

## **Interview with Cedric Robinson #2**

Interviewee : Cedric Robinson, born 17 Feb 1933 ('CR'), with wife Olive ('OR'), and cousin Beryl Leck also present and perhaps making indistinguishable prompts.

Interviewer : Rose Clark ('RC')

Location : Guide's Farm, Grange over Sands

Date : 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Recording duration : 1 hr 28 mins 14 secs

- RC Right. Can we start off with you giving me your full name, please ?
- CR My name is ... it's unusual, there's only two of us in the Country : Cedric Robinson.
- RC And can you tell me when, and where you were born ?
- CR I was born in the village of Flookburgh, and it's only not very far from Grange here, and, anything else you want to know ?
- RC What year were you born ?
- CR I was born on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the second [February] 1933.
- RC And do you remember which house you were born in ?
- CR I do remember, yes, it wasn't a house, it was like a little hovel. [laughs] They were built ... houses were a bit much smaller in those days, but people managed, and my mother was quite house proud, all her family were, she came from Glasson Dock originally. But there was me, and [1 min] two sisters, one nice one horrible one, and ...
- RC What were their names ?
- CR Well, very sadly, mi nice sister, she's not so very well at the moment. But the other one, she dresses like a queen, and walks round as if there's nothing wrong with her, and she never worked in her bloody life. I shouldn't swear, but I have. She's terrible, she is. [RC : You were the only boy ?] She took after her grandma, and every body was frightened of her grandma, even my mother, who was soft natured, and she was, you know, always afraid to go and see her. And my Dad was strong ... very strong willed and strong natured, but he wasn't ... you know, he was very firm, but he was a good Dad, good father to us.
- RC So were you born in Market Street or Main Street ?

CR I was born in Main Street, [RC : Yes] Main Street Flookburgh, behind Market Cross.

RC Yes. And how long did you live there ? Can you [2 mins] remember ?

CR Yes, I lived there 'till 1960, and then married, met Olive and married Olive, and we lived at Ravenstown for two to three years, and moved here in 1963. So we've been here 53 years.

RC So do you have any other relatives in Flookburgh, apart from your sisters ?

CR Everybody's related in Flookburgh ! [both laugh]

RC Can you sort of make a start on who's related to who ?

CR Well, my Dad, [RC : Who was ... what's his name ?] William Holborn Robinson, [RC : William Holborn Robinson, yes] he was my Dad, there was Beryl's dad, [RC : And he was ?] brothers [RC : What was his name ?] Robinson. [OR : James] Her dad was ... [RC : James Robinson] James was it, that's first time I knew that, [laughs] I always knew him as Carey, [laughs] that was his nick-name.

RC Did your Dad have a nick-name ?

CR [3 mins] Holly, I think.

RC Holly. So there was your Dad, and then his brother James, Carey, [CR : Then there was another brother, Maurice,( Uncle Maurice,) right] Did he fish ?

CR He used to go ... he had ... hawking, you know, round the villages and outskirts. And in his latter years, he did have a horse, and he used to work with another fisherman called John Hodgen, [RC : John Hodgen] and he worked from somewhere, it was difficult 'cos where he lived, he couldn't ... there was no right of way through the back, it was ... the land came down to the back of the house ...

RC Where did he live ?

CR He lived where I moved ... it was called Brooklyn, 36 Main Street, Flookburgh.

RC Right. Near the bottom of Sandgate ?

CR Near the [4 mins] Post Office at Flookburgh. [RC : OK, which is now the Old Post Office in Flookburgh] Yes. [RC : Yes, and he lived on the back there ?] Opposite the ... Jack Nicholas's garage, as was in those days. [RC : Right, which is opposite, yes, Adam Bright[?]] Yes. And then we haven't finished yet, because Dad had a younger brother as he lost [RC : Right] and he lost with a strained heart, and he was only like in his 20s, I think. And then he had a sister, Lucy, she was a lovely person. She married someone from Leeds. He was a baker or confectioner, something like that. And then they had a family. We didn't see them very often, but they had two sons, one called Brian and one called Edgar, and then they had a daughter, Beryl, now what do you call her ? [OR : Olga] Olga. And ...

- RC What about the other fishing [5 mins] people that you were related to ? Fishing families ?
- CR Well, I was going to tell you. Dad first. [RC : Yes] In Flookburgh, there was ... went to fish with a horse and cart, and some days she went up the Main Street, right up the steep hill, up Sandgate Hill and down to ... and other times she went down Flookburgh and along the mile road, and off the other way. But there was a prominent person in there, and there was called a Ganny. Right. She always wore a pinney, spotlessly clean, and she lived to a ripe old age. Now she was the mother of several sons. And they all fished, one of them was just part time fisherman towards the end, but there was one nick-named Pongo, right. He was only small, and he fished all his life, a very good man on the sands. The other was Tarro, right, the other was Meffat, Me-ffat, [RC : Oh, [6 mins] Me-ffat] Meffat, he lived at Cark. It was wonderful really, because when he moved to Cark, he had all that way to come with the horse and cart, he come ... back of the Crown Hotel, there's a lane goes up, I don't know ... [RC : Green Lane] They don't call in Green Lane. [RC : Yes] Do they ? [RC : Now they do] Well it's changed its name, since I was a lad. Green Lane ? Green Lane's at Flookburgh. [OR : Yes] [RC : Oh sorry, the top half, at the Rose and Crown ?] No, not at Cark. [RC : Oh, Flookburgh ?] Oh, yes, between the ... is it the Crown ... which is the pub [OR : Sunny Bank is where they lived] which is the pub in the ... I know, Meffat lived at top of hill, [RC : Yes, Rose and Crown] Is that the Rose and Crown ? [RC : Yes] Well no, it wasn't from there, it was from ... what's the pub in the middle ? [RC : Engine, The Engine] Engine, sorry [RC : Yes] behind The Engine, [RC : Right] lead the road, and it comes out at Sandgate. [RC : Yes] Well Meffat used to come in there. He was a big friend of Dad's, but he was [7 mins] a little nervous on the sands, [RC : Right] and he would never ever go first. [RC : No] But it was ideal really, because he could wander down that lane, and he could waiting, hiding, no-one knew he was there. And the Flookburgh fishermen would come out, you know, one behind the other, and he would just join in the group. But when I think about it, travelling all those miles ...
- RC So Pongo, Tarro and Meffat, [CR : We haven't finished yet] do you know what their real names were ? [OR : Harold Butler]
- CR Pongo would be [OR : Bill] Bill, [RC : Bill ... ?] Tarro was Harold, Meffat was [OR : Jonathon] Jonathon, yes. And then there was Ron Butler's Dad, [OR : Jack] Jack [RC : Jack] Yes.
- RC So they were all Butlers were they ?
- CR They were all ... Now Dad, [RC : Yes] is full cousins to them, and they also had a ... [8 mins] that isn't the end of the family, they also had sisters, and Nellie Manning, right, Jack Manning's mother, she was Dad's, full cousin. And her at Allithwaite, what d'you call her, married electrician, Connie Isner, [OR : Connie Isner] Connie Isner's mother, she was another sister, so Dad was a cousin to them, so I'm related to [OR : Everybody] lots of people in Flookburgh.

- RC What about the Bensons, are you related to the Bensons ? [CR : No<sup>1</sup>] No, or the Shorts ?  
[OR : (partly inaudible) Beryl, you're related to her]
- CR Beryl, I'm related to ... Beryl's my cousin. [RC : Yes, but she's a ...] Oh, and I've mentioned her Dad, haven't I ?
- RC Yes, that was through ... her father [9 mins] [CR : Yes] who was James Robinson, and your father Bill Robinson. [CR : Yes, (RC) OK. I'll ... when you think they went past the Engine Inn in Cark, was that a usual route to go out to the sands ?
- CR No, that was only for Meffat, [RC : Oh] 'cos he'd moved to Cark [RC : Right] Originally, I don't know where he lived, probably lived in Flookburgh when he was younger, wouldn't he ? [OR : He would] But when he ... he moved to Cark, and in one way it was a long way to go, but he would ... in another thing it was good because he'd no competition about, you know, pickers. He could take a cart full of shrimps home, and get 'em all picked. You know, it got ... in Flookburgh, there was so many fishermen that getting people to pick them was sometimes a bit of a ...
- RC So he had the pick of the pickers in Cark.
- CR Yes, yes, he did well. And I tell you something, he was nervous not just on the sands, but he was nervous with horses. With being a good friend of Dad's, he was looking for a horse. In those days we used to go to Morecambe. [10 mins] And it was like ... I was only a young lad, it was like looking at the Royal Mews. I used to love it. We'd go to this ... we mainly went to one stable, and there could be 20 horses all lined up in the stall. And they didn't keep 'em all, at the end of the season they used to have a sale. And Meffat was with Dad, and these two horses were for sale. Now we'd seen one of 'em, it was an aged horse, and it was stood on the Promenade, it was stood with its head drooped down, and, you know, it looked absolutely jiggered. But it was such a good one that it gave it all, all the time. Now this other one was a younger horse, sprightly, and it wasn't the right one for him. But he wondered, because it looked better. Well he got it, and he couldn't manage it. So, we didn't buy it from him, he sold it, and Dad sold him this as we bought, [RC : Yes] but we'd had it 12 months, [11 mins] and it built up, and it was marvellous. It was absolutely wonderful and he had it for years. [RC : What was it called ?] I don't know what the horse was called, [RC : Oh right. Did they have names ?] We used to give 'em names, yes.
- RC Yes. So where did they keep the horses and the carts then ?
- CR Well, he had ... he stabled it up the top of the hill, where he had his house there. Oh, by the way, I've missed another sister out. Cole[?] Jones' mother was a sister. [OR : Yes, Lucy] Yes.

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<sup>1</sup> Not quite true – see the Family Tree on page 191 of Jack Manning's book *It was better than Working*, which shows the grandparents of Meffat, Pongo, Tarro et al. were William Butler and Elizabeth Benson, who were married at Cartmel on 27 July 1846.

They must have bred like rabbits in them days ! [OR : Wini] Eh ? [OR : Wini] Oh yes, as well ! [laughing] No wonder her husband died early ! [continues laughing]

RC Do you think he lived in The Fold, or did he live further down the ...

CR No, they didn't live in The Fold. They lived up the top of the hill, [OR : Sunny Bank] [RC : Oh, Sunny Bank] just past the pub. [RC : OK, yes, Sunny Bank] It's set like a big gate on it, hasn't it ? And he must have made stabling in there.

RC Yes. So [12 mins] did you keep your horse down at Sandgate then, and the cart ?

CR No, no. We kept our horse down Flookburgh. As you go down Flookburgh, though The Square, down towards the Council houses, Flookburgh, [RC : Down Mile Road] yes, [RC : Yes] Now there's a slip road, which used to be the main road when I was a lad. Remember them building the R.A.F. Camp, [RC : Yes] lorries used to come down, and there were for ever breaking down on that old road, that's why they cut through, and they built the Council houses later. [RC : So they were just outside ?] But the stables were just down that slip road, [RC : Yes] and they were a wooden area, of about 1 2 3 4 5 6 to 8 stables for the fishermen's horses. [RC : Right] And that's where ... we had a stable there, when Dad come out of the army, and, well, most fishermen had. And there was a fire. And John Hodgen's father ... you know, [13 mins] when you bought a horse, if you bought it, it would usually come on the rail, in a lovely horse box in those days, to Cark Railway Station. And lots of the men as bought them, they stole the halter which belonged to the rail. You know, they should have left it, but they were so well made and so strong, and Hodgen's horse was tied with one of these halter, and he couldn't get loose, and it was burnt to death. I'll never forget it. It was just like a big cinder there after the fire. Our horse escaped. We didn't know when we went down, but it was down at the watering trough, and it still had its halter and it's shank broken, but it had pulled free.

RC So your Dad was a fisherman, [CR : Yes] and his Dad, was he ?

CR Yes, his Dad was a fisherman, and his mother was a fisherwoman.

RC What did she fish ?

CR They fished the bay. Dad told me, when he left school, there was 100 fishermen and women. [RC : 100 ?] [14 mins] 100 fishermen and women leaving Flookburgh village to go out on the sands to gather cockles.

RC So that would be about what year ?

CR Oh hell, that was before my time. [laughs] Let's see ... [RC : Turn of the century, 1900 ?] How long's Dad ... Dad's been dead about 8 or 10 years, hasn't he, must have been, [RC : Was he born about 1900 ?] and he was 102 when he died. And when he was a lad, left

school, he said he never went to school because yer had to pay to go to school, and his mother couldn't afford it. [RC : Right] So he used to go to sands to cockle with them.

RC So he never went to school at all ?

CR Very very little, no. He used to sign his name with an X.

OR According to Colin Milner, he went to school. [CR laughs]

RC So there were 100 people on the ... cockling mainly ? It was mainly cockling at that time ?

CR Cockling, yes, from out of the village of Flookburgh. And they didn't wear ... there was no Wellington boots in them days, they wore clogs, and leggings, like gaiter [15 mins] things round to keep 'em dry. Women made their own clothes out of calico. They got like some bagging and oiled it, it was like calico they called it.

RC Right. Where did they get that from .....[?], d'you think ?

CR Oh, I've no idea. Maybe ... well, they wouldn't go so far, they wouldn't travel so far. Maybe someone in the village ? [RC : To make them ?] I mean 'cos [RC : So had that changed ?] although when I'm saying he didn't travel far, I did tell yer that Dad travelled all the way from Flookburgh to ... what do you call that small town in Yorkshire, where he got hired out on a farm, he went all the way by road to Settle. [RC : Settle] It's a hell of long way is that, isn't it, with a horse and cart ? [RC : In a horse and cart ?] He took his horse and cart. He got hired, he got his horse hired as well as himself. [RC : To do what ?] Hay time. [RC : OK] And when he got there, the farmer also hired Harold Manning and Matt Coop. And Harold Manning, it was [16 mins] such a hot summer, that Harold Manning never got off the sofa, he had ... he suffered hay fever, so he had to come home. [another conversation in the background]

RC So was that sort of, d'you think, for your father's generation, that they had to do a bit of work here, a bit of work there, sort of because of the seasons for cockling ?

CR Yes. Well, it's always been like that, always. [RC : Always] Fishing is something and nothing, and it's always been like that, even in my lifetime.

RC So what were the main seasons for cockling ?

CR Cockling, you can cockle all winter and all summer. [CR : Oh, right] But you weren't allowed to use a jumbo<sup>2</sup> during the summer months. [RC : Why was that ?] Well, in summer, if you went out on the sands, and there was a good bed of cockles, the sand would be spitting. You would think it was raining, rain drops. The sand would be spitting up these cockles. But they didn't do it until you moved on the sand. It's your weight, or even a person walking, or

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<sup>2</sup> There is a photograph of a jumbo on page 63 of Jack Manning's book, *It was better than Working*, where there is also a description of it, and how it was used.

a [17 mins] horse and cart or a tractor, it was everywhere like that. And so, in summer, the cockle grows like a little weed, like a moss. And it was called grouting. The blacksmith in the village used to make craams<sup>3</sup>. A craam was a short wooden shaft with these metal ... three metal prongs at the end like that. And I used to watch him make them. He used to get a short piece of iron, and cut it, so three prongs at that end, and he'd one prong here. And this prong at this end was for the handle to fit on, right. And those three there, he used to hit them with a hammer, and temper them, so that they were so fine, because they were for picking the cockles, not for raking them, [RC : No] for flicking them, and if they were thick, they'd flick too much sand into the basket. So that was done by all fishermen.

RC Yes. And was there good money in cockling ?

CR Well, [18 mins] as far as I know, nobody ever made a fortune until this last lot of cocklers went, when the prices were ... well, they were all going abroad, weren't they. In my day, and Dad's day, [RC : OK] it was all Lancashire and Yorkshire towns, [RC : Right] and a lot were sent on commission. So went you sent 'em on commission, you relied on what they sent you. You know, you couldn't ask for you price.

RC Did you send them on the train ?

CR Yes, Cark Station. In the siding at Cark Station there could be half a dozen wagons, all going to different towns, you know, Liverpool, Bradford, Halifax, all over the place ... Bolton

RC Was this in the '30s, before the war ? [OR : '40s I think] '40s, yes ? [CR : Before] And before that ? [background noises of something being moved near the microphone]

CR Well, when I left school, I ... let's see, would be ... just after the war ... it would be just after the war when we went over to Hest Bank. There was no cockles in our bay, at Morecambe Bay, but Hest Bank, [19 mins] there was lots of, oo, right big cockles. But the sand was as hard as bloody iron. God, it was hard work. And I used to go. There were Jim Benson, Sir James, he was never knighted but he got that name, Sir James, [RC : Did he have a nick-name ?] No, just Sir James, [RC : He was just Sir James, yes] that was his nick-name. He had a brother called Sep, Septimus, Sep Benson, and he had another brother called Harold, and they lived down on Church Villas, [RC : Yes, in Flookburgh] you know, which was built in the remainder of the old church. And as a lad, I used to spend, in war time, when Dad was away in the army, I used to spend a lot of time down there. They used to have these old motor cars ... [background noise, dog arriving] hello, that's my neighbour's this one. She's just been eying you up, she knows that you're not going to hurt her, so she's crept back. [20 mins] [laughs]

RC So when you said you went to Hest Bank, were there no fishermen who usually went on for Hest Bank ? Would that ...

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<sup>3</sup> See illustration on page 66 of Jack Manning's book, opposite

CR There was about two, that's all, [RC : Right] and they were dead against us, they were. And one chap, you know, he used to come in like an apron, a brown apron like you serve in a shop. But they only went about once or twice a week, and they didn't follow the sands like we did. They didn't know the sands intimately.

RC Why do you think that was ?

CR But well, they'd other jobs, like they all wanted it as part time, but they wanted the sands to themselves. But once Flookburgh found out ... Jim Benson loaded up his horse one morning, the early morning, with all he could get in the cart, and Dad loaded our horse up. We had this really quiet one, [21 mins] James was ... we called in Downie, because he bought it from Downie Howard, who was a dealer who lived between Lancaster and Preston. And Downie, it could walk for fun, it could fly almost. So when we went over there, there was only us two cockling over there, and this chap come towards Jim, and Jim, knowing that he could handle himself, right, frightened on no-one, and he put this 'ere man in his place, and they never said another word after that. But we used to go and cockle, .....[inaud] and when it was suitable for me to go in the school holidays, but I also used to go at weekends, if Dad didn't come home. And I would take ... Nanna, my mother, would send me with a biscuit tin full of ... you know, she was a good baker, cook, and she'd full of cakes and that. Because [22 mins] we were allowed to sleep in this little cabin at the said of the Railway Station. It's still there. But we never get any sleep because that's the main line, and these trains, when they went past there, they go about 100 mile an hour. [RC: What, at ...] Hest Bank. [RC : At Hest Bank] Hest Bank, aye.

RC Oh, so you had to stay away over night when you went there ?

CR Yes, well I ... in my school holidays I stayed there. [RC : Yes] They didn't stay long, but when the tides were only short tides, they did that. But when they used to start coming home, we had a farm just along ... only about five or six hundred yards back up a lane, it was called .....(ph) Hatletts Drive, in Hest Bank, and it's now quite a big restaurant, but it was a farm in those days, and when we were going home and not coming back, say we went over on the Friday and weren't coming back 'till the Monday, the farmer said he would see to our horses. They were stabled in his farm. [RC : Right] But when we got back on a Monday, Jim used to [23 mins] think that he hadn't fed Downie, because Downie used to bite like hell, and it used to kick, right. But ours was as quiet as a mouse, anybody could go near. [laughs] Then eventually we got grazing in a field, down on the shore, it's now all caravan park, but we got the grazing. But before we got the grazing, we managed to get grazing in a field near a farm on the shore, we were coming home one day, we'd unload our cockles, and we were going along the shore, and there's like Red Bank Farm they call it. And why they call it Red Bank Farm ... the land runs to the shore and then there's ... same as at Sandgate, round from Sandgate, where sea takes away the embankment, it leaves it on the shore like red, you know, and it was high, high up, and down the bottom there's a boulder which the tide releases, but there was a track round, like a cart track. [24 mins] Well, we were going first, me



and Dad in our cart, and Jim Benson, Sir James, was following, and he always sat, always sat with his back to the horse, because if a horse was following the one cart in front, it usually followed the same track, with it's head over the back of the cart or vehicle in front of it. [RC : Right, yes] And by gum it didn't, it cut a corner and it hit this boulder, and it whipped the cart right over, threw Jim out. And he was trapped with his leg under the cart, and he was never the same after that. He was lame all the rest of his days after that.

RC Did you usually go out onto the sands with other people, or did, you know ... was there a group usually of people ?

CR No. At the first, there was just, at Hest Bank, there was only Dad and Jim Benson. And then a family came from Askam in Furness, and I believe the name, when I told Dad the name ... Dad used to know nearly everybody, [25 mins] he told me they'd a family of about 13 children. They were always hard up, and breeches' arses hanging out when they were kids. [laughs] And he used to come and ... holidays he had lots of these children with him. And he hired a farm horse, big heavy farm horse, and a lorry like a coal lorry, with a turntable and four wheels and a big ... He used to load it up with cockles. How it ever pulled 'em back to shore I'll never know. But we were the only three there.

RC So were there other, like the Askam family, were there other families that came onto Flookburgh [CR : No, only those two families as already lived in Bolton le Sands] Oh, in Bolton le Sands, yes. What about at Bardsey, were there families there ?

CR There was fishing families at Bardsey, but there was never no cockles in Bardsey, [RC : No] all Dad's lifetime or all my lifetime, until this last lot, when this cockling tragedy happened.

RC Right. [26 mins] So your apprenticeship then with ... in the school holidays was it ...

CR When I started. And then when I left school, I didn't want to do anything else. All my pals had jobs to go to, they all went into trades. But I used to sit aside of Robert Nelson, you know, his wife still lives at Flookburgh, [background noise of OR talking to a visitor for a while] and Robert was my best friend, and being a big lad ... and in the school, Holker School, they had these big sliding doors, they must have been about 15 foot tall, at an angle, and they slid on a grid, and they used to close them. That meant our class was separate from the others. And Robert always wanted to be a train driver. And so he left school and he went to be a train driver, to train to be a train driver. Then he found that when he was a train driver, he couldn't get the weekends off, and he was mad on football. So he still stopped on the railway but he went in [27 mins] for ... on the line like, you know, whatever job it was, and then he was made a foreman. [more background noise] But very sadly, he passed away in a train, didn't he ? He got .....? [inaudible through background noise] And he was exactly the same age as me was Robert, and we used to sit together in school, we were great pals.

RC So of your sort of contemporaries at school, were you pretty much the only one who went on to the sands then ?

- CR No, there was ... well at my age, Jack's about a month older than me, Jack Manning, [RC : OK, yes] and Jack went to Grammar School at Ulverston. In those days you could pay to go, you know, if your parents could afford to pay for you, they could put you up to education that way. And I believe Jack was paid for, that's why he went to the Grammar School at Ulverston. My sister Jean went there as well.
- RC Yes. So in terms of skills, [28 mins] had you got all the skills from the summer holidays when you went onto the sands ?
- RC All the skills ? I couldn't get all the skills in Morecambe Bay in the summer holidays. [RC : No ?] It's taken me a lifetime ! [laughs]
- RC So tell me, what are the skills ?
- CR There's people and there's people, everybody is different. [RC : Yes] But, see, my Dad was ... he was mainly a cockler. [background chatter again for a while] And he didn't ... he wasn't used to setting a lot of nets, or anything like that. Some fishermen made their living by setting their nets, others were mainly cockling, and my Dad was a main cockler. But I know when I left school, many a time there'd only be the two of us, me and Dad out there cockling. Without there was a glut, and then when there's a glut of cockling, they all come on. Same as Jack and his Dad ... Jack's Dad was ... he was one of these, he liked to organise. And he didn't work himself, he was like, you know what they call these ... like a [29 mins] gang master more or less with the Flookburgh fishermen. He would get yer to get 'em for 'im, and then he ...
- RC So they fished for flukes ?
- CR They mainly fished ... and salmon in those days. [OR : Illegally] They would get lots of salmon illegally, illegally. Lots and lots of salmon illegally. Now there's none.
- RC There isn't any. Was that going up the Leven, from the Leven estuary ?
- CR They got them at the Leven. [RC : Yes] I once ... I don't know if I told you on the last story, 'cos Dad used to take a lot of flukes from Mr Manning, and he was getting short of flukes in his nets, so he would have ... we'd take our horse and that, with draw nets. And we went up with Jack, and I think Jack came down in a big massive rowing boat. But I remember I went with a horse, in as deep as it could, we had this long net, and they were down the side, [30 mins] and we were drawing for whatever we could get, mostly flukes, but we'd probably get a few salmon as well. But ... and then Jack took the boat up, but I was once asked to go with him, and this was at night time, up above ... let's see, how do you get to it, you go up Holker, past Holker Hall, and then yer turn left down to the caravan park, right. [RC : Oh yes, at Old Park ?] at Old Park, go as far as you can, to the last farm almost, and onto the sands. And there was an area here where they use to draw for salmon, Jack and his Dad. But on this occasion, they let me in on it. So, I had mi bathing costume on, and Jack and his Dad rowed out, and I was on this end holding it, and they rowed out and come back, come back and we

pulled it in, [31 mins] I'll bet there'd be 20 salmon in one go. We almost filled the boat. And we had two draws, then Harold, as they called 'im : we'll have to be quick and bag 'em up and away with 'em. And I thought, bloody 'ell, they've been doing this for ages, make a fortune, must have made a fortune, right. And if there wasn't as many salmon, and they were frightened of the tide were wrong or summat, we catch 'em, they used to go and hide 'em in the farmer's field under the hedges, and then go back in the dark and collect 'em. The farmer knew what was going on. And also, Lord Cavendish did because they used to supply him with 'em ! He allowed 'em to go and do it ! [laughs]

RC So did you not do shrimping, did you ? [CR : Yes] You did shrimping and cockling ? (32 min)

CR Yes. I have a DVD, which, it only runs for ... I didn't show yer last time did I ? It's 60 odd [32 mins] years old. I'd just come out of the army, National Service, and Dad had bought me a horse and cart, and we were fishing. Actually, this horse, it belonged to Harry Shaw. Now Harry was ... he was here there and everywhere, and Jim was the same. They'd buy two horses, and they'd fit up with carts and shrimp nets, and they'd shrimp, maybe 12 months, maybe 2 years, and then they'd sell up, want to sell up, and they started going hawking, round the villages and in the outskirts. And Jim, now, is like a bishop is to verger at Flookburgh Church is Jim. Captain, lovely bloke, he never ever had a bad word for anyone in his life time hadn't Jim. [RC : And that was Jim Shaw and his father ?] Jim Shaw, Jim and his father. And now, when I come home, Dad bought me Jim's horse. It was black and white, and it could wade ... you could trust your life with it, it would wade with just its nose out the water. It could walk without swimming, [33 mins] under water almost. But nearly all the horses got to doing that. And on that DVD, it shows you ... it's taken when I was 20 years of age. I came out of the army at 20, and I had ... Jack Butler's brother at Allithwaite, he married Jack Rowlandson's sister, she's dead now isn't she, the small one. [OR : Elsie ? Jack Rowlandson's sister ?] Jack Rowlandson from Allithwaite, Jack ... Jack's sister, Joan Manning married Rowlandson from Allithwaite, right<sup>4</sup>. [OR : Yes] He had two sisters, and they're both dead now I think. I think one just died recently. [RC : Elsie, maybe ?] Eh ? [RC : Was it Elsie ?] Tallest one, just died recently I think, I think I read it. [RC : Before Christmas] Yes, well the other one was shorter, and she married Jack Butler's brother from Allithwaite, and he was a joiner at Postlethwaite's, and he was going [34 mins] to make me a cart. And I have that cart on DVD, and I'm only 20 years of age, and we were up West, just dropping our nets off, and going in, horses are going down deeper and deeper with just their backs showing.

RC Where's West ?

CR Well it's opposite to East ! [both laugh] If you go out of Flookburgh, and you go up the village, and up that steep hill at Sandgate, [RC : Sandgate, yes] you know Sandgate, that's West. [RC : Right, that's what you called West] [OR talking to someone else in the background] Up West, aye.

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<sup>4</sup> Confirmed by Family Tree in Jack Manning's book, op. cit.

- RC Right. So, between the cockles and the shrimps, were the cockles sort of hassle free really ? You just caught them, bagged them, and they were onto the wagons ?
- CR Yes. [35 mins] Hassle free I would say, hassle, yes, because it was hassle free, there wasn't ... When they ... without they were plentiful, you didn't get many fishermen going for them. You might have got same as ... someone as went to a market stall, they would only go once a week for maybe a few cockles, maybe to boil, or something like that.
- RC Did you go to Barrow market ?
- CR No these ... Dad didn't have a stall in them early days. He bought some land off [laughs] behind Beryl's property, and it belonged to a Mr Reagan. [OR : Oh yes] Harry and Mary Reagan, and we bought that property, and then that other horrible sister, she got it. [RC : Right] And then she had, she wanted ...
- RC And what was the land for ? [CR : It was money, money, money] Oh right, I see. [CR : Not for us, no, when mi sister got it] But it wasn't for growing ?
- CR Ah yes, when we bought it, [RC : Yes] it was a market garden. [RC : Right] It had a 60 foot greenhouse. And Dad did follow [36 mins] the same as Mr Reagan. We didn't have a transport then, and Mr Reagan used to ... in fact there was two, three of them probably, they used to go with a bogey, a flat bogey, loaded up with the vegetables, Cark Station, into the goods van, barrowed[?] out on to another bogey, and wheeled through the streets to the market at Barrow. And that's how they did.
- RC What was the bogey ? A barrow ? A cart ? [Another conversation continues in the background]
- CR It was made with mangle wheels, you know, one either side. They used to make their own.
- RC So the carts that you used to take out onto the sands, were they for life ? If you had a cart, was it handed down, like from your father to you ?
- CR Well, they lasted a long time. But one thing with the sand, and the wheels, and you know bushes, right, so you always had to keep an eye on them. Because on one time, [37 mins] I say, Dad's best friend Meffat was shrimping, and they were trawling up with flood tide, and Meffat's wheel was coming off, right. So Dad went t' side with his horse, and I went out and held his horse, and he waded in, up to 'ere, like this, [RC : Up to his chest] aye, while Meffat could walk out to the side with his horse, and Dad kept pushing the wheel on. And they did like that all the way home. And then I think when they got to the shore, they loosed it out and left the cart. They had to come back another day and ... They used to put new bushes in, 'cos they got worn with the salt water. There's different types of wheels and different types of bushes, you see.
- RC And who made those ?

- CR Oh hell, he'd be dead and gone a hundred years. They were years old. They used to buy 'em at farm sales. [RC : Oh, I see] And these, the wheels, [RC : Yes] they didn't buy the carts, [RC : No] well, they did, they probably did, [RC : There wasn't a joiner, local joiner making them ?] There was, yes. They used to make carts at [38 mins] Davis' at Cark, top of the hill, just before you get ... right opposite the pub, at Cark, on top of the hill. [RC : Sunny Bank ?] [OR : Sunny bank] Aye. That was brothers, Davis brothers, there were quite a few of them, and they were joiners. They could do anything. Wheelwrights, they used to make wheels and make the carts. [RC : Right] And make the heavy carts for the farmers, and they'd make a lighter cart for the fishermen. [RC : Right] But for fishermen for shrimping, we used spring carts with a spring. And for block carts, they were heavy and, well, when the horses were pulling them on the sand, the wheels used to ... you could 'ear 'em, like knock knock on the bush.
- RC So where did you go to in the early days, when you were fishing with your father ? Did you go to Ulverston markets, and sort of ... [Cr : No] No. How far did you get away from home, sort of ?
- CR We didn't go away from home at all. [RC : No] And nobody ... I mean home was home, and you stayed at home. In fact no-one [39 mins] new ever came into our village, and no-one ever went out without they dropped down dead. And then they had a funeral, and everybody used to go to church in them days. On a Sunday morning, bell used to ring, and you could look out yer window, [laughs] and you'd see one going, and then another going, and another. It was a way of life in those days. I mean, Ethel Wilson, she was a fisherman's daughter, Tom Wilson's daughter, and Ethel used to go to the sands and cockle with her father, and she told me that she always went to church, you know, about three times on a Sunday, [RC : Three times ?] yea. And there was ... and when at the, I think it was the morning service, boys weren't allowed to sit with girls. But the boys used to sit at the back, father back, and lots of them took pea shooters, and they used to [blowing noise] to the girls at the front. [laughs] And they always wore bonnets did the girls in them days, wore hats, [40 mins] yea.
- RC Did anybody go to the chapel, the Methodist Chapel at Cark, or was it just the church ? [OR : The Bensons went]
- CR The Benson's, they were ... what d'you call 'em, Methodists ? [OR : Yes] Aye, Methodists. There was a woman lived down Grange ... There was a Methodist Chapel in Flookburgh [RC : Oh, where was that ?] Burnt down. [RC : Oh right, on ...] The woman ... there was a woman as lived at Ravenstown, and she was like, a Meth... [RC : Methodist] Metho. I was going to say she was a Heathenist ! [both laugh] She was a Methodist, and she was like a caretaker, used to come often, and if it was in winter months, and there wasn't many people, she used to light the stove. And she burnt the bloody spot down. And it was burnt to a cinder. John Hodgen bought ...

[phone rings, OR answers it and is heard to say : Hello ... [CR : You're naughty; I'm looking] Well, he's actually busy talking to someone at the moment, could you ring a bit later ? ... [41 mins] Is it about the walk ? ... Yes ... [caller says they will call back] ... All right, [CR : This is recording now] Thank you very much, goodbye. [ANO : Leave it off] There you go. [CR : Don't put it on. Leave it off Beryl. Olive, don't put it on, it's naughty, we ...] [OR : I don't know who she was, she said is Cedric about ? I don't know who she was, I didn't ask her what she wanted] [CR : One of mi girlfriends!] [laughs] [OR : We get a lot of people ring up]

RC Right. So nobody ever came in and out of Flookburgh, so what did you do for amusement then?

CR Abusement? [RC : Amusement] [both laugh] I thought you said abusement. [both continue laughing] Amusement? We didn't have any amusements. You weren't allowed. [OR : Played cards] [42 mins] My father didn't believe in ... [RC : Were there dances and things?] My father was ... he was work, work, and more work, you know, no play. [RC : Is that.. would you say ...] It was his nature. He was as strong as two men, [RC : Yes, yes] and he just worked, all the time.

RC Was that something that all the fishermen shared? Were they all workers? [CR laughs] [OR : Some went to the pub]

CR Some would spend half their bloody time in the pub. [laughs] They did, honestly. Never mind. It was a way of life, you know. There's no two people alike. But they still managed, and they got on. [Background conversation again] It was a lovely village, apart from them families did ... some families never spoke to other families for years on end.

RC What ... was that because of competition? [CR : Yes] [43 mins] Right, so when did you start to go to Barrow and Ulverston ? Do you remember when you started to sort of go further? [CR : What, to go fishing?] To sell, or to sell the shrimps or cockles.

CR Well, we didn't go to Barrow. Well, when Dad bought the land, he carried on with ... and I was still fishing, and Dad was still fishing as well, so between we had this market garden, which we kept nice and tidy as well, in the first few years we had it, and then, it was only when I moved down to Grange here in 1963, we had this land here cultivated, and neglected the one at Flookburgh. But there was a naughty man lived at Flookburgh, he's dead now. And you see, you do get people envious of you. And he lived very close to our greenhouse, and [44 mins] every time Dad went round, there were broken panes. And he was throwing bloody stones at our greenhouse, and he broke bloody dozens on panes. So, one day, Dad said ... he got in touch with the policeman. The policeman said, well, he'd come and sit with Dad. And we sat all one ... you know, until it was dusk, and it never happened. So the policeman didn't want to come again. But me and Dad sat there, and Dad was sharp as lightening he was, and then it happened, one evening. Bloody stones were coming, and bloody windows were getting smashed, so Dad run out, and it was big Frank, you know, yea, big Frank. [OR : Balmy] And Dad said, you know, we've got you now, he said, there's policemen on the gate there, there's one round the corner. There wasn't, there was only me and Dad. But he just went so soft, [45 mins] and his wife come to the door: what's happening

Bill. And she said, I'll get him to put it right. So he had to put every bloody pane back in the greenhouse. [laughs]

RC Tell me a bit about how the change happened between the carts and the tractors, and how that affected you.

CR Well, I had such a love of horses. I had some good uns, I had some bad uns. My Dad had some good uns, but they were a one man horse and one woman, because mi Mother had to be a horse woman as well as mi Dad, because the last one as they had, it used ... it wasn't good to yoke but it was worse to loose out. It used to run out the shafts. When there's one person, you see, we had like what you call ... it wasn't heavy gear for cockling, it was for shrimp cart gear, spring cart gear, [46 mins] and it was light and it tugs, like two brown things like that which the shafts fit through. And if you're only at one side, you couldn't see what the other side was doing. [Background conversation again] And that horse used to run out, so Mother had to get up, and she had to be there every time he come from the sands to help him, either yoke or unyoke. But it was so good on the sands, it was about the only horse I've ever as you could put ... you could face a gale force wind, put it straight into the weather, and it would take 'er Dad right to the fishing grounds. Not many horses would do that, given the ... they'd turn round and go the other way.

RC Yes. Who ... did you have to go and buy horses, I mean, where did they come from ?

CR Our main source was from Morecambe, but they did used to have a horse sale at Kendal. [RC : Right] [47 mins] And when fishing became ... when there was more orders, when Youngs came into the village, [RC : Was that in the 70s or the 60s ?] Yes. The ... I mean ... horses I say ... I remember buying through his father, Tom Shaw, he wasn't a fisherman at all, he used to hawk fish, you know, but he went fishing part time, and his brother Nathan was a full time joiner, and he left his job to come on the sands, and both of them bought horses from Kendal horse sale. And luckily, they both went to the sands as if they'd been doing it all their lives. Nathan bought a dapple grey, and he kept it until it was white. And you know, he fished, and shrimped, I don't remember him going cockling, but they shrimped, and they used to supply Bill McClure, that was [48 mins] Nathan's sister in law, was Bill McClure, he was married to Nathan's sister. [RC : Right] Madge, they called her, didn't they?

RC So did you fish with, and cockle with the tractors?

CR We started cockling with tractors, and at first it seemed .....[?], it seemed very difficult, and it seemed a bit awkward at first, because you get so much splash on the sands, and we started with these little Ferguson tractors. Well they're only low set, and they really splashed everywhere. And then the fisherman started buying tin, and modifying them so that they would stop the splash. But ... and then John (ph) Hodgen came along, and his sister kept the corner shop in Flookburgh. And his father must have done very well in years gone by because money seemed no object [49 mins] to them. And John bought the first diesel tractor. And then, you know fishermen in the village ... oh, I wouldn't buy a blooming diesel, na'body

in the village knows how to mend it if anything goes wrong wi' it. You know, but he did and he used it, and found out that diesels were far better. The petrol models, we used to start 'em with a hand, [RC : The old crank] Some had a press, but you could start 'em by hand, but that was hard work, really hard work. But ...

RC So did they repair them themselves, the tractors, or was there someone in the village ?

CR They didn't have any ... they used to have someone in the village who had a bit of knowledge, more knowledge than the others about them, but we seemed to get on alright with them. And when you get a lot of ... when there was a lot of tractors, you know, a lot ... a number of them might not be so good at starting, but as long as one starts, you could manage to get the others going as well.

RC Yes. So what do you think, from those [50 mins] 100 families, that you talked about, that your Dad talked about, when you were sort of fishing, how many families do you think would have been going out then ? [CR : about 20] 20. And why was that sort of drop ?

CR Well, same as I mentioned earlier, no-one ever went out of the village, and when they left school they would get a job locally, [RC : Right] And if they went into trades, if they didn't follow their father into fishing, they went into trades. And in my day, there was me, there was Jack Manning, and there was Brian Shaw .....[?]. Captain Jim, I didn't know Jim at school, like he's older than me isn't he, about our Peggy's age, [OR : He doesn't look it] He doesn't look it, he's done marvellously has Jim.

RC So it was sort of other [51 mins] opportunities really for trades. [CR : Yes, that's right, yes] Do you think school played a part in that ? Going to school ?

CR Well, [inaudible comment from OR] I didn't like school, I bloody hated school. But as much as I hated it, [RC : Did you go ?] Vera Preston, her name isn't Preston now but she was my neighbour, and Vera was always top in the class and I was always second. I don't know how I was always second because I always hated school, absolutely hated it. [RC : Why ?] Bloody awful. When I went to infant's school, I ran home first day and hid under bloody table. In them days, Nanna had a cloth, you know, which hung down, and I hid under bloody table thinking they'd never find me, and she come and found me under there, put me over her shoulder, and slapped mi bottom, and took me back to school. [laughs] And they used to put us to bed in afternoon then, they had loads of beds. [52 mins] [OR : They did] [RC : In the school ?] In school grounds. You know, there's two buildings, Flookburgh school. [probably addressing OR] Oh aye, 'cos you had the ... you got the ground ... [OR : Yes] Yes. And in that ... it was only a wooden building was the second one. We had this coke stove in the middle, [OR : Yes] with a big fire guard round it, and that threw out a lot of heat.

RC Did you have ... did you go home for lunch ?



CR No. [OR : No] I don't remember. [OR : We didn't do that] We probably didn't. [RC : There was a canteen, was there, at lunch ?] No, there wasn't a canteen, they weren't designed in them days. [RC : Right. You had packed Lunch ?] No, not in them days. You wouldn't know what a packed lunch was. [OR : We took sandwiches] Eh ? What at infants school ? [OR : Oh, maybe not] [laughs] I don't remember ever eating. When we get home, Nanna would have made a [53 mins] hotpot or something. [laughs]

RC So did your grandmother live with you ? [CR : Grandmother ?] Or did she live nearby ?

CR I never knew mi grandmother [RC : Oh right. When you said Nanna ...] [OR : His mother] I used to call her Nanna, yes.

RC Right, OK, yes. So how did the job of Guide of the Sands come about ?

CR Well, I was cockling out there, there was only me and mi father cockling, miles out, probably five miles out in the bay. And you could see this dark figure coming, Gren Harrison from Grange over Sands, he was a sea fishery officer. And he wore a uniform, like a naval person, a black cap, peaked cap, and dark uniform. And he always wore waders. Even if it was mid summer, he'd walk out five miles with his waders on. Big strong chap he was. But we always liked him, we thought he was very fair. And he always carried a brass gauge in his pocket. And [54 mins] I think I told you this before, when he arrives, he goes to the cockle bags which we've already gathered, and he'd take out ... he'd try a few cockles. If they dropped through, they're too small. But we always had a riddle, and everything was in order. And then he'd come to the time to load up, and I was only a lad, and you get tired, been out there five or six hours jumbo-ing, and raking when they're .....[?], or picking them one at a time. And I think we had about five or six hundredweight. And we always took the back of the cart, we called it the eck, right, and chucked it on the floor, [RC : The heck ?] They called it eck, E C K, [RC : Yes] Not oh heck, but it was an eck. We just dropped that on the floor. And then he'd ... we'd get one either side of the bag, and lug it at the bottom, and two 'em into the ... they were hundredweights and more like with being wet cockles. And Gren, he looked at me and said, [55 mins] there's no need to do that, he said, I'll load the cart for you. And he just got hold of a hundredweight bag like that, and oo, straight into the cart on the side. I thought, bloody hell, he's as strong as a giant. But he was very very strong, he must have been as strong as two men. And then on the way home, .....[?], we had a horse called Charlie and it was a Clydesdale, and it was nervous. But with him walking along side, we went twice as fast. But he mentioned the Guide, he was retiring. He said, have you never thought of applying for it Cedric ? I said, no, I didn't even know there was a Guide. You'd never heard of walks world in Flookburgh ! Mind, there weren't many walks in previous days, see. So he said, I'll call with the details. So he called round the day after with the details. And I had to apply, in writing, to ... it was Holker Estates, Lord Cavendish. [56 mins] Not this Lord Cavendish, it was his father was the trustee. There were three trustees, and when they had the meetings, there was Tom, Dick and Harry. That's what ... funny that, isn't it, there was Tom, Dick and Harry. And we went ... I had word that I had to meet at Holker Hall,

and you go before the Board. They'd two of the trustees, three of them, sat there, but they know who you are before ... they know all about you. They ask a lot of questions. There was one other chap, Alan Benson applied, and he was ... I was chosen on that day.

RC And how old were you then, about, were you in your 20s ?

CR I was 30 when I came here. [RC : Oh, 30] We've been here 53 years, so now I'm 84 next month. What, is it now January ? [RC : Yes] Yes, I'm 84 next month. [OR : Yes]

RC So you've been walking the bay for 50 ...

CR [57 mins] I've walked millions of miles. No, I have walked the equivalent of twice round the world out there. It's true is that. These students, you know, from Leeds have studied me for ... They come as .....[?] all one year, went out in the bay with me, walked the sands with me, went out fishing with me, and then they did this study. And it was a nice bit what they wrote about it, but they said I walked the equivalent of twice round the world, or, in a straight line, as from here to Canada.

RC So did you stop fishing when you came here ?

CR No. I never stop fishing. I fish between ... you see, you fish when there's rising tides, and you don't catch fish on the low tides at all. Same as the Flookburgh fishermen. They don't shrimp much on the low tides, neap tides, because there's more water in the bay, and they can't get in to the bottom of the river. [58 mins] The river's wide, maybe a mile wide down where they shrimp. Whereas when you're shrimping, maybe it's only a hundred and fifty yards. That makes the difference. [Background conversation again]

RC But were you fishing for pleasure, and for your own needs, or sort of commercially, when you came here ?

CR When I came here ? I always ... we always set ... we were catching whitebait at that time as well. [RC : Right] We set for ... that was a new venture. Flookburgh fishermen started that off. And we used to take a lot to Fleetwood Fisheries. [RC : Right] But I ... [RC : On the train, or just ...] No, no, with a vehicle. [RC : A vehicle, yes] And then when cockles got mad to get, you know, we travelled ... and Jean had left school, and she wanted to go to the sands wi' me. And she did, for years. Then we had a trailer behind the car, and we used to work the sands during the day, and take the cockles during the night, to Blackburn market. [59 mins] [RC : Right] Did I ever tell you about the time we got pulled up ? Every time we went ... 'cos it was through the night, and we were driving along ... there's the RAF place on the left hand side on the outskirts of Preston, and there's a Kentucky Fried on the right, and it's a straight road, maybe for a mile of straight. And it must have been, oo, 4 o'clock in the morning. And I'd been to the sands, and I had mi waders on, and jacket. And we were both tired out, and we had this trailer full of cockles. And all of a sudden, this car pulled up along side, I saw it in mi mirror, it was a private car, and it pulled up along side. And I said to Jean, 'cos I swore,

but I said, I wonder what them two cheeky buggers want. And they just looked right at us, like that, and then it zoomed in front, and on the back window : Police Stop. And they jumped out. [1 hr] And I thought they were bloody gangsters or something. "What are you doing at this time of morning ? Where are you going ? What yer got in those bags ?" And we had to explain everything, and then it was alright. "On yer way". And that wasn't the only time they pulled us up. Another time I had a van which broke down, and they pulled us up and played 'ell with us. And I had to get Larry to come and tow us home. And then there was a third time. I didn't have any rear lights for my trailer. So I fixed 'em up with a wooden net stake, and two bicycle rear lamps for the back, tied on with string. And it wasn't a good night when we arrived, and we must have set off back about half past five in the morning. And we were just approaching that, you know, that motorway place with big mushroom on top, [RC : Forton] [OR : Forton] Forton Services, [RC : Yes] And it was like a haze, like a misty [1 hr 1 min] rain, right. And this bloody Police van pulled past, same thing : Stop. So he come out, and : "Do you know you've no rear lights ?" So I said, well we had when we set off. "Jump out a minute, Mister". Right, so I jumped out. They'd vibrated and they were shining down under floor ! [RC laughs] We'd come all that way, and it was really bad for ... He said : "What are you doing anyhow ?" So I told him. "Where do you live, where are you from ?" I said we live at Grange, but I said formerly of Flookburgh, I'm a Flookburgh fisherman. "Do you know Bill McClure ?" I said, I know him well. He said : I'm a great friend of Bill's, he said. He said, look, he said, you drive into that station there, he said, and stay there 'till daylight, he said. And if anyone pulls you up [1 hr 2 mins] between here and there, he said, don't say you've seen me ! So we went in there, and we sat on a table, me and Jean, and it was a bloody misty morning and dark, and we sat there 'till it come daylight. And on the next table, about six policemen come and sat down, [RC laughs] with that one as had stopped us. And I thought, we daren't get up off this table until it comes properly light. And then it come properly light, we went out and drove us all the way home. And we had some experiences on that journey. [laughs]

RC      So how did the charity walks start ? Was it ...

CR      Well, when they first started, the walks started, there were very few charitable walks. And if I had an enquiry about a charitable walk ... it's funny, but there's naught so queer as folk as long as they're alive, that's a saying, old saying. And if I mentioned, you know, if someone mentioned a charity walk to a group as wants to come, [1 hr 3 mins] they didn't want to go on a charity walk. So I remember a woman from Grange wanted a charity walk. I said, well, I'm afraid we don't do them. That was just right on the early stages.

RC      When was that about ? [CR : 1963, '64] OK, yes.

CR      But now if you look through there, there's charitable walks on every walk, but the public can ... if a smaller group wants to come, and do their own thing, I just tell 'em, I say : take no notice of the charity walk. Some of the organisers of charity walks are quite cheeky, they'll go up to a group and say, you know : you have to pay. But I said, listen, if they come to you,

you just say your friends of Cedric, and you can come in on the walk. But it's good, because these charitable walks raise a lot of money. We do walks for Barrow, Westmorland General, and Lancaster hospitals. We've raised hundreds of thousands for 'em. And now, we've just organised a walk for [1 hr 4 mins] Blackpool Victoria hospital. 'Cos they're all wanting ... it's all ... all the money we've raised, [coughs] excuse me, it's going towards new equipment.

RC Equipment, yes. So when does the walking season start ?

CR When I say so. [laughs] No, it starts late April, and you won't get any enquiries at all this time of year for those early starts. But ... [coughs] excuse me. When ... I should have had a ... [OR : Perhaps he wants a drink ?] [background chatter] My father and her father, they always used to take a bottle of cold tea, when they went to sands, didn't they ? [OR : I don't remember] Which they brewed up in the morning, what was left they'd put in a bottle and take it.

RC Yes. What did you call what you took to the sands ? Did it have a special name ? [1 hr 5 mins]  
[CR : What d'you mean ?] Your drink and your food. [CR : It was only called tea. You didn't take any food] You didn't take any food ? [CR : No] Right.

CR But you were ready to eat a horse when you got back, but you couldn't eat the horse which you had to make a living with. [laughs]

RC So it starts in April, the season ...

CR Aye, and it goes right through 'till the end of September, and this year I've chose the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 'cos it's very low tides. [RC : Right] And when it gets to October, you can't start in afternoons, because the nights are drawing in so quick. It's a morning start. So I've 22 walks this year.

RC But now we are only January, and people are phoning up, what are they phoning up about ?

CR Well, if they don't get in now, they miss. They'd all be full, before ...

RC So they're booked up so much in advance ?

CR Well, just pass that red book over Beryl. [laughs] [Beryl : Tell me what you want] It's in the early pages. See, I do this, [1 hr 6 mins] this is my cross bay walk book, but for reasons when the phone rings, I can open up that with my glasses on, [RC : Yes] but there isn't room to put everybody down. But those are all the dates, [RC : Yes] and the names are opposite. But there's, I've put ... there's full, full, full, full, full, full, already.

RC And these are full to societies, these are societies that are phoning you up, on behalf of societies ?

- CR Well, can you read ? Do them glasses work ? There, look you. [shuffling noise] But in this book, [RC : Yes] all those dates are down, [RC : Yes] 'ere. And the book ... people have booked there ... and now in this book 'ere, but when they're full, [RC : Yes] when it gets up to 500, [RC : Yes] I put full.
- RC Oh, 500 is the maximum. [CR : Yes, just say no] But ... So how do you go about preparing for the walks ? Is there a lot of work involved in it ?
- CR There's always a lot of work because that ... [1 hr 7 mins] it changes every day out there. People have no idea. They come on a walk but all the danger has been taken out of it. But with being on the sands all my life, I have two very good helpers, one especially. He came from Manchester, he's been coming with me now for about 10 years. He listens to everything I say. But they can't ... see, I could look from the bedroom window, and look out there, on a clear day I'll go up onto Hampsfell, and scan the bay, and look at the river, and choose the place to cross. But I can't tell what that river's like until ... that looks the best place to cross, for 500 people, but until we get there, roll ... take our wellies off and roll our trousers up, and stick edge, and separate about 15, 20 yards apart, and start to walk into the river, test it, can't tell until it's all been tested. I have to cross the river with my tractor, [1 hr 8 mins] to go over to Arnside, to mark the full route. I'm driving on the route which I would be coming back on the day with the walkers. [RC : Yes] So when we go through the river, I always follow Barry, 'cos he's reliable. See, if the river's wide, I'll only go about half way, because it means me walking through and walking back for mi tractor, which is hard work in water. So, I .....[?] go back to tractor. If it's alright the rest of way, just thumbs up, and he gets to the other side, and he goes ... so I go through on that route where he's walked. They jump aboard, I say jump aboard, there isn't time to hang about. John, he's being going with me for 40 odd years, and he's a heart of gold, but he never stops talking, he's worse than me. But he talks a load of bloody rubbish, and never listens to what I say. And he does t' opposite things. He think up is down and down is up. So, you know, he's still learning after all them years. Whereas [1 hr 9 mins] Barry listens to everything, and does everything right. Anyhow, we go over to Arnside, turn round when we get to the shore, where we're meeting the group, and start coming back. And then I'll stop, in a place where I think it's suitable to put a laurel bush, with a big iron bar, and Barry's stronger than me now, and so he bars it, and John pushes these laurel bushes in, and the sand sets around them. And then they jump aboard, and they shout alright, and then I go on to where I think I need another one. Then we get back to the river. But when we get back to the river, I go back to the track where I've come through, and put a marker in. We're still on that side. And then ... [RC : That's on the Kent side ?] On the Arnside side. [RC : Arnside, yes] And then we have to go from that marker where I come out of the river, up the river, either up or down, which ever is the best area, and say, [1 hr 10 mins] well, with 500 walkers I need a hell of a width, so we'll put another in. And then we'd cross. They'd walk through and I'd go with the tractor in a different area to what I went through, and then we find out ... And then I get off at he other side and come in, and we do it until we're satisfied that it's firm and safe for 500 walkers. And then we mark on our own side. [RC : And that's the day before] And that's the day before. And then on the

day, it can change if it rains, and people don't understand. If it rains on the Saturday, and it might be raining on the Friday, and when we test it, it's a bit on the dangerous side, but if it continues to rain, it makes it too dangerous, that's where I have to judge. But people can't ... now say it's fine, and the sun shines on the Saturday, they're ringing up and saying why have you cancelled the walk. They've no idea that the river will be higher on the Saturday, because it's only just getting it ... [RC : Coming down] Yes.

RC Why do you use [1 hr 11 mins] laurel ?

CR Because ... you can use any old bush, but after a couple of tides the leaves would drop off, and you're left with like a skeleton. With laurel, the leaves go brown, but they don't drop off. [RC : Right] And they're very very good to see, especially if the weather is a bit inclement, they look like a man standing up in the distance.

RC Is it tradition that laurel's been used ?

CR They've been used for ... Guides have used them for years, yes.

RC Are there any other traditions that have sort of been handed down ?

CR Not as I know of. [RC : No] They haven't handed anything over to me anyhow.

RC So, looking back, have you retired, would you say ?

CR No ! Hell, you looked at that book. I mean, yes, have I retired ? [laughs] I get tired but I'm not retired. [laughs] No, I'm looking forward, I always look forward to the season.

RC So what keeps you going ?

CR [1 hr 12 mins] Well I have a love of the sands. If I didn't, I would have retired long since. I just have a love of the sands, and I never want to leave them. I mean, it isn't just ... what happens now, you see, I don't get any money coming in from the walks or anything without I do something for myself. Majority of the walkers think I'm paid by the Queen or the Council. And, oh, I see that footballer has been given one of Cedric's awards. See that middle award there, from Lancaster[?] City Council, that Liverpool footballer has been there from leaving school, and he's moved away ... what d'you call him ... [OR : Don't know] but his name was on telly. The Liverpool city give him the freedom of the city. [OR : Freedom of the city, right] And Grange have given me ... Where were we ? Let's get back to fishing.

RC You were saying about ... that there's no money in it.

CR No, no. Well, [1 hr 13 mins] you have to be devoted to it because, I mean, I get a cheque handed ... we have a meeting once a year, and Lord Cavendish hands me a cheque with a big smile, but it's only for £15. [OR laughs] And I mean, I pay ... with the health and safety, you see ... who would be allowed to take 500 people across those sands ? I mean, I've been on the sands all

my life, [RC : Yes] and the health and safety people ... there's one for this Lakes area, there's another when you get further down the Blackpool side, and they've both in touch with me for information. And they trust me, you see, that's why I'm allowed to take 500 walkers. But what will happen after my day, because, you know, you don't know who wants to come along. I mean, this is old property that's, you know ... youngsters today, when they move in, they want everything, they want everything modern, don't they ?

RC But [1 hr 14 mins] 'The Guide to the Sands', do you think that will continue ?

CR In some form. I had someone talking to me last week, I don't know whether he come here or what, I get so many people coming. Yes, he was sat here where you're sat, and he was talking about this bloody C P what d'yer call it, where you can go in a straight line. I said that's no bloody good on the sands. I remember a few years back, Flookburgh Bay Rescue invited to take me out, because they'd someone coming from Liverpool Coastguard, and they were going to ride with us, right. So we ... it was prior to a walk, and I'd marked out the route. But no, they didn't want to go on my route, 'cos I go down the bay, and you can't go in a straight line, they would set this GPS is it, [RC : GPS, yes] in a straight line. Well it went right into a bloody area where the river turned on a corner, and there was these bloody big holes, it was a soft as hell. And I pointed this out [1 hr 15 mins] to them. And then coming back, it was dusk. And they got right in on marsh. I said, if you'd have kept ... I said to this boss, if you'd have kept only about quarter of a mile out that way, you'd have avoided all this, we'd have been on level sand all the way. Would we, he said. I said aye, this bloody method's no good, going with these things. You know you can't do that with walkers. [OR : No] You have to be ... you plan the route, and where, you know, where I can't go, walkers can't go.

RC So can I ask you what made Flookburgh such a special place ?

CR [laughs] It's a special place ? I didn't know that ! [continues laughing] Oh God ! Let's see, Grange is a special place now, they've got a sign up with Cedric's Walk. [laughs] No, Flookburgh [1 hr 16 mins] a special place ? I always ...

RC Is there another Flookburgh ? Is there another place like Flookburgh ?

CR Bloody hell, I hope not ! [all laugh] [inaudible background comment] In my day, when I was younger, the village, you know, I say, a lot of families didn't agree with others, there was a hell of a lot of jealousy. And you can't help it, it probably always happens, we had .....[?] of village life.

RC But there were always big funerals in Flookburgh ? [OR : Oh yes]

CR Big funerals. [OR : Massive] Well, they shouldn't have eaten so much, that's why they've been caught ! [OR : Well attended, she means]

RC Right. So I'm going to ask you, for us to round up now, what changes have you seen on Morecambe Bay, from the time that you've spent on Morecambe Bay ?

- CR Well, I couldn't tell you that, I mean, it changes every day.
- RC The big changes, for the wild [1 hr 17 mins] life ? [CR : 60 years, every day for 60 years] Yes. [CR : I can't remember all them changes] Are there big changes, are there differences in ...
- CR There's big changes, because when I was a lad, you could go out there, you could set nets to catch the birds, the oyster catchers, right. And you'd bring 'em home, and mother would strip 'em, and cut the legs off, and she'd put a roasting tin in the oven, and roast 'em. Roast oyster catchers, they used to call 'em (ph) seapies, and they were lovely. All fishermen families had them. And they used to take 'em to the markets, Ulverston market and Barrow market. And then came a law, and Judge .....[?]'s daughter, she was a horse rider, she was riding round the sands one day, and she saw this band of nets, and she saw some live birds struggling, you know. The idea when you set the nets, you set 'em on the tidal brod, that's where the tide comes to. But you set 'em on a rising tide, so the next [1 hr 18 mins] tide would come and cover the nets, and drown the birds if they were alive. But she must have just caught an awkward time, and she reported this, and after that, a new law was made, and they were protected. Well now you go out in the bay, there's thousands of 'em. Lovely to see, but they can do some damage. They can clear a cockle bed up in no time.
- RC Right. So do you think there's been a return to the wild life, because there hasn't been as much fishing ? There's more bird life ?
- CR There's definitely more bird life, yes. Oh, and there's these black headed gulls. Same as early Spring, when you go out there, the shallower areas, you can hear them, you can hear them feeding. They're after small shrimps. Dad used to say that small shrimps breed in the lesser channels, they're not channels, they're dykes, and dubs. And sometimes it's white with these, you know, [1 hr 19 mins] small .....[?], the black headed gills, pecking away, and you can get quite close to 'em before they up. But it's a wonderful sight. And the dunlin are better still, because you can get as near as from I am of you almost. And they're called mice by the fishermen, [RC : Right] that was the term used, mice. [RC : Why's that ?] Because they're just like a mouse. They're very small, [RC : Right] and they're fast running. [RC : OK] For the fishermen, you could get close with a horse and cart, and when they do go, they ... well ... nowadays and in the past, there was massive great shoals, you know, and they weave and interweave, and all patterns in the sand, especially if the sun's shining. But they were wonderful to watch. Never forget that.
- RC Right. I think I forgot to ask you right at the beginning, I asked you your Dad's name, but I didn't ask you what your Mum's name was. [1 hr 20 mins] [CR : My mother's name was Gladys] And was she ... what was her family name, before she married your Dad, before she became a Robinson ?
- CR Let's see. She lost her Dad, and then she had a Step-dad. So the first family was called ... I'll think in a minute ... [RC : It doesn't matter] It does, I'll tell yer in a minute. My cousin at Lancaster, Marie Alston, [RC : Alston] Alston was the ... Gladys Alston was one ... oh hell,



I don't know what the other name was now. [RC : Was she local ?] No, she lived in Glasson Dock. [RC : Oh sorry, you said she came from Glasson Dock] Dad had a cousin live in Glasson Dock who was a Butler, [OR : Yes, I remember] relation to these Butlers at Flookburgh, yes. So Dad [1 hr 21 mins] went over there to fish. And they used to fish together, and then hawk the fish round the local areas, Garstang and all that area. And that's where he met mother.

RC Right, yes. So he got out of Flookburgh ?

CR Well, you know fishing, as I said, there's fishing, and then there's no fishing, [RC : Yes] Yer can't make a penny. [RC : Yes] And so, [RC: In between times ...] he had a young family and went over there, and he fished for a while with ... Another time he met up with ... he was friends with the Silverdale fishermen, and he stayed in a place called The Outlook. And he fished from that side of the bay, [RC : Right] trying to ... And another thing, he used to go down on the farmers, on what is now the aerodrome, and mother would have, you know, the pram, and maybe the eldest beggie stood along side, and me, and .....[?] under the soil in those days. And [1 hr 22 mins] Mum and Dad would have ... put bags on their knees, and thin turnips, you know, [RC : Right] and mangos and that, in those days. It was damn hard work, but anything to make a living. And when Dad was in the army, she used to take in washing from the soldiers down ... [RC : At Cark, RAF Cark] RAF Cark. [RC : Yes] [OR : And she used to pick shrimps] And then ... pick shrimps, yes.

RC But she didn't have a job as such, but she sort of ... [CR : She didn't have a job as such, no. And the ... ] But she did every thing to sort of work along side.

CR Aye. I was saying, in our house ... when I think about it now, the size of them little cottages, they're only two bedrooms upstairs. I was in the bedroom, same bedroom with mi parents. Peggy and Jean in the other bedroom. Downstairs, in the back kitchen, there was no laid on water. My Mum ... we had a clean galvanised bucket full of cold water, which you would heat up to wash, [1 hr 23 mins] and then we had a bath hanging up which, you know, we filled to get a bath. It was ...

RC Did the houses have ranges ? [CR : Ranges ?] Yes. [CR : What, shooting ranges ?] No, no, you know, a kitchen range, where you've got an oven on the side. [OR : Yes] [CR : Yes, there was nothing modern] But how did you get the hot water then ?

CR Well, you boiled it, in a kettle or a pan. [RC : On the fire ?] Yes [OR laughing : Yes] Oh God it was primitive, it was, but ... [RC : Everybody was the same] But Mam's family was ... she was house proud. I mean, she kept it spotlessly clean, I don't know how that she did it, because I had a dog and a cat, and there was three of us. And in those days, you didn't have ... there was no carpeting in any of the houses in Flookburgh, there was no telephones, [OR : no .....[?]] no, everybody was in the same boat. On the [1 hr 24 mins] tables, you had like a linoleum cloth, wasn't it, [RC : Yes]

- RC Right, OK, I think we're coming to the end, so is there anything that you'd like to add to the questions that I have asked you ? Anything that you'd like to sort of add ?
- CR I can't remember .....[?] I keep thinking back. No, it's nice to think after all these years I've been recognised, isn't it, with all these, you know, ...
- RC I was going to say, would you mind if I took a photograph of you, and photographs of ...
- CR No, don't take a photograph of me, I look bloody awful at the moment. [Laughs]
- RC And to take photographs of all the awards ?
- CR No. It's surprising who calls here. Because, only about three months ago, I had a phone call from the Queen's photographer, as come 'ere a few years previously, when they were putting a book together, it was a Royal book. And we've got two copies over there, it's a big thick book, [1 hr 25 mins] with all the people as is connected with the Queen, right. And I was ... they wanted me in it, they rang up from Balmoral, .....[?] journey, went out on the sands and took photographs, and I was in the book. The same man rung me, only weeks ago, to say, Cedric, he said, for the Queen's birthday, we're doing a smaller version of a new book, he said, and we'd like you in it. He said, could I come through and take your photograph ? So he came through, went out down the marsh, on the sands. And then he rang me up and said, it's turned out wonderful has the photograph. And then he sent me a lovely Christmas card. I had it on there where that jug's stood, right. And it's outside Buckingham Palace, with the horse guards, and he told me that the book would be published at the end of this month, which he'd send me a copy. Only about a fortnight since, a knock on the door. [1 hr 26 mins] I answered the door, there was a chap there, an elderly chap with a dog, on a lead. I looked at him. Hello Cedric, he said. I said, who the hell are you ? [laughs] He said, don't you recognise me ? No, I don't recognise you. He said, I came 'ere all them years ago ... well it must have been about 8 years ago, which is quite a while, at the same time as that photographer, or round about that time, and he said, you took us out to the sands, cockling, and to the fluke nets, and we came back here, and Olive cooked the fish, he said, and they were beautiful. And he said, I took some shrimps home. And he said, I thought I was in the area, I must not go back to London without calling to see if Cedric and Olive are still there. So he come to see us. And he said, I've rang up, and I'm going to pick up some [1 hr 27 mins] shrimps in Flookburgh. I think he was going to pick some frozen shrimps up from Wilsons. [OR : Oh yes] And I said, I've had a card, look you, from Alastair Bruce I think they call him, and I showed him. He said : Cedric, he said, I know him well, I'm great friends, he said, he's mi next door neighbour ! [all laugh] I couldn't believe it.
- RC So the ... all the sort of things that have come with the sort of, The Guide of the Sands, has that sort of really ... could you have ever imagined that when you were ...
- CR Yes, it was ... well it ... I would have loved my parents, my mother especially to ... you know, if she'd have known that all these were going to come, she would have been thrilled to bits.

[OR : She would] 'Cos we went round ... when this chap from London, when he got back to London, he said, Cedric, I forgot to ask you one thing, for you to give me a list of your awards. So when Olive and I went and gathered them up, we've had 20 awards. [1 hr 28 mins] And it's wonderful really. [OR : It is]

RC Right, OK, we'll finish there. Thank You very much indeed, [CR : You're welcome] for your patience, yes, Thank You.

CR We enjoy it, don't we Olive ?

[recording finishes at 1hr 28 mins 14 secs]