

MORECAMBE BAY LIVES

People | Voices | Memories



MORECAMBE BAY
PARTNERSHIP

Between 2015-2018 the Morecambe Bay Lives project sought to bring different generations together to celebrate the people and places of Morecambe Bay. In villages and towns all around the Bay, people met through reminiscence and oral history to share personal stories and unique insights. Experiences of coastal industries, tourism, wartime, childhood, regional traditions, hidden places and wonderful anecdotes of everyday Bay lives have been collected and preserved in an archive for the future. The memories shared are at times, dramatic, poignant, informative, hilarious and most of all, full of Morecambe Bay spirit.

An important aspect to the project was engaging young people in discovering and celebrating Morecambe Bay and their local heritage. Primary school children around the Bay learnt oral history techniques and invited 'older' people from the community to their school to share afternoon tea and swap stories and memories before celebrating what they'd discovered in art and song.

Over 120 people were recorded as part of the project creating a lasting resource for the community. The Archive is available at the Cumbria Archives (Barrow) and also online at recordingmorecambebay.org.uk – a website created by Morecambe Bay Partnership to share historical information about Morecambe Bay. Some of the fantastic work created by schools plus resources for teachers can be found at morecambebaylives.org.

The project was delivered by Morecambe Bay Partnership as part of its Headlands to Headspace Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership Scheme. Thank you to all those who buy lottery tickets.

It is a real privilege to be invited into people's lives and to record their memories and we would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and stories during the Morecambe Bay Lives project.

This booklet is a collection of 'memory snapshots' drawn from the oral histories recorded as part of the project. These extracts offer an insight into the story of this wonderful area but can only scratch the surface of the diverse lives and experiences of the people of Morecambe Bay.

Everyone we've recorded is connected through their proximity to Morecambe Bay itself; a place which I have come to respect and love in equal measure. With its rich mix of people, nature, industry and history, Morecambe Bay is a fascinating and beautiful place and as one of the interviewees remarked one which 'we are so privileged to live in.'

Emma Aylett
Project Facilitator

Front Cover image

Grange Pool from an old postcard (photographer unknown, E. Aylett collection)

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MEMORIES FROM A MORECAMBE BAY CHILDHOOD

John Murphy, born 1940s, remembers Walney Island

John was born and raised on Walney Island. Born with a 'sense of adventure' he joined the Merchant Navy at 16 but returned when he married a 'Barrow girl'. He became the Mayor of Barrow in 2011-2012. A self-professed 'Walney fanatic' he leads guided walks on Walney and across to Piel Island.

My playground as a ten-year-old was Walney Island so I had a twelve-mile garden to play in. My father used to say you can go anywhere on the island as long as you don't go over the bridge.

Walney to me at the time was a very magical place. I've very early memories of going up the beach with my father or a brother and doing things like crabbing. My father taught me the technique of getting some really decent sized crabs from under the rocks with our hands.

Then there were the delights of winking when we used to wander over the rocks just picking winkles.

Growing up was dominated by ship building. I lived only about two or three hundred yards from the top of Walney Channel. Launch day was a big day. The schools had enough freedom then to allow us to go to the top of Walney Channel and watch these magnificent launches: it was an incredible day.

If the wind was in the east, you could hear the ship yard band playing. The tune which I remember with great fondness was Nimrod. Watching for that first quarter of an inch movement and you knew then the tugs would start hooting and the crescendo would build up until this ship entered the channel. Then it would send out a wash, a wave, a small tsunami of water.



Right

The Destroyer 'Almirante Williams' on the slipway, Barrow, 1958

© The Dock Museum VPA.0739

David Hodgson, born 1950s, remembers Morecambe

David was born and bred in Morecambe where he still lives today. A local historian, he continues to research into the history of his home town.

When I was a kid, all around Morecambe Bay every community had a bonfire on the beach. By community I don't mean a town I mean little areas. I lived where the Arndale Centre is now. Those few streets all got together every bonfire night and we had a bonfire behind the

old information bureau. There would be others having bonfires all the way along. So, if you stood in the middle of Morecambe Bay you could actually see all the way around the Bay, bonfires.

As a child, for four months of the year the town wasn't my own. You couldn't walk down

the promenade without being jostled. You couldn't go in a shop without queuing. So, what we tended to do was jump on a train and go up to Heysham Harbour or go to Carnforth. Like many kids of my generation I was in to trainspotting, so I'd spend hours and hours sat by the rail line in various locations.

Maisie Murray, born 1930s, remembers Morecambe

Born and brought up in Morecambe, Maisie remembers being a child in the town during WW2. As she recalled: "They were dark days, but we were young and didn't really appreciate what was going on because our parents used to make it a fun time."

I lived on Scott Rd which is near Regents Park in the West End. A very happy childhood; hard times because it was during the war. Food wasn't easy to come by and I have early memories of Mum coping with rations.

I always felt that Morecambe was a wonderful place to be brought up in. We just played, we walked and we ran. We went over Westgate into the fields: no fear.

Lots of visitors came to Morecambe just after the war and as children we used to go and meet the trains coming in and offered to take their luggage. We had barrows with wheels

on and we would walk the visitors to some of the boarding houses. You would get sixpence or something and there were crowds of children doing this. I can remember walking the donkeys on the sand. You didn't get paid for that, but you used to walk them along with the reins and take little toddlers and that was good fun.

We got a pass for the baths and 'lived' in the swimming pool. Crowds of children would run up there. We used to run along the piers, sometimes you would find a ha'penny on the wooden deck it was like a treasure. No money but plenty of love and laughter.

John Murray, born 1930s, remembers Overton

John was born in Penrith. During WW2 his father became a security man at the Trimpell refinery at Heysham. The refinery played an important wartime role by producing aviation fuel for the Air Ministry. The family moved to the village of Overton to be nearer his father's work.

I remember Overton so well, every stone and every little lane. Overton had farms right on Main Street and we were all involved with the farms. I can remember leading horses and haytimg: the hay being thrown up right from the village street. Very much a rural self-contained village.

The children worked on the farms and I did until my teens. At 16 I was working at a farm between Overton and Middleton and was given big horses to lead: I had no experience really. We came in to Morecambe to deliver milk to the hotels. No wonder I grew to be six foot plus because at mid-morning break you were given a bottle of milk that had that much cream on the top.

Opposite The Ship was a smithy and I could go out there and George Jackson, I can see him now, putting the red-hot shoes on the horses' hooves and all the acrid smoke coming up: it was fantastic. I can remember when I worked at a farm called Downy Field, which is half way between Overton and Middleton, they gave me this great big horse, (I was a big lad but it was a big horse), to take to George Jackson in Overton which would have been a mile and half down the road. There was a raised platform where they put the milk kits, so I climbed up and got up on the horse and I rode to Overton. It was shod and I took it back. I was 15 perhaps. Incredible what you were entrusted to do.

This page

Overton from an old postcard

© Published by Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd, c. 1940 (Private collection)

Right

The Strand, Barrow, 1960s

© The Dock Museum, BAWMS.09392.302

Right inset

Barrow Street Trader Badge

© B. Myers



Denys Vaughan, born 1930s, remembers Barrow-in-Furness

Denys was brought up in Barrow. His first childhood home was 10 Strand which was a 'stone's throw' from Buccleuch Dock. He recalled that: "All little boys were terrified of falling in the dock". His family moved to nearby Argyle place which offered more space.

Argyle Place, in Barrow, really was a community. It was a very friendly neighbourhood from one end of the street to another – there were lots of kids and we all played with each other. There was an ice cream man who came from time to time ringing his bell and shouting 'ice cream'. Very rarely were we allowed to have ice cream because it was a penny or tuppence. The milk man came night and morning with his horse and cart and his big milk churn and doled it out into jugs. Then there was an interesting woman called 'Fish Maggie from Flookburgh'. She had a pony and a wooden cart and she had a basket of fish. Her call sign was 'flukes, fresh flukes' at the top of her voice and you would take

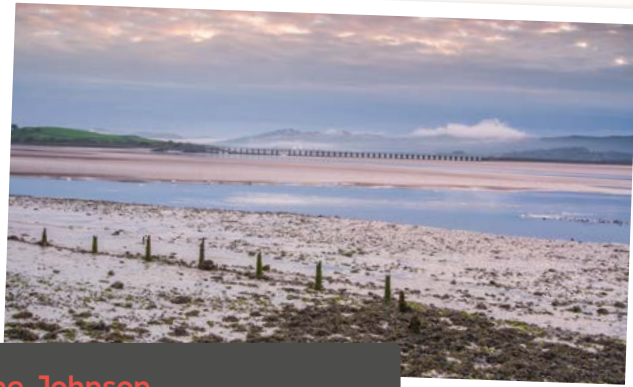
out your plate or basin and she would weigh out two or three flukes. One fluke was a meal for a kid.

Out came a stick with a cocoa tin on the end for the money. You would put the money in the tin and she would pass your change down in the tin.

There was another caller called potato buyer and he was around two or three times a week with a flat cart. His call sign was: 'come along now all you potato buyers'. We would come out to watch him interacting with the housewives. There was a knife grinder he was fascinating because you could see the sparks and he would sharpen everybody's knives. The knife grinder was fun.



Right
Canal Foot at dawn
© S R Miller



Jane Smith and Anne Johnson,
born 1950s, **remember** Canal Foot, Ulverston

Jane and Anne are sisters. They were brought up near Canal Foot in Ulverston. Canal Foot, which offers wonderful views across the estuary and into Morecambe Bay, is located at the end of the Ulverston Canal. Although the canal gates are now locked the canal once performed an important function in transporting cargo from the shore into Ulverston.

Jane: Dad got a job at the ironworks and later at Glaxo (in Ulverston) in 1948 and Glaxo made available some cottages and mum and dad were able to buy their first house on Ironworks Rd. We had a wondrous childhood.

Anne: Everybody just looked after each other.

Jane: We spent all our days out in summer. We would be out from morning until night; we might take our jam sandwiches with us. We wandered all around here. Nobody worried where you were. You were safe.

Anne: There were no restrictions.

Jane: There was a railway line that went to the Priory (it was Glaxo's line) we used to walk through there to Priory Shore and you could walk along from there to Bardsea.

Jane: As children we were always told, my mother went on and on and on, that we never went on the sands and I still cannot to this day go far on to the sands. The tide race is just incredible. People have always gone out to Chapel Island for a day out.

Anne: But you have to have the knowledge. A friend and myself, when we were about 13, thought that we could have a walk over to Chapel Island because the sand was all out. Suddenly without warning we were covered up to here with water and I don't know how we got to the other side.

Jane: I don't think if mum knew you would have been allowed again. I did lose a shoe once in the sinking sands.

FUN IN THE SUN

Louie Carrick, born 1930,
remembers Aqualovelies –
Morecambe Super Swimming Stadium

Mrs Carrick had always loved swimming and she was determined to become an Aqualovely and perform with the synchronised swimming act at Morecambe Super Swimming Stadium. She swam with them through the 1960s and continued performing as a synchronised swimmer until she was 42.

We had quite a few spots. We had lovely flowered hats on and different suits for each routine, so we had quick changes. We had to do synchronised swimming. Basically, we'd make patterns in the water, quite complicated so you had to be strong.

Each routine was different. One was a Spanish influence or Greek, so we had to learn a little bit of dancing on the stage then we would dive in and do the synchronised swimming. The water was freezing. Sometimes we didn't want to go in but we had to.

Sometimes we had packed audiences on a lovely day. Other times there would be a few people under the café out of the rain and we would think please don't come in it's absolutely pouring down. We still had to do a show even if there was 6 in.

We used to hear the music under the water. We used to have to listen to the music for when to come up. It wasn't very good because I often got the giggles and I would be under the water trying not to laugh before I came up.



Above
The Aqualovelies,
1960 Photo by courtesy
of Mrs Carrick.

Photographer unknown.

Evelyn Archer, born 1940,
remembers Morecambe
Winter Gardens

Evelyn was born in Morecambe at the beginning of WW2. Morecambe's Winter Gardens, which saw the cream of British entertainment perform on its stage, was always close to Evelyn's heart. In fact, she was one of the people responsible for saving the building from demolition and keeping it open after its closure in 1977.

I remember all the stars coming to the Winter Gardens for the summer season. I remember in 1958 my friend and I were playing records up in her bedroom and we looked out of the window and in the garden opposite was Morecambe and Wise: they had rented the house for the season.

There were Sunday concerts. We had all the top stars of the day come to Morecambe: Tommy Steele and Cliff Richard and the Shadows – people like that. Every Sunday night there used to be two shows one at quarter past six and one at half past eight. So, we always came to the last one because we thought that they don't have to rush off stage and we might get a little more out of them. We sat up in 'the gods' and then when they had finished, we ran all the way downstairs, through the back staircase, and waited outside the back door for their autographs. The last person that I saw, I couldn't forget it her nails were so bright red and long, was Shirley Bassey.

Charlie Overett,
born 1940s, **remembers**
Aqualoonies – Morecambe
Super Swimming Stadium

The Aqualoonies was a diving and comedy act that performed at Morecambe Super Swimming stadium along with the Aqualovelies a team of synchronised swimmers. As a boy, Charlie was invited to join the Aqualoonies and to 'act the fool' with them on the diving board.

The Aqualoonies ended up putting me in it. They said it's a good idea let's put Charlie in it. From going so often and talking to them they made friends with us we were only young lads and they were really nice guys. I was part of the act on a Saturday, Sunday and a Wednesday because we weren't at school on a Wednesday afternoon. They got me to sit down on the end of the diving board. They would come along with a plank and the plank would just nudge my head and I would just roll over into a dive.

I'd be eleven. My mum would be down there watching me because on Wednesday afternoon business people would be off. I think the first time I was a little bit nervous, with all these people. It was very, very simple. They would knock me off and I'd go up again and then I'd be finished and then right at the end when we all fell off, they would hold my hand up and chuck me back in again.

Eric Atkinson, born 1940s, **remembers** Ulverston

Eric moved to Ulverston when he was 12. During the summers of 1960 & 61, whilst he was a student training to become a PE teacher, he worked as a pool attendant at Grange Baths which is where he met his wife Jill. Like many people living around Morecambe Bay Eric enjoyed being out in nature.

I used to spend a lot of time in the summer walking on the beach from Ulverston almost to Barrow with my friend. We used to look at all of the redshanks and birds. We used to go fluke fishing under

Ulverston Viaduct – watch the tide coming in and have to rush up the ladder to escape it. On Sunday morning, particularly at certain times of the year, there would be whole coach loads of people.

People would come from Preston and the Fylde area and we would almost be touching each other on the foundation of that viaduct fishing for fluke. Many would go back to Preston with whole sackfuls of fluke. That was interesting especially when someone spotted the tide coming down on us and we all had to rush up, get out of the way and get up by the railway line before the tide swamped the place.

Jill Atkinson, born 1940s, **remembers** Grange Lido

When she was three Jill moved to her Grandparents' farm in Witherslack. Grange Lido (known locally as Grange Baths) was a popular place for people to spend their leisure time. It was an open-air unheated salt water pool. The Baths closed in 1993 but the structure is still present on Grange Prom.

We spent our teenage years at Grange Baths if you had a weekend you were in The Baths talking to friends. It was a centre for young people. It was always full and it always seemed that the sun was shining. There was an area of concrete steps between the paddling pool and the diving boards: this was the main area for seating. So, you took your cushion or towel and it was just one hive of activity. It was a lovely place to be because everyone was happy.

I was teaching at Cartmel, it was my first teaching job and I was teaching PE. Once we got past May half-term I would take a group of children, all from different years, to Grange Baths for swimming every day until the end of term in July. Sometimes the water was not warm and after five minutes swimming we had to come out and some of them were a bit blue! As it got towards June/July then they stayed in a bit longer.

Ginny Marshall, born 1940s, remembers Miss Great Britain Competition

Ginny moved to Morecambe when she was 6. For four summers during the 1960s, whilst she was a student, she worked as a lifeguard at the Morecambe Super Swimming Stadium. More than just a swimming pool, the Super Swimming Stadium was also a place of entertainment. There was a daily Aqua Cascades show to enjoy along with a weekly heat of the Miss Great Britain Competition.

Wednesday afternoons were spectacular events at the swimming pool because at about half past eleven in the morning the bathing beauties would start arriving ready for the competition in the afternoon.

Of course, they were all rivals and they all wanted to be Miss Great Britain. They would wear one-piece swimming costumes because obviously the days of the bikini hadn't arrived. They would be tanned but they helped the tan along.

They would wear very high heel shoes with stiletto heels and they would wobble around in those. They had the most beautiful bouffant hairstyles – mostly backcombed. When the competition started they would be given a heart shaped number each and they would then come from the changing room and parade all around the swimming pool in front of where the judges were sitting; smiling at everybody and trying to win the eye of the judges. We had a lot of famous judges.

Mostly when they came for a season they would be invited to come and help judge such as Eric and Ernie, Tommy Steele, Frank Ifield.



Right

Programme for the final of the Miss Great Britain competition, 1957

© Lancaster City Museums (Lancaster City Council)



Left

Leeds Children's Holiday Home

© E. Aylett Collection

Edith Farrar and Freda Addison remember Leeds Children's Holiday Camp, Silverdale

Edith and Freda are lifelong friends. They were tireless fundraisers for the Leeds Children's Holiday Camp located in Silverdale. For over a 100 years, until its closure in 2016, the charity provided free holidays at the camp for the under privileged children of Leeds. Up until 2015, 60,000 Leeds children had holidayed there. There were lots of activities for the children, a swimming pool, outdoor space for the children to play and wonderful views across Morecambe Bay.

The children came from the poorer quarters of Leeds. The headmaster or mistresses recommended them and sometimes social services recommended them. The children come in what they stood up in. When you think of the children that came to the camp, quite a large proportion hadn't seen a sheep or cow.

We had a little boy who got off the coach on Monday and the tide was in. He could see it just over the field. They were going to the swimming pool the following morning. He came out and stopped dead in the middle of the forecourt and he looked, and he said, 'Who's pulled the plug out?'. He didn't realise that there was a tide and it went in and out.

The money that we raised would come from various sources. We had a lot of money from our coffee mornings. We found that people from Heysham were just as enthusiastic about raising money as people from Silverdale. We held a cross bay walk, annual dinner, Lancashire evening every year and we gave talks. Love of the children has kept us fundraising.

**Gillian Asplin, born 1930s,
remembers Grange Fell Golf Club**

As a child Gillian lived at High Fell in Grange-over-Sands later moving on to Holme Island. Gillian's father, Mr Davy, was a local businessman who owned a road haulage business which transported milk and coal. He decided that he wanted to build a golf course – a venture which truly became a family affair. The Grange Fell Golf Club he created in 1950 is still a thriving club today.

There used to be Grange Golf Club, but my father didn't really like that because it was too flat for him, so he used to get on a train every weekend and go through to Silverdale Golf Club. There had been a Fell Golf Club (in Grange) which had gone to rack and ruin.

My father along with other locals decided that they wanted to reinstate the Fell Golf Club.

He made this golf course mostly with his land but taking in some of the upper fell land as well. It was a very nicely designed golf course built on the hillside. We had a nice club house and my father wanted it to be the first golf course in those days that had women equal

as men. We got the golf pro from Silverdale. On a Sunday all his drivers (who worked in his haulage business) who liked it came and played. A lot of people like that weren't allowed to be members of clubs: golf was upmarket in those days. I remember my father saying that everyone should be able to play golf it's a lovely game and healthy.

It was such a friendly, friendly place. After my father died, we let the members buy their own golf course.

My mother said she'd have got divorced if she hadn't played golf; it was just the only thing you thought of doing Saturday and Sunday lunch. That was really what I loved about it the feeling that we were all very much a community doing it. I became an avid golfer and played golf all over the country when I was younger. We had lots of juniors up at the club and my father used to transport us all around the country to junior competitions.



'TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NO MAN OR WOMAN'



**Colin Midwinter and Harry Roberts,
born 1950s, remember Morecambe RNLI**

Colin and Harry are volunteers for RNLI Morecambe. They joined as crew in the 1970s and 80s respectively. They were both brought up in Morecambe.

Colin: The boat used to come in a bag and we would have to blow it up ourselves.

Colin: We were always cold and wet, always.

Harry: We didn't have dry suits at the time. The PPE (personal protective equipment) we have now is amazing to what we had then. We had three sets of waders which you wouldn't wear in a boat now anyway.

Harry: A lot of the time in summer we would grab a life jacket and jump in the boat with a pair of shorts on and t-shirt and that was it and off you went. Now it's completely against regulations and all your PPE has to be on before you go out there.

Colin: All size 11.

Harry: And three sets of oilskins and that was it.

Colin: Our life jackets weighed a ton once they were wet.

Colin: We couldn't wait to get back and have a cup of coffee but again we didn't have anywhere to make that coffee. You were reliant on Keith's wife coming down with a flask and meeting us – very often with a tot of rum in it. I remember one time she came down she picked the wrong bottle up and put sherry in it. It tasted awful, but we were so cold we drank it anyway.

Harry: They were filled with straw – It's changed incredibly.

Top Yacht 'Mabel' sailing in the Bay, K. Willacy Collection. Photographer unknown.

Left Old Postcard from the Bay, 1953 © E. Aylett Collection

Bruce Eastwood, born 1930s, remembers Arnside

Bruce lives in Arnside but was originally from Halifax. From the 1960s Bruce and his family would come to Arnside at weekends, staying in a caravan or with friends, to sail with Arnside Sailing Club.

We were out one day and it was blowing a hooley everywhere but on the beach. On the beach it was a good wind but not a wicked wind. Ian was out on a Flying Dutchman with his son and I was out on a skiff by myself. I capsized because of the wind. I got the boat up two or three times but couldn't hold it up.

It rolled straight over again. I heard a voice say, 'Get in the boat'. I said, 'Which boat?'. He said, 'This one you idiot', and it was the Coastguard sitting next to us. 'We had been waiting twenty minutes you seemed to be coping quite well.' Then we went and picked up Ian who had

got swept up to Arnside Viaduct; same problem the wind was peculiar. So, he had said to his son no problem we'll go through the viaduct and it will snap the mast and we will drift up the estuary; it didn't, the mast stayed up and the boat snapped in half. He came up in one half and his son in the other.

Bruce Chattaway, born 1960s, remembers Walney Island

Bruce was born in the Queen's Arms in Biggar Village on Walney Island. Boats and going fishing and sailing with his dad were important parts of his childhood. Bruce is currently the Station Officer of Ulverston Inshore Rescue, a volunteer organisation established in response to a local tragedy. Being part of Ulverston Inshore, for Bruce 'means a lot to me to know we have done something for Ulverston.'

Originally, I joined Walney Coastguard: twenty years ago now. I lived on Walney. I had the local pub (Crown Hotel) on the Island. The members of the team used to come and drink in the pub and asked me if I was interested in joining Walney Coastguard, so I did. I was there for twenty years.

While I was there, I got three recommendations and a Royal Humane Society Award. The award was for saving three gentlemen on a yacht which was running aground off Walney Island. It was a gale force ten. Myself and Simon we had to swim out, put a line on and bring three guys back.

We were put forward by members of other societies and we were chosen to be awarded. It was one of the proudest moments of my life. To be recognised by other people and members of my own team and other teams in the area – it meant a lot to me.

Right

Plover Scar Lighthouse, image
© Courtesy of Mr R. Parkinson

Helen Loxam, Lancaster Port Commission, remembers Plover Scar

Helen is the Chief Executive of the Lancaster Port Commission which is based operationally at Glasson Dock. The Commission looks after, and is responsible for, the navigation of the River Lune between the edge of the Lune Deeps and Lancaster.

We had a bit of an incident a couple of years ago when a vessel struck our lighthouse in the river: the Plover Scar Lighthouse. I went down on the pilot boat and I was horrified, absolutely horrified. There was a big hole in the side of it. It was obvious that the lighthouse had been pushed to one side. The top layer of stone had been shifted sideways about a foot

so there had to be a corresponding shift below the water line. The whole top of the lighthouse had been shifted a foot one way. Quite frankly it was what do I do now? It was new territory: it was unprecedented. It was a case of how are we going to fix it and not only that but how are we going to get to it to fix it? One of the first things the contractors asked

was do we know how it was built? We went to the Archive Office and brought back some plans for the lighthouse. They didn't look anything like the lighthouse as built. These plans were dated 1846. I was contacted by the son of the last lighthouse keeper. His wife had done some investigation and came up with the indication that the lighthouse had been reclad in stone much later than it had been built. We discovered that there was actually a lighthouse inside the lighthouse.

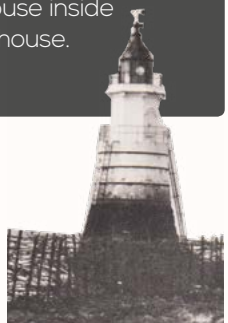
John Howell, born 1930s, remembers Arnside

Sailing has been a big part of John's life. In the 1960s he joined Arnside Sailing Club which he describes as a 'friendly and very much a family club'. The club would organise sailing events.

I thoroughly enjoyed arranging these things. Close to Holme Island over at Grange there are three rocks Outer Rock, Inner Rock and one which is called Seldom Seen Rock, but it is very seen at the moment and it changes over the years. Until, I think, last year it probably hadn't been seen for twelve

years and it will silt over again. I used to walk across the estuary from White Creek over to Outer Rock with toffees which I put in holes in the rock and again families would sail down and, if the kids hadn't eaten all the toffees before they came back, the one with the most toffees was the winner. We would always

have the Outer Rock race. If it was a good windy day it was an exciting race. To go there and back without capsizing. I think that one of the most memorable days was in the late 60s early 70s. I remember counting 21 sails on the water. That was extraordinary I had never seen so many boats on the water.



EARNING YOUR DAILY CRUST

Below Morecambe Crowds, c. 1950s, old postcard
© E. Aylett Collection.
Photographer unknown.

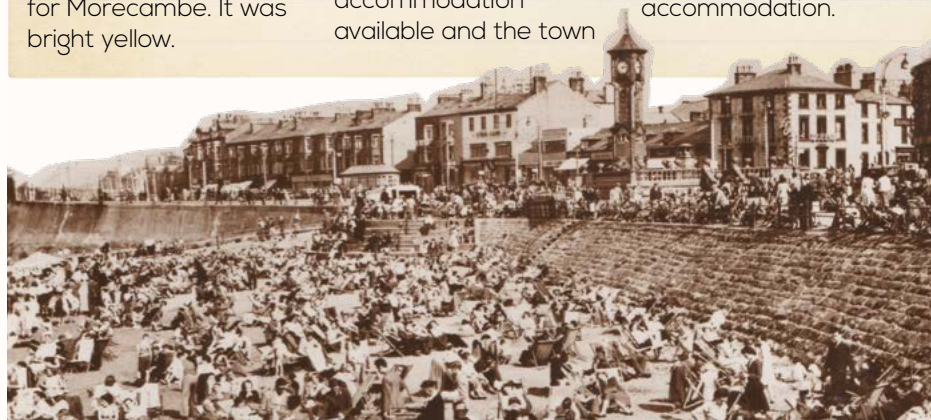
John Owen, born 1950s, **remembers** Morecambe Town Hall

Shortly after leaving school in the late 1960s John found himself working in the 'Publicity and Entertainment Department' in Morecambe Town Hall. In the summer period the department organised and ran events, whilst in the winter months they dealt with publicity for the resort.

We used to do the publicity and what you would call now 'marketing and promotion' in the winter months. We would produce 40,000 copies of a guide to Morecambe and distribute them through the winter. We would attend exhibitions. We had a Ford Thames that we would take all of our materials in. It was covered in slogans for Morecambe. It was bright yellow.

I had some adventures in that. It had a big sun on the top that was knocked off in Glasgow once by being towed under a low bridge when we broke down! It had light up panels on the side that said, 'Go motorway to Morecambe'. It was a big thing in the 60s as they had just built the M6. There was a time when there was no accommodation available and the town

was full. Particularly Glasgow fair fortnight which was the last two weeks of July. So, we put loudspeakers on the publicity van and we were asked to tour around the residential streets of the town appealing to people to provide accommodation and let some of their rooms to some of the holiday makers turning up without pre-booked accommodation.



David Kettlewell, born 1940s, **remembers** Hyning Hall, Warton

Hyning Hall, near Warton, was once owned by Lord and Lady Peel (it is now a convent). David's dad Edgar was the Peels' head gardener from 1962. The garden was designed by the renowned designer Ralph Hancock and once included a vinery, peach house, iris garden, orchid house and rose garden. The family lived in a cottage on the estate.

Dad was always at work. He would always find some excuse to go around the gardens. It was his passion. It was his life. He would be out there at 7 o'clock in the morning. You would have trouble getting him home for his dinner even though he was only 20 yards away. On a summer's night he would be there at 10 o'clock at night.

The edging of the lawns was my job in the holidays. My dad used to say

you can go and do the Red Walk and that would stretch from one side of the gardens right the way around the edge: it was all a red shale path. I used to start at one end and go along with the edge trimmer. If you saw Lord Peel you used to go and hide in the bushes and turn your back on him: he didn't speak to staff. He was old school you were there to do the work. He would speak to my dad, but only by appointment.

Rex Lancaster, born 1920s, **remembers** John Asplin Butchers, Grange

Rex was born in 1927 in Grange-over-Sands. Rex's family owned and ran the butchers 'John Asplin' on Main Street. When a family member died Rex's mother, at the age of 15, took over the running of the business. After WW2 Rex went into partnership with his mother and aunts. He retired in 1982.

We used to get cattle down from Scotland to Carnforth by train and then walk them from Carnforth to Grange. When they got to Carnforth we were there with our bicycles; twenty or so Aberdeen Angus just think of it, now coming along that A590!

We had a wonderful furniture shop in Grange, R and H Law. We were bringing cattle up from Grange Station: ten of them. The furniture shop had left the

shop door open as they always did. Two animals, large ones, walked into the top shop. There were pictures and furniture everywhere. The cows walked down the steps in to the next shop. Someone said: 'Don't make a noise just let them go' and they walked down and out the bottom shop. Apart from one opening its bowels as it left the shop... that could have cost thousands. I will never forget that incident.

Keith Tassart, born 1940s, **remembers** Lancaster Canal

Keith worked for the British Waterways on the Lancaster Canal during the 1960s. He had worked in farming but, finding himself without a job, happened to be walking down the banks of the canal one day when someone asked if he wanted to work with British Waterways. Keith took the last boat through Tewitfield Locks before they became unworkable.

One of foremen says that as you are coming into Carnforth there are some telegraph poles the other side and they carry electric over to a farm. So, we duly found these telegraph poles. Boats keep complaining that they

keep catching something as they are going past these telegraph poles. So, we had a fish around with dredger bucket and coming up was a cable – it was coming up like a serpent.

Pulling up the cable was pulling on the telegraph poles.

One of the poles swung back into position and one is still there at a crazy angle. The fellow from the farm came out and he says by gads you lads don't know how lucky you are it's only two or three weeks ago since someone could see this was going to happen and we cut that cable off. We now have the cable laid on the bottom of the canal otherwise it would have killed you.

Eunice Sampson, born 1920s, **remembers** Morecambe/Ulverston

Eunice now lives at Canal Foot, Ulverston but lived in Morecambe during WW2. During the War, due to Morecambe's relatively safe location, the Government relocated various departments of the Civil Service there requisitioning many hotels for office space and accommodation.

My father died when I was 10 and we moved to Morecambe. We moved to Morecambe because then mother could earn a living and be at home because in those days you had to have someone to look after your children. My mother talked about it on the Thursday and by the following Friday we were in Morecambe, from Leeds. She had a boarding house and everyone bought their own food. My mother was an excellent cook she did the cooking for everybody.

During the War all the hotels in Morecambe were taken for offices. When I left school, you were told to go into this or that. I went into the Civil Service that had moved into Morecambe. I married a local boy who lived at Heysham. Andy got a job at Glaxo, you just went where the work was. I must have been about 30 when I came here to Canal Foot, Ulverston. We moved in 1953. Everybody round here accepted you; they already accepted everybody who worked at Glaxo.

Graham Maclean, born 1940s, **remembers** Heysham Port

In 1990 Graham became the Director, General Manager and Harbour Master of Heysham Port. He had previously been Captain of Hoverspeed Great Britain. Heysham is a cargo and ferry port. When Graham was working there the Heysham to Isle of Man route would transport 20,000 motorbikes during TT week.

When I started it was a particularly steep learning curve for myself and the staff. I think some of it was the history of the place: the office door was locked and everybody was mister. I had never been brought up that way yes, I had a rank but my name was Graham and if we were in private that's what I was called.

I suddenly had responsibility for the profit and loss of a business that was turning just over 10

million pounds. We had 120 staff. I didn't know anything about dredging before and that was a big issue, or pilotage and suddenly I had two contracted to work for us. I had a fleet of vehicles; I was used to ship's engines yes, lorry engines no. When I went there, we were carrying 250,000 trailers a year and taking 50 trailers off and putting 50 on in 4 hours. By the time I left, they were putting 80 on and 80 off in three hours.

Foot and Mouth was one that gave us a big problem. The government said that any vehicles leaving the country should be washed. We drove some through water baths, but the Isle of Man said that they preferred to have vehicles washed so we washed every vehicle as it left the port. So, when you are talking in the year 400,000 vehicles that was a lot of washing to do!



Right Heysham Port

© P. Sunderland, Lancaster City Museums, LM98.44/218, Wilmott collection

Below The Lakeland Laundry © Courtesy of B. Myers

Sheila Drewery & Bryn Howell Lakeland Laundry, remembers Barrow

Lakeland Laundry was once a major employer in Barrow. Originally a domestic laundry collecting dirty washing by horse drawn wagon it branched out into cleaning for the hotel and food industries. A place of innovation, it was the first laundry in the country to develop a temporary laundry marking system replacing the need to indelibly mark items of laundry.

Sheila: I started as an office junior in 1964 and left in 1976. Then employers were different. Then you had to show them that you were willing to go to night school to gain your certificates I was going to night school 4 nights a week.

Bryn: I went to night school three nights a week for bookkeeping and accounting.

Sheila: Lakeland Laundries Holdings paid for my postal course in shorthand which was Pitman's. I attained 120 wpm in shorthand.

Bryn: I was in accounts. Mr Watkins was the procurement officer and Jean was the statistician. She had an old Marchant calculating machine she used to put in all the figures



I came up with. Each laundry company, I think at the time there were 8 or 9, every month had to send in a big ledger of everything they had used in the process from pins, the collar guards, the inks, raw materials. I used to analyse and cost all that.

Sheila: The only thing I didn't like about the job was when I learnt to drive Mr Hetherington decided:

'Sheila will you go and fill my car up with petrol? It was quite a big car and I was a nervous wreck. Every time he said that I thought: 'Oh no'.

It was a very family orientated place. We had Elsie who was a tea lady with a trolley and by gum she was wonderful. She used to bring us treats and we would have a crack with her.

Robin Reginald Beck, born 1950s Lakeland Laundry, remembers Barrow

Reg was the last apprentice taken on at Lakeland Laundry in Barrow-in-Furness. He and his boss Frank made up the electrical department and were always on call to repair machines. After his apprenticeship, and then 8 months at the Shipyard, Reg went on to spend 36 years at sea.

In 1967 Barrow Shipyard could offer jobs to every male school leaver in town who could all get an apprenticeship. It was a struggle getting people into other jobs in town.

I'd been offered an apprenticeship as a fitter and turner, but I didn't want to go into the Shipyard, so I had gone down to the employment office, who said that they were after an apprentice

at Lakeland Laundry. I came down to the laundry and entered by the front door which was a no-no for anyone who wasn't the management.

The foreman took me into the factory which was very warm and steamy, full of people with all sorts going on. It seemed like a good job so in 1967 I started work as an apprentice electrician and

worked on a five-year apprenticeship.

Afterwards, I went to the Shipyard for eight months but on the submarine, I was on, there was 120 electricians. I once had a job for a week, one of the most boring jobs I have ever done, glueing Formica plaques by electrical fittings. After eight months I was bored silly.

Morecambe Bay Partnership celebrates and conserves; connects and collaborates. From birds to beach cleans, from cycle ways to catching fishing tales Morecambe Bay Partnership delivers projects that make great things happen for our communities

Our supporters make the Bay a better place, sharing skills, volunteering and donating. Hundreds of local people have contributed so that we can:

- look after special heritage sites and care for nature
- create safe cycle routes and open up access for disabled people to enjoy the Bay
- bring great art and celebration to connect our communities.

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