



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

Cumbria County Council, The Factory,
Castle Mills, Aynam Road, Kendal, LA9 7DE
Tel: 015397 34888

TRANSCRIPT SUMMARY

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INTERVIEW NO:

INTERVIEWEE NAME/S: Miles Clive Martin

YEAR OF BIRTH: 25 March 1948

INTERVIEWER/S: John Metcalfe

DATE OF INTERVIEW: October 2016

LOCATION: Morecambe

SUMMARISER: John Metcalfe / Michael Redman

RECORDING 001

0 -	Climbing Accident Miles talks about climbing accident at Malham Cove which damaged his back when a young man. Shows picture of boats he owned. Lord Sam was a mussel dredger.
4:00	1993 – had 120 people landing to Miles and would fill 3 artic. lorries 3 times a week with mussels which were hand gathered only on the big tides. Talks about regulation the mussel dredging being banned.
5:10	Working Relationships. Agent for 12 gangs – who owned tractors. As well his own gang of 10. Worked for John Legg in Kings Lynn. Millionaire. Talks about Lord Sam buying and selling. JL was loyal until he was crossed then he would be ruthless. One of the lads who worked in the yard, hurt his back and JL paid his salary for 18 months
9:34	Early Years. Born in Egberth, Liverpool. Talks about parents, where they lived in Liverpool, Mother set-up country house hotel River House in Poulton-Le-Fyle with his Aunt when he was 11. Went to boarding school. When he was 17, he helped his mother and brother Piers set-up the Old Rectory Hotel near Clapham.
13:10	Sticky Toffee Pudding: His mother introduced sticky toffee pudding into this country. Tells the history of pudding.
14:19	Climbing Experience: 1973 –
17:30	Family: Met his wife at the Old Rectory. 2 Children and & 5 Grandchildren. His son fishes and worked with Miles on the beach. Had various businesses including Garage at Galgate until he was 35. Packed it in to do a round the world rock climbing binge.
19:30	Start of Fishing: Bought cafe in Green St in Morecambe and started to fish with Piers who bought a trawler. Bold Adventure. Ended up skippering the boat. Miles knew a fisherman who worked for him at the Garage in Galgate. Craig Worthington

	<p>who was a very good and innovative fisherman who made a good living from fishing. Bass & Salmon Netting. Drift nets. Jimmy Arkwright shot a net right in front of the ferry.</p>
25:00	<p>Bottom Netting: Fishing for thornback rays. Explain the process. Net stored in 8 bins a kilometre each. 4-5years experience. Fixed net anchored to the bottom. Storms can result in nets not being collected for days resulting in the fish rotting. Ray nets with a mesh of 10 inches – catches rays tope, jelly fish, crabs and lobster, dustbin plaice. One but no sole. Biggest tope was over 90lbs. Better than trawling. A lot of wastage as many small fish caught in the trawl were found to die after putting back. Shows the net hauler on the boat. Eventually tailed off and fell out with his brother. Mentioned the Albery(?) Fishery.</p>
31:50	<p>Winter Fishing: Went to Solway working out of Galeston. Some shelter from northerly winds. 45ft boat can't fish in strong in strong winds. Trawling, cod, plaice, turbot, brill, lobster which were migrating. Gurnet, Go to Aire market to sell the fish. Vole = flounders. £1 a box (14stone) Late 80s . Summer fishing based in Glasson Dock.</p>
35:38	<p>Elvery Fishing: Feb to April, Shore fishery. High point of market £425/kilo live elvers. £4000 for 16 Kilos. Fished where fresh water meets the sea, e.g. drainage ditches – they follow the fresh water. Nets a 1m long 0.5m high 0.75m deep on a long pole and scoop them up. NW 15 license people. 2000 SW. Collapse of stock led to dying out. A natural cycle. Not due to fishing. 3k elvers to make a kilo. Lost 23K one night as tap not turned. One fisherman Michael Wilson in Flookburgh posted 2K elvers i n the post in polystyrene box with a bit of ice which was separated from the elvers. Shipped to Gloucester sent to Hong Kong and Taiwan to supplement the Chinese & Japanese markets where they are grown on. Exports are now banned. Jumbo shaped container used to ship the levers out. Because high value market brought some ruffians in but NW not affected. Some authorities were troublesome. Example – EA charged a fisherman for using a fixed engine, The magistrate asked the EA in court what a fixed engine was and the EA did not know. The fisherman was old and had previously nearly got swept away in the tide rush and lost his net. So he tied his new net to a stick and put it in the ground and that made it a fixed engine. He was fined £25 over 2 years and EA was told to reinstate his equipment and repair any damage. Research showed 25 elvers per acre is enough to restock – the rest are food for birds and dragon fly lava. Fished for 30 years. When not Elvery fishing – fished for oysters and mussels.</p>
49:30	<p>Mussel Fishing: Mussel fishing has been going on for ever, but fishing on an industrial scale started in 1993. Oysters & Mussels. Miles is proud of this story. Started on the barrow side. 5 groups fishing mussels off Foulney Twist, Foulney Start, 2.5 miles from Ulverston Barrow Coast Road – drove out with tractors , trailer. Quad bikes can drive over mud which is knee deep. Parked tractor trailer 100yds. With his group he would drive round with the Quad bike which has greedy boards or wings so he could load 8 bags on the front and 12 bags on the back of gathered mussels. About half a ton. Drive of the hummocks of mud to the trailer, load the bags onto the trailer and then back to the beds by which time more bags would ready. When the tide started coming in there was always a race to get the last bags onto the trailer. Because high water is mid-day and midnight gathering time is 6 and 6. In the autumn the evening tide would be gathering into the dusk. The groups were from Wales, Liverpool, his own group of 8 and some local lads form Flookburgh. The Liverpool gang leader was useless and mouthy but could organise things and had a group of about 12. In all about 30 of lads working the bed. He hadn't noticed but the Flookburgh lads had gone assuming everyone knew the sands as well as they did. The tide comes in very fast in Morecambe Bay and they hadn't noticed a really thick mist had sprung up and drifted in. So 3 or 4 tractor s for the whole group of gangs and lots of debate as to which set of tracks to follow. Miles couldn't get a word in edgeways due to the Liverpool Gang leader who had set off in the wrong direction. Miles knew this because for some reason unbeknown to him he had put his wife's walking compass around his neck –something he has never done before. They followed the Liverpool Gang leader which brought them back full circle to the mussel bed and get his trailer bogged down in the mud. As he wouldn't leave his trailer everyone had to unload it,</p>

	<p>pull it out of the mud and load it back up again. By this time the tide is around the wheels. Visibility was such that only shadow of people could be seen at 15yds. Could here the rod but cannot tell which direction. Using the compass led them. Young Liverpool Lad in the tractor who was crying for fear. After 10mins. Followed Quad Bike. Suddenly surrounded by water. Set off into the water which was truly scary. Eventually came out of the water until they came to rocks. There were police cars and ambulances and people who knew they were out there. A policeman stood on top of his transit and found the mist then came up to his chest and could see over the top of it into a beautiful autumn evening.. Miles is proud that he managed to save some 30 lives that day all because he picked up his wife walking compass. Might have been in the local press.</p>
62:15	<p>Other Mishaps/Incidents: Lord Sam was beached not 500 yards from here after being rescued. Watched from a pub as their barge with 11 tons of mussels sink just off Morecambe Prom. First real success fishing for Ray had 190 stone of ray and the engine failed so had to be towed by pilot boat. May June time- Bass netting, flat calm, deck light on as it was night, sea had gone a greeny red colour, it was moving with rag worms coming up to spawn, 3-4 inches deep at the surface. Took about 5 minutes to cruise through it, at 3-4 knots. In line with Jenny Browns point – central in Morecambe Bay.</p>
74:36	<p>Lord Sam: Showed picture of Snow cat used down at Fleetwood. Looking at various boats. 12m built in Portugal- Bow to Rudder Stock – actually 15m and 7m wide. Very solid. Fitted out. One of these boats can make it cost in a week. Describes how cockles are sucked up. Been out fishing a mussel bed just off barrow channel a mile out from the lifeboat station off Roa Island. Miles had been uneasy about going. Pressure from the guys on shore with 15 tons of mussels. John Leighton said it was Mile’s decision as skipper but if you don’t go..... Someone interrupted the conversation. Blowing force 6 – south westerly. So loaded 15 tons of mussels on the beach. Kilo bags brought to the boat side, loaded into ton bags which are then lifted onto the boat using boat hydraulics. Engine is keel cooled and running. Also mussels collected from current evening tide. Eventually 20 tons of mussels in the hold and a further 6 tons stacked on the boat stern. By this time Gale force 8 with a 10.1 tide. All the weight is at the back such that bow is starting to bounce dropping to 3-4 feet onto the mussel bed. Engine Failed seized. What he didn’t know another skipper had taken the boat to in similar conditions and cracked one of the cooling pipes so the cooling water was seeping out. Tried to anchor it. Now being drifting up the bay at 4 knots – called up the coast guard. Lifeboat alerted and although only a mile away it took them about 80minutes to reach them. Cox then tells him the waters are uncharted and therefore not allowed to work. Asked if he wanted lifted off and then said the inflatable had already been launched. Exciting transfer to inflatable and then told to lie down with his crew mate in the bottom of the boat. Took 30minutes to get back to the lifeboat. Relieved to get on the lifeboat feeling completely safe! Steamed back Roa Island Lifeboat station. Describes how difficult was to moor the lifeboat. Given cup of tea with a shot of rum . Left in Barrow at 2am. Taxi took them back the coast road to find the Lord Sam being slammed against the concrete of the promenade. Came back to find that some one had off loaded 20ton of mussels from hold by one of the lads. The insides of the boat was a mess of 25 litres of oils and accommodation wreckage. Eventually John sold the boat to Miles for £5K.</p>
95:00	<p>Dutch Mussel Fishing: 1993: Couple of local lads got involved with a Dutch man who brought a dredger across. This would dredge up 100 tons of mussels in a single tide. This done under the auspices of the EA as “research” to see if it was viable. They wanted to see if Bay mussels were different to others.</p>
96:30	<p>South America Mussel Bed: To this day Mussel dredgers from North Wales come up to Barrow South America 2 miles long ¾ mile wide. To gather seed mussels. Fished every spring. The mussel fishery is self sustainable as much of it is not commercially viable due to barnacles, worm casts on the shell, if it has pearl inside could damage people’s teeth, pea crab inside , old and grey, But still biologically viable. They spat and muscle lava swim about for 6 weeks. The mud on mussel</p>

	beds is excretion from the mussels. The reason for deregulation 42 46 mm mussels is once the mussels reach 50mm they are susceptible to wave action. The south America bed is built on large cobbles which is ideal for mussel larvae. Duke of Baccleuch and the Cavendish Estate tried to claim of the mussel bed and tried to issue permits. Generally Land Owners are unable to claim ownership of beds.
Track 2	H2H2016MilesMartin2
0 -	Describes an incident where an unknown person lands over quota fish. Man sticks to rules, but man was fined. The rules had changed while he was at sea. Discussion of fishing quota problems.
0:48	Mr Martin tells of a meeting with Piers (brother), yesterday, he provided some "stuff" and old logs and charts. Piers explained some regulation changes about fish that could be fished.
1:20	Interviewer takes photograph of Mr Martin. Discussion of process.
2:24	Discussion of lists or headings of things to talk about.
2:41	Story of the sinking of a mussel filled barge just off Green Street slip [Morecambe]. The barge is still there. It surfaces occasionally.
3:17	Interviewer "does his questions".
3:40	Mr Martin asks interviewer where he was brought up. Real childhood started at West Kirby on the Wirral. Recovering from bovine tuberculosis, parents bought a house on the estuary. Artificial marine lake there and got interested in marine fishing. Interviewer from Bidston. John Metcalfe put out lay lines on the estuary – two posts and string between them with hooks. Interviewer describes this as long lines. Stopped as he kept catching Cormorants. Discussion about Cormorants eating fish. Discussion
4:45	Discussion about Cormorants and seals eating various commercial fish. Interviewer describes Seals damaging mono filament nets. Seals seen off Fleetwood. Criticism of people who work with the RSPB. Claims Morecambe Wildfowlers do more for conservation than RSPB Leighton Moss.
10:45	RSPB wanted to go on netting boats to see how many sea birds are caught. Interviewer says he wants to turn the sound off. Mr Martin describes taking up an offer from the RSPB. RSPB refused to go on his boat. Discussion that RSPB research is skewed. Discussion of windfarm politics.
13:50	Mr Metcalfe describes the marine lake. Digging for rag worm when the marina was drained. Mr Martin describes rag worms at Sunderland Point. Anaerobic mud.
16:00	Discussion of mussel beds opposite the Broadway [Morecambe]
17:15	Mr Metcalfe went to Leicester University. Studied maths and molecular biology as part of Chemistry degree. Discussion about degrees.
19:45	Mr Metcalfe ended up in IT. Unilever as chemist then Ferranti making simulators for submarines. Trident. Calibrating sonar array.
21:48	Story about a Flookburgh lad who welded in a submarine ring the wrong way round. Trafalgar.
23:05	Trafalgar is discussed. Morecambe twinned with Trafalgar. JM lives in Bare.
24:10	MM talks about compensation for mussel fishermen when the stone groynes went in [at Morecambe] nearly 20 grand a piece.
25:00	Discussion about fishing for varying catches. One stock won't provide a living. Only Mark Willacy in Morecambe and Michael Wilson at Flookburgh are full-time fishermen. Part-time, Terry Frankland (Tex)[see below at 40:15], Elver fishermen like MM, salmon. Trevor Owen at Sunderland Point is mostly from fishing. He has two or three boats, shrimp boat, shore net. A sand fisherman. His wife Margaret has a sand license.
30:00	Discussion of Trevor Owen as a fisherman.
31:00	Ray Edmondson has a fish shop.
32:10	Other fishermen's names, Barker.
33:08	Return to talking about Ferranti. JM there for 10-15 years. 5-6 at Unilever. Lived at Stockport for Ferranti and Port Sunlight for Unilever. JM went to night-school doing computing. Deck of cards. Fortran. Ferranti computers had huge memory stores 4K byte capacity. Discussion of cost of getting computers repaired and family issues.
40:15	Return to fishing related names. MM had a local crew. Big Tommy. Two are dead. Four managers of Heysham Port, Simon sets nets. Simon Dowson, telephone

	number given. Terry Frankland. Phone number. Colin Frankland. MM explains that you get big spat falls at Heysham. Mussels near the Battery, but they get washed away by heavy weather.
45:34	Tex was a lorry driver. He did netting, bass, mullet. Many of them were keen shooters. They would beat for the estate. Duke's estate, Abbeystead. Jimmy Arkwright [as mentioned above] was a shrimper and a netting boat. Craig Worthington , phone number. Dave Jewitt/Dewitt who has a salmon license and a mussel fisherman. Dave Stocker. He's a keen angler. Works for the Countryside Alliance – telephone number.
50:00	Drink break.
50:12	MM talks about losing the barge. (Green Street as above) A mussel bed was just off the promenade. John Porter was skipper of a Brixton beamer, he came to shore fish with a 35 foot shrimper. He has 64 bags, MM had 56 and son had 52. 25 kilo bags. John and MM were getting £5.00 a bag. We were paying the lads £2.50. Currently mussels are £4.00 a ton.
53:30	Tex was working with cockles on the Dee he was earning £1,000 a day in his pocket. That went on for nearly three months.
54:00	Pause. JM left Ferranti mid to late 90s. GEC bought the shares for a penny each. Ferranti bought an American company. [sounds in the distance] JM went self-employed. { JM and MM's voices disappear into the background]
1:12:00	[Voices audible] MM did a science degree at the Open University.
1:12:00	MM explains he works very hard when fish is available. MM had 120 people landing for him.
1:13:25	MM saved the little bed of mussels for themselves. John and MM, MM's son. MM had found an old stone barge at Glasson Dock. Airtight compartment at each end. Used for building the training walls on the Lune. They welded up the holes. Toed the barge out to the mussel bed with a shrimper. Gathered the mussels. The barge would then be picked up at high tide by a trawler. They hired a forklift truck. 11 tons of mussels and a broken forklift truck. About a week's tide, and half way through the mussel bed. The wind blew up and the barge tilted from side to side. At high tide it turned turtle. The barge was not recoverable as the barge air tanks had filled. It's been there for 20 years. A big storm blew up and took the mussel bed away.
1:21:00	JM asks about fishing for mussels. MM explains about a craam. A single handed three pronged tool that you rake the mussels into a box or basket and into a bag. The Liverpool lads over on the Barrow side had a bag sent back by the French. The bag was sent back with 25 Kg of rocks, Coca-Cola cans, mud, ... [MM distracted by a telephone call.]
1:25:11	End of track
Track 3	H2H2016Milesmartin3
0	MM returns to stories. Netting trip with MM's son and engine failure. They drifted down to the pilings at Heysham Power Station in a 26 foot jet drive netting boat. Discussion of how a jet drive works. It would make 17 knots. Only 150 hp engine. The universal joint failed. The boat got closer and would have turned over. We did just scrape passed the piles.
2:55	MM explains about the first ever shot of Thornback rays. They shot two nets, 2Km of nets, with no success. Next day off Danger Patches buoy. In the Lancaster channel. 2.5 miles off-shore. The buoy is on the north side of the channel. The fishery about ½ mile north of the buoy. You can see the tide swirl on the rocks. The Lancaster channel is about 40 fathoms deep. On the north side there's a vertical cliff. Waves were reputedly up to 80 feet. They were in a 30 foot boat at this time. His brother had the pilot boat franchise for Fleetwood. He had a 45 foot Nelson. On the second day the boat broke down. They got stranded on Piling Sands. A man on a motorcycle arrived, he was a coastguard. Piers got a lift in, then MM. Hospitable man fed the brothers home brew and Piers' wife came to pick them up. The engine was repaired, but the propeller was damaged. The pilot boat was taken out. And they hauled in the ray nets. There was one every 20 to 30 yards. MM thinks they were coming in to spawn. They had 190 stone of Roker (Thornback ray). They came in pairs male and female. The pound boards broke and the fish slid to the front of the boat. The waves went over the bow. They managed to get into Fleetwood on the Knott End ferry berth. The fish were off loaded to Neave the fish

	merchants. MM and his brother were given 75 pence per stone. Normally that would have been up to £13.00 a stone.
15:30	JM asks if MM's son would be interested in talking to the project. MM says he would. Another story was when the Heather sank. MM volunteers to carry on with the discussion later.
17:15	JM explains that the stories build a picture of what the fishing was like.
17:56	Recording ends.