

SET TWO



THE
FISHING HUT

THE FISHING HUT

Set two : 1

Between 2015 and 2017 Morecambe Bay Partnership (MBP) www.morecambabay.org.uk recruited a volunteer team to gather an audio archive about the history of fishing around the Bay. Guided by Jenn Mattinson, over 50 hours of interviews is now stored and filed, available as a unique resource for the community and researchers. In 2017 as part of their Headlands to Headspace Landscape Partnership Scheme MBP invited artists to respond to the archive and create artworks. We, Hannah Fox and John Fox were two of those commissioned. Given the responsibility of distilling and disseminating aspects of this rich source we have chosen this approach:

During Summer 2018 The Fishing Hut, a handcrafted travelling shed, will appear at locations round the Bay. Visitors are invited inside to enjoy a kaleidoscope of Hannah's short animated films and John's small illustrated stories set on 20 large cards. We have each chosen archival aspects with relevance for today. Hannah has taken The Child's Eye View, exploring growing up as a child where work and play intertwine. John has looked at knowledge and attitudes to be recalled and celebrated today. In seeking '*the essential truth*' different tales have on occasion been amalgamated and simplified to re-emerge as useful fables. Individual credits are given where appropriate. Huge thanks to everyone who generously offered their experiences for us to trawl.

Hannah Fox
www.hannahonthehill.co.uk

John Fox
www.deadgoodguides.co.uk



QUEEN OF THE SEA

Set two: 2

Jack is a dab hand, as they say, at treading fluke - small flat fish which hide in the seabed. They can be paddled to the surface with bare foot skill. Deep fried fluke taste good. There are many species and sizes of flat fish, such as dabs, plaice, brill, sole, turbot and halibut. Some breed in or around Morecambe Bay. When first hatched they have roundish bodies with an eye on each side. A few days later as they begin to lie over on one side, the underneath eye moves up and over, to be alongside the other eye. Two eyes on the same side of the head!

Who is Queen of the Sea tonight?

I am, says Mullet, but I'm never right.

I am, says Sea Bass, but I won't fight.

Try me, says Eel, I'm a delight.

Fluke whispers from under a stone:

Give me, give me the throne.

You wish you wish? says Mackerel Fish,
whipper-snapper, a Fluke to boot.

Knocks Fluke loopity loop.

Flying high, both eyes spread,
to land the same side of her head.

Mackerel rails. Scales flash bright.

See my sheen. I'm the Queen.

Queen of the Sea tonight.



CATCH, RIDDLE, BOIL, PEEL, EAT. Set two: 3

The brown shrimp of the Bay is a delicacy with a mild sweet taste. Using expert knowledge of mud, shallow water and rapidly changing channels, it has been caught since Tudor times, although now shrimping is a declining industry.

Shrimp are crustaceans up to 6 cm long, bottom feeding with long antennae, slender legs, and a laterally compressed, muscular abdomen highly adapted for both forward swimming and a backward escape response. In the Bay, often in September and October, thousands could be caught, trawled in customised nets. On the Morecambe side they are caught from boats then boiled live in seawater in barrels on board.

At Flookburgh they work from tractors and trailers (previously horses and carts) then boil them at home in fresh water. Shrimp take a lot of peeling, frequently done by women round a big table. This companionable process, with its conversation and occasional song, provides repeated '*mind-free*' action for practised hands. Potted shrimps are boiled shrimp embedded in melted butter with a touch of nutmeg, cayenne and mace. Try in a stir-fry of sliced artichokes (or courgettes) with tagliatelle. Or just with brown bread and butter. Delicious!



A GIRL'S STORY

Set two: 4

Credit: Jackie Bailiff

Mother cleared off with a GI so my father brought me up. He was a fisherman. From five until I was forty I was crazy for fishing. I am an only child, bit of a loner. I love the outdoors, anything to do with sailing and fishing. On a boat I always felt I was in charge. Didn't think about anything else. Fun. Exciting. Just did it.

Dad and I went on trips to Piel Island. Stayed overnight on the boat. The pub on Piel was magic. No electric. Just oil lamps. We had our own oil lamp too. One night we put up two big rods tied to a bucket and if we caught anything the bucket rattled. We caught a 40 lb Tope. A shark! As big as me. Dad said I caught it on my own and put my picture in the News of the World - '*Fish of the Week*'. I once got stung with a Weaver fish. At first the pain was terrible. Once we ran out of fresh water and had to cook our mackerel in a bucket of cider. A chunk of bread and cheese to follow. Nothing fancy. Dad made me a tomboy. Once he tied my pigtails with rope. Often left me out in the dingy while he went to the pub for a quick pint. Don't know what Social Services would say? One night a submarine came up the channel. I was so scared they would crash into me I rowed and rowed to get away. Must have been about 13 at the time. I really miss fishing and all of it now.

THE FISHING HUT
Hannah Fox
John Fox

Morecambe Bay Partnership
www.hannahonthehill.co.uk
www.deadgoodguides.co.uk



Isle of Walney

Hilpston Point

MORECAMBE BAY

Lancaster

Glasson

Lune Deerp

BLACKPOOL

Blackpool

Two o'clock

Stanbury Point



WATCH, COMPASS & LEAD-LINE. Set two: 5

Credit: Charlie Overett

November. We were fishing off Blackpool near the the North Pier when the fog set in. Uncle Charlie went rigidly calm. *What's up?* I asked. *It's two hours back to Morecambe.* Sounds are odd in mist. I could just hear the jangle of a fairground organ and maybe even a tram on the prom. I wanted to be on that tram. I wanted to be ashore.

We'll be OK. Have to be careful though.

Harry checked his watch. Then the compass. Then the watch again. *Get a pole and a lead-line ready.*

We veered North. The diesel chugged away. The sea wraith thickened into a white blanket. Cold as spanners on ice. Nothing before your face. An hour passed. Nothing. *Will the engine get us there?*

Reckon we're halfway. No sound above the pistons. Not even a gull. Uncle Charlie repeatedly checked both watch and compass. He steered slightly East. *I can smell land* he said. *Drop the lead. No it's taking too long. Waste of time.* We swung further round. *Should be up to the edge of the Lune Deep. We need to go closer to the bank.* Try the pole now. It came up clagged with grey mud, a tiny crab and jelly fish but gave us sufficient draft. Just above Heysham we made out a light and even the jagged shadow of the old pylon.

Spot on. Home. In exactly 122 minutes. *Never been lost yet,* said Charlie, grinning modestly. *No GPS then!*

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John Fox

Morecambe Bay Partnership
www.hannahonthehill.co.uk
www.deadgoodguides.co.uk



MY OWN BOAT

Set two: 6

Credit: Trevor Owen

Traditional boats were wood. Clinker built Nobbies dating back to the 1800s were shrimping boats 28-33 ft long, with a rough construction using tar, pitch and red lead, made at Overton and Arnside. Fleetwood prawners were the same shape but 35-37 ft long. With a foresail, mainsail, top sail and jib set, boats were designed for hazardous seas. Sadly the only Nobby left at Sunderland Point was sold recently by Old Mike. At 74 he'd had enough.

It's quite something to build your own boat ... Over a week I made the mould cutting shapes from 8 x 4 sheets of plywood. Behind our house I hammered fencing posts into a field, then nailed on the shapes designing the boat, upside down, judging height as I went. After that I covered it all with hardboard and a friend plastered it with a smooth skin in only 2 hours. Next we covered it with a tarpaulin and, when dry, coated it all over first with wax - which fibre glass won't stick to - followed by a releasing agent. Then we set to. Five of us. Four cutting lengths of glass fibre matting from rolls 3 ft wide. Another lad mixing resin all the time. Keeping us going. Started at 10 in the morning and finished the hull by tea-time at 5. A good job, a good team and a new boat. A 30ft hull in a day!

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SHOOTING FOR THE POT

Set two: 7

Life was hard and there was no real benefit system. We were poor but never starved. If the fish weren't biting you shot a rabbit. Mallards went into the pot. So did curlews - hung up, blood dripping onto the lino. We also kept a pig, fed it all the leftovers. Now it's illegal to use scraps. Some of the fishermen, who also worked as slaughterers, knew how to stick a pig. We ate it all. Nose to tail. Blood for black pudding, head and trotters for brawn (which grandma made). Now everything is packaged, often in plastic. Kids think meat comes from a fridge. How values shift. Once you could get a reward for a kingfisher's head and netted oystercatchers.

What would you give for the call of a curlew?

They are leaving us.

Elegant and strong straw legs long.

Bent beaked, oatmeal flecked

melancholic tuning forks of another way of being.

They are leaving us because

we gave them cash crop furrows

a predation of foxes and EU crows.

Not often a taxidermist weeps.

But, as she held the curvature of the earth,

beak bent from ancient evolution,

feathers falling,

her fingers fumbled with glass eyes

black and bright as acid.

What would you give for the last call of the last curlew?

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Hannah Fox

John Fox

Morecambe Bay Partnership

www.hannahonthehill.co.uk

www.deadgoodguides.co.uk



QUICKSAND

Set two: 8

Morecambe Bay is beautiful and dangerous. With knowledge and care however it offers a unique experience. *Avoid potential hazards:*

- 1. Weather.** The Bay has its own climate. Fresh rainfall raises levels in its four rivers, affecting channels, surface water and the firmness of sand. Out in the Bay take a compass and GPS as fog can rapidly occur and you lose orientation.
- 2. Unstable edges.** Looking firm they can arise along sand gullies yet be undercut by fast shifting currents.
- 3. Rapid incoming tides.** Always check tides with a tide timetable. High tides with a back wind can move *faster than a horse can gallop* and veer into surprise hollows behind you.
- 4. Quicksand.** A wobbly surface of puddling sand which can suck you in and trap you like cement. **ADVICE:** research locations. Take a companion and mobile phone (999). If caught, spread-eagle your body. Don't panic.

In 1996 at Cotestones a man was trapped over night. By morning the sea was round his chest. A farmer heard his cries. He was saved at the last gasp by 32 rescuers from Coastguards, Fire Service and Police. This triggered the Bay Hovercraft Service who now use high pressure water hoses to break up suction.

Sensible precautions bring fantastic rewards.

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John Fox

Morecambe Bay Partnership
www.hannahonthehill.co.uk
www.deadgoodguides.co.uk

BAY
SWEET
BAY



Welcome



THE WAY IT GOES

Set two: 9

THEN

Family in community
Poverty
Seasonal rhythm
Killing for food
Knowledge of nature
Elemental physical work
Children playing outside
TB
Manual housework
Hands on skills
Work and play entwined
Malnutrition
Cold houses
Self sufficiency
Austerity
Tradition

Life expectancy:

65

NOW

Social Media
Benefits system
Foreign holidays
Ready meals
TV Documentaries
Leisure
Anxiety
Health Service
Domestic machines
Depression
Internet
Food Banks
Central heating
Bureaucracy
Obesity
Nail bars

Life expectancy:

80

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A DIFFERENT KETTLE OF FISH Set two: 10

Credit: Barbara Dawe, Jean Dennis plus Anonymous.

Little money but we didn't notice. We had good food and fires in the bedrooms. With shrimpers you learned the trade from your dad. All the family were involved. Men went out to catch them and we women and children peeled them. One year in Autumn the fish didn't run. We must have been poor for eleven months. There was no dole in those days but mother was a very good housekeeper. She made our clothes, even found school uniforms and my confirmation dress.

Morecambe was full of visitors. We did Bed and Breakfast. Fishermen took pleasure boats full of day trippers round the Bay and some sailed yachts on Windermere for wealthy folk. Grandad quarreled with Sir W. *That's the last day you'll have the pleasure of putting money in my hand.* Lady W. came round but he wouldn't budge. Stubborn as a mule. Family trait!

One day Grandad just stopped fishing. *That's me finished.* Couldn't keep Dad off the Bay though. Nor me. It might be two in the morning or dawn. *Eh lass, skip school today, he said. I need help on the boat.* I loved watching the sun rise, the porpoises and seals. Loved fishing AND boxing! Dad and me stayed up late at night listening to the radio for fights from America. He took me to London to see Joe Frazier training. I can't believe it now.