if could sail. Oh 'she sails like a witch.' It's a good phrase isn't it? I've never thought of it.

Well it is a good phrase cos it's slightly odd cos you don't think of witches as sailing you think of them as more broomsticks! So I quite like it.

No idea where that came from. But erm..

So Nora was ...you fished very much the same fish in Nora as you did in the Swallow?

Yeah. Nora was a more better, better boat...[?] at the back

Because she was bigger

Yeah well I don't know I was much help. I used to steer. I used to sort fish. I think they thought I was a bit of girl and I wasn't very strong at pulling. But I tried you know but it was grab the tiller, mainly, while they pulled the, you know, if they want someone to hold the tiller....I used to steer. I used to steer everywhere. He would just go to sleep and let me steer when we going to the Isle of Man and Piel and places. So yeah I used to sail but it was all under the engine whereas me husband was a ...he like to sail you know. But erm yeah I've got loads of old fishing memories. I remember me grandmother, who had a boarding house, used to tell me tale after tale after tale, you know, cos when you're little it goes in one ear and out the other. But she used to tell me all about old fishermen and what they used to say and ...how they talked...

Can you remember anything?

I can remember she said you couldn't tell what they said. They had an accent that was different. She used to [?] said she could hear the two of them and one said "deal watter dahn below" [?] and other one said "ay ay 'em watter nah" [?] and she says they talked...like Cumbria. Westmorland cum Lancashire you know. They just sort of had a way of talking that was between each other that you could hardly tell what was said.

And if they spoke to her they'd speak differently would they?

I don't know. I don't know. Probably not. They wouldn't do it on purpose...

You wouldn't have thought so...

But she knew a lot of the fishermen. She, Grandma had ...she was a dressmaker, and she had a dressmaker's ... do you know the tale of the Tower that was there before... top of Lord Street where the bingo is?

Yeah

Er it used to be the Tower Ballroom and the Tower cinema later on and it was then it became the Gaumont. When it was the Tower it was all like minarets and things. First World War they were going to build a tower like at Blackpool but they never did because it needed the metal. The First World War. It all got scrapped. But she had a little dressmakers place in there and one of the girls who worked for her was married to 'Bloney' who was a well-known Fisherman Baxter.

'Blarney' 'Blorney?'

Bloney. You know all the fishermen had nicknames?

No

Yeah they all had really wicked...really...

So what was his name?

Bloney. His name was...

I can't hear. 'V'lorney or Blorney

Bloney. I don't know how you spell it

And you don't know why?

No! No idea. Some of them you did know. I've got a whole book about fishermen's nicknames somewhere. Erm and he...the girl that worked for her was married to Bloney and she used to tell tales about Bloney that you wouldn't want to know.

I do now! [laughs] Go on tell us

He's got family still alive.

Oh ok

He wasn't a nice bloke.

Oh not nice tales.

No. Not nice. But Grandma knew all about fishing. They were well integrated with all the fishing family and me Dad wanted to be a fisherman. Oh God. Yeah.

Oh before he got the pharmacy?

Oh yeah. as a boy he went to what was Morecambe Grammar School then - you know the old red building that's now flats in the middle of the technical college, that was Morecambe Grammar School originally and he went there and they only lived around the corner and he wanted to be a fisherman. And she said you are not going to be a dirty fisherman. Are you heck. You are going to get a proper job, you know. But it was his desire to be a fisherman but he ..that was it. You're not being a fisherman. So he wasn't. He was a chemist instead. And...

Who went out fishing at every possible....

Every minute of the time when he wasn't working. No wonder his wife beggared off to America with a GI!

Well that seems a bit harsh... [laughs]

No I don't think that was anything to do with it at all. But there you go. But what else did she used to... she can remember the pier burning down and the house was full of

visitors and they thought that a war had started. Oh I know what they thought. They thought the munitions factory'd gone up. It wasn't it was the pier burning down.

Oh right

Erm. And she can er she had tons of memories of Morecambe. She remembers, there was a big drowning of trippers in a trip boat, you know they used to take trip boats out, from the jetties in summer

Yes

And latterly I used to go on one of those as well one of those as a teenager. But years before then, it would be, this would be in the 20s probably or 30s. It'll be documented somewhere, a whole boatload of people got drowned in a pleasure boats and ship boat and grandpa said they used to sing [sings] "next time that we go fishing, we will we will, we'll have a steady man to steer and keep away from the West End Pier, we will, we will. Next time that we go fishing..." So it made they got drowned. It wasn't really funny

No. but it got turned into this...

It was a like a legend. You know

So do you remember, and I can't remember the name of the boat, the one that was built at Glasson that became Moby Dick. Do you remember that when it was a restaurant at Morecambe then?

It was never a restaurant

Oh was it not?

No they had one at Glasson Dock - the Babaji- that same bloke owned. That was a restaurant.

Oh okay. I'm getting muddled up.

But it never was a restaurant -you used to pay to go round it

Oh you just used to go and have a look at it

Yeah. Yeah I've got loads of pictures of that somewhere. Now me husband he helped to sail that up from the south coast

Oh really?

When they brought it up, it was Hispaniola wasn't it.

Yeah

Yeah in the film it was Hispaniola.

Well that was Treasure Island and Moby Dick.

It was the Pequod in Moby Dick

Pequod was Moby Dick. It was. That's right.

And then they called it Moby Dick - was it Pequod in Moby Dick?

Yes Pequod was the name of the boat.

But it was called something when it was built

Yeah it had a different name. It was the name of the man...

Ryelands was it?

The Ryelands! Well remembered.

Yeah I think it that's what it was

It was yeah, that's right.

And then it burnt down of course, which I can remember quite well. Yeah I watched it. And the same day the Alhambra burnt down opposite.

So what was that about?

Erm, it was a hot wind. It was a really weird sort of summer day, very very stormy but hot so no, but there were a lot of rumours at the time cos they were both owned by t'same guy. But there was never any proof of anything and it was a case of be

careful what you say, you liable to, you know, say too much about it. But everyone said 'ha ha, yeah right ok' you know, cos they were literally opposite each other.

But that could also be a reason they both went up if it was you know a wind, spark and....

Yeah. mmm. And I knew the owner actually. He wasn't a friend of mine but Bill knew him my husband knew him because he'd sailed up with him, he'd brought the boat up and he was a very shrewd good businessman. He owned the old Arcadian cafe and half of that block on there as well. And the Babaji at Glasson Dock. So he was a very shrewd businessman. But I never knew anything dodgy about him. But when that happened and the Alhambra and the thing on the same day, a few tongues were wagging.

People like to gossip though.

Oh they do.

So erm fishermen's nicknames. Can you remember any others?

Yes. [pause] Shiny, Knocker, erm Happy Bob, Lile Bob

Are these people that you went out fishing with?

No not necessarily. Just people I knew. But I went, let me just concentrate, I went on...they used to run the pleasure boats from the top and there was three that I used to go on: Silver Spray, the Harbinger and the erm the Brutus. And one of them is still here it's a dead boat now nearly and the men who ran them there was Bob Hodgson and he was Lile Bob. I'm not as - this is what I'm not good at - names. Erm, Baxter. I've got a pamphlet with them all written in. And I kept thinking oh yeah I know 'im, I knew 'im. But why can't I think of names now!

Oh well not to worry.

Shiny, Loud Bob. They were nearly all called Bob! I suppose that's why they had nicknames

Loud Bob! What did you say the other one was called?

Cos he shouted a bit.

Happy Bob. That was the other one. Was he Happy or was he a miserable man?

I think he was miserable now come to think of it. It was like, yeah..oh yeah there was Number One - he was Dick Woodhouse - have you spoken to Barbara?

No you're the first person I've spoken to.

Oh! Right. I thought you'd spoken to Barbara Woodhouse. She knows more about Morecambe fishing. Her Dad was , he called himself, well he didn't call himself, they all called him Number One because his boat was registered as Number one and he was he'd plenty to say, if anyone came interviewing about fishing or anything like that, it was always Barbara's Dad that, Dick Woodhouse, that got er got the job of... Cos a lot of them couldn't hardly string two words together really.

Well if you spending a lot of time at sea.

It's not what they did. It's like expecting Premier League footballers, you know, to sort of write poems and things - it's just not what they did. They were good at what they did. You know.

Yeah. So tell me what else. You've told me about the sort of the mackerel poles and the nets, any other bits of kit on the boat that you remember that you either...

Fishing kit? Fishing gear

Yes?

They did long lining as well but very rarely.

What's ...

Long-lining, they still do that. You would set it between two buoys like that, basically a string about maybe 100yards long with baited hooks hanging down in the water. What the devil did they catch like that? I can't remember. Fluke! If they were in the right place across some estuary or something like that. Didn't do that so much. Then there was 'snig pikes' which were only occasionally did they...they had a bawley net

which was a round net like that and they would, it was a trap, it was an eel trap basically.

That was the 'Snig pike'?

A snig pike.

Oh 'pike'. Snig pike

Snigs are little, baby eels. Elvers. Snigs are eels basically. And I don't know where dad set these snig pikes. But I know as a teenager, you when you sneak in at two o'clock in the morning when you should be in bed and you'd been to the dance, I let myself in through the kitchen door, we didn't have a fridge we had a larder. And didn't put the light on. Took me shoes off. And suddenly I'm screaming I'm treading on all these things that escaped from the bucket in the larder.

And they were the snigs! Oh!

All over the kitchen floor. And I woke the whole household. Did I get my blessing really. [laughs] yes so that was snigs.

And they were caught in...

A bawley net.

Balley?

Yeah. B-A-W-L-E-Y.

Oh ok.

Or 'bowley' they used to pronounce it. It was just I was like a net erm on hoops about so long with a trap and lay it on the floor and I don't know what they baited it with. Probably dead fluke or something like that. I don't know what they baited it with.

And then they'd just haul up the whole net?

Just hauled it. It wasn't big.

So many hours it'd be there?

Yeah. They'd just set them, I'm sure they still do, but nobody will do it now for a living. Nobody would bother now I don't think. We used to boil them. Grandma used to chop their heads off and boil them in milk. I never fancied them.

Snigs.

Yeah. Never fancied 'em at all. But rest of 'em would set to and eat 'em with [?], they'd eat anything wouldn't they. But yeah. What else fish? Occasionally we used to go, when were on Piel, we'd go with people who had lobster pots. And they'd set those on the rocks.

On the rocks? A high rock or rock on the sea bed

A rock on the sea bed. On the rocky bottom. Seldom Seen was a good place for them.

What's the...is that where lobsters live on the rock? In the rock?

Yes and crabs you know if you wanted eating crabs as opposed to little tiny soft shell things.

How long would you leave the net out? Was it for a tide or..?

The lobster pots would be put over for a tide. But oh and the other thing we used to catch at Piel was mullet. And bass. Now have you been to Piel Island?

Yes

Well round the back of it it dries out, or nearly dries out, but there's a pool.

Yes

It doesn't completely dry out. They always used to call that bass pool. Because that's where you caught bass.

What they'd come in on the high water and then get stuck

Yes. Trapped. Yeah. So you could also get fluke there. You could paddle for fluke there. But you could also get bass, certainly if you'd had hot weather and some, a

spell of hot weather seemed to do it because me Dad would say go on we'll go and look for bass and you'd walk down to this pool and bass or mullet and you could, you could catch them in the little hand net. You could just get 'em you know. Not a kids net like that

That's what I was picturing, one of the yellow [laughs]

No no. you could just get what they call a shank. Like a little wooden stick with you know, you'll have seen them in all the photos. They're about that wide. They'd be a bit wider.

That's the size of the net? That's quite big then. About the length of your arm.

Yeah. About like that. But it's on a stick. Like a kids net but more of a man for the job you know. But the same shape.

And what did they call it? A shank?

A shank really was what you caught shrimps in but that was the same idea. You dragged it along. It was like that. It was just a landing net I suppose. I don't know what you called it. Erms. Words, when you were pulling the catch in, if it was too heavy to pull by hand you would do what my dad always called 'taigling it' [?] which meant you'd a block and tackle on your mast and you would put the hook into the erm rope of the net, top of the net end, erm fix it in where the swivel. And then haul it up like that onto the deck. So if it was very heavy.... It's just the words that fascinate me. 'Taigle' I never saw it written down

Taigle. Brilliant

I think it is T-A-I-G-L-E taigle.

Oh taigle. Oh Ah.

I've never seen it written down.

No well you wouldn't would you.

But whether the fishermen would recognise that word now because I'll have to ask...Trevor. He's the only bona-fide fisherman that I actually know now, if he knows what taigleing means. But they all used to talk about it then. Taigeling it. Nice word

It's a great word. I like riddle as well.

Yeah riddle. Oh I don't know. Telegoram is 'boiler'.

Yeah that's an interesting name.

Goodness knows where that comes from.

Unless that's the make of it maybe?

I don't know, it was just like a copper thing that's you'd have in your house really. In fact, Trevor and Margaret and still got one but they don't have it on the boat they have it in the back yard. And they bring the shrimps home to boil. They're the ones for knowing about fishing, shrimping now and what's changed and what hadn't changed you know.

So when is the last time you went fishing?

Properly. Oh not after I was married really. It was all in me girlhood really. 40s, 50s by the early 60s I'd better fish to fry by then. You know. I loved it up to being about 15. You know I started doing other stuff. But I still...maybe I was a bit older - 16, 17 - but I really I was crazy from about 5 to about 13/14 yeah. I've got photographs of me mackerels, salmons on the deck, pulling the mackerel in from the age of about 15/16. Yeah up to then.

So you've said it was about spending time with your dad. Can you remember any other reasons or what you liked about it? Maybe especially as you were a bit older what was it that you enjoyed about it.

Just the general thing. I'm quite outdoorsy. But whether I learnt that because I enjoyed having time, I enjoyed having fun out of...I always felt free and sort of almost in charge of everything. I don't know. I wasn't. But it just felt... I don't know maybe I was a bit of a loner, erm, I don't know why I loved it so much. It was interesting. Basically. It was just absolutely fascinating to me you know. Maybe it's genetic.

What was fascinating? Watching your Dad know where to go and..?

Yeah and just doing it. Being on the boat. I loved the boat. I loved the sea. Still do. Don't get much know really.

Don't get much what?

Sailing. Fishing. Boating. Not as much as I'd like. But you know, I've done quite a lot I suppose over my life. Can't say I haven't. But it was exciting, it was, you wouldn't think about anything else whilst you were doing that. It's just what you did. And I liked, oh crumbs, me Dad er I remember me Dad, he used to like a pint. He wasn't a big boozier but he liked to go and find mates in the pub and have a pint wherever we went, me Dad would leave me on the boat, except at Piel, and he dropped me on the Island and I would run wild on the Island with all the other kids. But then sometimes we'd go up to Barrow up the channel, anchor at Ferry Beach and he would still leave me other the boat in the middle of Barrow Channel. Well I had to amuse myself so I used to daft things like rolling around in the dinghy and stuff like that, which was fine. But one night I as rolling around and it was dark and I could see cos there was lots of lights around. It wasn't pitching dark. It was Barrow Channel and there were roads on either side of the channel and lights you know, and boats, but a bloomin' submarine came up and it was not under the water it was above and it was only going slowly but I thought, blimey, it might not see me and I was scared. And I thought once it gets here, once it's passed me, there'll be a big wash and I didn't want this bloomin'..So I remember rowing like mad to get back on board the Nora and I did I got back on board just as this submarine came past. But I was wary of it. I wasn't that brave so I was glad to get back on board.

Well, or not fool-hardy as well because it wouldn't have been a big wash

No I mean he left me, it was fine. He would come back. After the pubs shut you know.

Yeah. So the dingy did you always have that one the boat?

No it was tied up behind

And it went along right behind you?

Yeah. And he generally left it. I used to row him ashore

So even when you were motoring it was just tied up behind you?

Yes unless we were fishing. It couldn't be then. Or we didn't used to take it we would leave it on the moorings usually. But when we'd gone up to Barrow we knew we were gonna need it so instead of leaving it on the... we used to tow it across to Piel if we were fishing at Barrow, we would tow it across to Piel and pick a mooring up at Piel and keep a dinghy on it if we went off fishing. When we were at Morecambe we'd get the dinghy off the morning, we'd catch it as tide came in, take it to the jetty and then we would go from the jetty onto the big boat, leave the dinghy on the mooring and not take it with us if we were fishing. But if we were going over to Piel we'd take it.

Right. Right.

I used to enjoy...I learnt....'cos I was an only child I really did learn to enjoy me own company in a way even though I loved being sociable and when we got to Piel Island I loved it all the sociability there. But I think it probably taught me to be ok on me own as well which is a damn good job 'cos I've been on me own since Phil died. I've been on me own since I was 54 now. So twenty years I've been on me todd.

Gosh

Yeah. But I was alright as a child on me own... Big imagination for doing stuff and drawing and writing and messing about you know. You know as a young, yeah. I then went and married into boat building as well didn't I.

Well there's a reason for that isn't there

We had all of that. Yeah.

You said that it was a boat builder that had built the cabin for Nora.

He was a fisherman called Walt Bell

Walt Bell? So he was a Morecambe fisherman?

Oh he was lovely. Yeah. He was old then when I was a teenager he was old, a retired fisherman. But he was a boat builder too - he'd built, I remember him building several wooden boats

What sorts of boats was he building?

He built fishermen's, like that, that type. Whammel boats and mussel boats and that kind of thing. Not trawlers, I don't ever remember him building a trawler. But he was a, me Dad, he could do a bit but he wasn't a craftsman really. He was ok. He could turn his hand to quite a lot of stuff but he wasn't a craftsman. And Walter was a habitu   at our house. He was always there when I was a kid. and he'd be either building a boat in the back in our back garden or down at Bare or mending one of me Dad's boats or putting cabins on doing things like that. So yeah, he was...

And that's what he did once he'd retired from being a fisherman?

I think he'd always done it. A lot of them, I'm thinking the olden days, were quite good at maintaining their own boats. Latterly now, we just seem to let the go, you know, but yeah Walt Bell was an amazing old bloke. He was lovely.

What was amazing about him?

A kindly old thing you know. They used to call it....he never measured anything. They called it building by rack of iron, gawp of Gob. Isn't it lovely?

Excellent. Rack of iron, gawp of gob.

In other words he'd look at something

Yeah yeah [?]

And that was, that's how, that was Walter was building his boat.

Yes that was Walter. Man of experience. He was in eighties

Still building them.

Yeah. And not Crossfield's boats. They were made with half models. Er they would ...and owner would want a boat and they'd want it this and they'd want it that and they'd want it this shape but [?] and so they would make him a half model

Crossfield's would.

Yes. And present it. Say "is this what you want" you know, yey or ney, but cut a bit off here you know.

So when you say half model like long ways

Yeah I'll show you one but this isn't an old one. My husband used to make them as well. So these are not old...[indistinct goes to look], I've got some proper old ones. But this is [?] . This is one of his, it's a whammel boat. Isn't it lovely?

Aaarh.

So that's a half boat. And I was gonna stick on the wall eventually but I've never got round to it, you know. I think it would look nice

I think it would look nice. But that's his whammel boat.

So then they would see it to spec and to scale and then they would say, like this but not that

Then it would be built for them. These, yeah, that's about it.

Rack of iron, gawp of gob.

Cute isn't it.

It is brilliant. That's loads.

I know, I get garrulous. It just brings happy memories.

That's good. It's really interesting. So I think there's something I'm meant to tell you know that I can't remember. I've got to, it goes into the archives and somebody will type it up.

What like a transcript?

A transcript. Oh look here. I've got a form. Interviewee occupation.

Well I'm retired primary school teacher.

And father's occupation was a pharmacist.

Yeah.

I'm gonna put fisherman.

Pharmacist, fisherman.

Now there's a consent form.

So what happens to this?

It's going to Morecambe Bay...sorry did Jenn not tell you. Cos Jenn was the one who said you needed to talk to Jackie.

I thought it was Barbara Woodhouse.

Oh

I don't know why. Anyway, I've no idea how I came to get involved.

Oh well let me.. I haven't got a consent form.

I just feel that it's such a shame for people's memories to die with them when they are lazy like me and never bother to writing stuff down. It's good that

[End of Tape]