



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

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TRANSCRIPT SUMMARY

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INTERVIEW NO: H2H2017.33
INTERVIEWEE NAME/S: Tony and Mitchell Rowlandson
YEAR OF BIRTH: Not supplied
INTERVIEWER/S: Marion Dawson
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 19 January 2017
LOCATION: Flookburgh
SUMMARISER: Deborah Coleman

00.00	Background. Mitchell (MR) is a plumber; Tony (TR) a builder. They are brothers and work together in partnership. Their mother was a secretary at (ph) Gedyes solicitors in Grange; their father a wagon driver, then a fisherman, then a process worker at Glaxo. Jack Manning (JM) is their uncle (mother's brother). Their grandparents were full time fishermen. They remember horses and carts being used in the early 1960s, then tractors & mechanical means. They were brought up in Flookburgh – 10 Main St then a new bungalow at 110 Main St. MR was born in his grandparents' house; TR in Ulverston hospital – his grandfather came straight off the sands to see him
02.35	Flookburgh life. The horses & carts were amazing – different times, another world. Flookburgh was a real fishing town; women picked shrimps round tables at night; there were fishermen, tractors & chassis all the way down Main St. Main St was the main thoroughfare to get to the Bay, & the centre of universe when they were kids. Played games there; never went anywhere else. Everyone knew everybody else & you could go in anyone's house. Spent summers on the beach at Sandgate when the fishermen were there
05.50	Fishing families. Their father was involved in fishing & all MR wanted to do when he grew up was fish but his grandfather wouldn't let him. Had to get a trade first – apprenticed for 5 years & never went back. All the parents encouraged their children to learn a trade. Fishing was hit & miss - good times, lean times. Grandfather was Harold Mitchell Manning (adopted; changed name to or from Butler). Grandmother also a Butler but different family, was sent away to Manchester to work in service. Other names: Bensons, Hills [McClure also mentioned earlier]. Names die out, e.g. JM has only one grandson (Tim – fishes & cockles) to carry on the name
10.45	Horses & carts. Memories of their father fishing. Different way of life. Conversations went back & forth between the carts; horses raced to get into prime position for casting nets, galloping flat out. Every family had a field – TR remembers taking

	horses to theirs; & father's horse getting stuck in sands. Rescued by 'Whiskers', Harold (ph) Cowperthwaite - stripped off, covered in hair, lashed ropes round horse & dragged it out. MR has list of local nicknames he asked his mother to make
14.30	Fishing, shrimps & market gardens. Fishermen would be out all day – knew they were back by smoke coming from chimneys which meant they were boiling shrimps. They'd keep an eye on each other's chimneys to see how good their catch had been. Beehive of activity. Lots of fishermen had market gardens & hawked shrimps & produce door to door in villages, or at markets – father had stall at Keswick market & left at 5am every Saturday with van full of fruit & veg. Beetroot boiled in same water as shrimps - MR hated smell. Ian McClure still does Kendal market; Michael & John Wilson do Barrow. Lot of fish went to Manchester & Liverpool markets by train <i>[not clear whether in brothers' lifetime]</i> . Cark Station has records showing several hundredweight of shrimps, cockles, flounders, mussels, samphire left village in early 20 th century. The main industries were fishing & market gardening, with some trades; now the other way round. 2 or 3 families (e.g. McClure's) still fish full time; others fish between other jobs
22.05	Other memories. Playing in the street; open house everywhere at Christmas. A real community. Only started locking doors, & cars, in last 20 years
23.13	Fishing cycles. Shrimping was the mainstay. Cockling ended with hard winter of 1963 – MR remembers icebergs the size of houses in the Bay. After that the brothers' father & JM went up to Largs cockling in 1965/6. Remember vans piled high with cockles coming back from Scotland, then being taken down to Liverpool. Father & JM advertised for people to help in Scotland – turned up in suits & ties as had never been on the shore before, just wanted work. Cockle beds out of action for years, so men moved on to whitebait. MR remembers sorting them at his grandfather's house – rifling through with hands & picking out the ones that were too big (sprats), muck & crabs. They were also taught how to fillet flukes. Remembers once the whole bay was covered in massive jelly fish
28.56	Salmon & 'beck watchers'. <i>[Mentions fishermen's co-op briefly – more later]</i> . The best bit was catching salmon. Had to have licence so illegal for kids but great fun. Always in summer & beautiful weather, standing in water in trunks. Great excitement when the salmon came down estuary – would catch them in 'lave' nets as they turned in the shallows – big splash, like a water fountain. Licences were little round copper discs attached to nets. Fishing controlled by bailiffs "beck watchers" – Bill Moffatt & Arthur Shankley – always chasing kids. Weren't even allowed to pick up dead salmon – could be fined & taken to court. A lot of poaching too, with beck watchers watching through glasses – played hell with them. A lot of friction, but an exciting time every summer. Licences hard to come by as rationed & no one ever wanted to give them up. No one wants them now as there are no fish. Brothers' family was based in the Leven estuary, on the Ulverston side, & could catch 30 salmon on a good day. Guys on the Kent estuary (Grange side) caught 200 some days. Worth a lot of money in 1960s & 70s
35.50	After school; more fishing memories; Timothy the seal. After school, work took over, but did a bit of fishing at the weekends. One grandfather just caught flukes, flounders – now can hardly give them away. Used to help fillet fluke but one brother left-handed – grandfather couldn't bear to watch so other brother had to do it all. Gutted & beheaded fluke live – didn't think anything of it. One day grandfather brought a seal back – they called it Timothy. Released back into deep water. Remember tractors getting stuck 5/6 miles out in bay. Terrible thing to lose one – everyone would muck in to try & get them out but some were left
40.40	Memories of Flookburgh. There was a blacksmith's shop (Bert (ph) Rowlandson). Remembers coke fire glowing red & Bert batting horseshoes on the anvil – massive fellow in massive leather apron. Like an Aladdin's cave. A garage in the middle of Main St had everything you needed for tractors, & a mountain of old bikes from which they made new ones. A meeting hub. Run by Harold Nicholls & his father Jack, who started a taxi service when there were hardly any cars – once counted 12 on the way to Lancaster (early 1960s)
44.35	Father, work, living in Flookburgh. Father a jack-the-lad; fun loving, life & soul of the party, liked a drink. Great upbringing – no money or holidays but didn't bother them. Father joined Glaxo – one of finest firms – when MR 17/18. MR making

	<p>£3.17s.6d a week when friend Frank, same age, making £27 at Glaxo. Asked father to get him a job – father admitted years later he'd never handed in the application forms. Didn't want son working in a factory – workers all zombie-like & pale. Grandfather didn't want them to go into fishing as fishing dropped off. Best years were after the war when a lot of fishermen did very well. Shrimps were a big thing in the 1960s, & JM made quite a lot of money. But both brothers have done ok – fantastic memories. Very different now; lots of holiday homes. It's lucky that young people can still afford to live here, unlike Cartmel or Grange. All brothers' kids live within ¼ of a mile. Story about motorbike race up Main St.</p>
51.20	<p>Rivalries. There was rivalry, fallouts, jealousy amongst fishermen & between groups of friends. JM was a very good fisherman, mostly worked on own, did very well & others got jealous. Hair raising tales – once a rival drove right through his nets & wrecked them [<i>later transpires this was about poaching</i>]. Friend Harold Benson's father Walter told son not to tell mates how many boxes of shrimps they got – didn't want them following</p>
53.21	<p>Flookburgh Fishermen Co-op. Set up in late 1950s / early 60s. Now Furness Fish & Game. Local institution. Manager Charlie Bartle / Bartell – difficult job as fishermen might go elsewhere (e.g. Young's in Cark) if thought they could get more money.</p>
57.30	<p>Poaching. JM's book doesn't mention poaching as he's ashamed of it but poaching tales the best! Went through hell with 'beck watchers' – had to shout to warn JM who had to throw salmon out of boat. All in the dark. Incident at 51.20 above: JM tied illicit sack of salmon to post & other man pinched it – saw tractor tracks drive right past post. Everyone did it – it was their living</p>
01.00.40	<p>Making a living. Really hard to make a living now – that's why a lot of fishermen have dropped out. Brothers' father used to go for a drink on Saturday nights but JM would go fishing twice a day every day – mother played holy hell with father but didn't make any difference. Grandfather never missed a night in the pub. MR would have liked to go into fishing – fantastic lifestyle in summer, catching salmon. Left school at 14 in the July & fished all through the summer holidays, but in the September grandfather told him he had an apprenticeship – you start Monday & you need a ruler, a pencil & clean shoes. Became a plumber & never went back to fishing. TR never really wanted to be a fisherman – wanted to be in the building trade & started at (ph) Howsons in Cartmel</p>
01.05.50	<p>Picking shrimps. 6 or 7 women sitting round a table chatting away, some smoking, tipping fag ash into the husks. Worked very quickly; wore [???? something] out. Great atmosphere; used to enjoy going in. Each fisherman (about 30 of them) had maybe 6 or 7 pickers, working either at home or at a 'pickery' (outbuilding). A few people still pick, e.g. Doris Myerscough, Madge Barratt.</p>
01.12.45	<p>Ending. One brother doesn't like fish! Grandfather had a fluke every day (one day 7), always on the bone for flavour. Brothers have only positive memories, no downside, wouldn't change a thing. Rivalry amongst fishermen never carried through to kids – mixed with everyone, sometimes went fishing with others, all at school together & still mates today.</p>