



**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

© Morecambe Bay Partnership

INTERVIEW NO: H2H2017.40
 INTERVIEWEE NAME/S: Mark Smith, Kath Whalley, Rosie Shaw
 YEAR OF BIRTH: 1964, 1950, 1975
 INTERVIEWER/S: Jenn Mattinson
 DATE OF INTERVIEW: 5 July 2017
 LOCATION: Baxters, Thornton Road, Morecambe LA4 5PB
 SUMMARISER: Michael Redman

0 – 1:00	Introduction of staff members – Mark Smith, Kath Whalley, and Rosie Shaw. Dates of births given.
1:00 – 2:28	Mark Smith tells of how he joined the company, asked by Bob Baxter 1990. Joined 1991. Originally butcher. 1991 Baxters had several businesses but shrimps main trade.
2:28 – 3:55	Kath worked in bakery bought by Baxters. Kath then started potting shrimps later helped by “Uncle Eric”. Later business expansion behind frozen food shop in the front. Also involved Doreen’s mum (ph) Anne. Kath had kids and was replaced by Doreen. Kath Returned and the business moved “up here”. 45 years employed.
3:55 – 4:04	Shop originally in Poulton Square, shrimps sold rough. Scoops of shrimps in can.
4:04 – 4:40	Mark explains originally wet fish shop on Queen Street set up by James Baxter. Baxters from 1799.
4:40 – 5:14	Kath explains Mrs Baxter, James’ mother packing and sending shrimps. Small packages by post and others boat train to London. Late 70s.
5:14 – 6:05	Mark – we’ve always done the mail order. Now potted shrimps sent in insulated boxes with gel pack.
6:05 – 6:42	Discussion of family relationships. Bob’s father was Harry Baxter, Harry potted at “Baxter gate”.
6:42 – 7:15	Existing building designed 22 years ago (1995) purpose designed potting room.
7:15 – 8:41	Introduction of Rosie. Started due to retiring of Kath’s sister Anne. Started 4.5 years ago. Discussion of good job, due to good work mates.
8:41 – 9:40	Bob explains job of potting. Quality of shrimps. Butter, shrimps and seasoning.
9:40 – 10:54	30 pound tail meat cooking batch. Checking shrimps that have been picked by fisherman’s family.
10:54 – 11:48	3 sizes of pots. 85% shrimp, 15% butter. Same silver butter spoon, recipe hasn’t changed. 90 years old Bob Baxter’s christening spoon.
11:48 – 12:40	Purpose made cooking pots. 100 years plus. 2 cooking pots.

12:40 – 13:10	Cooked at 100C for a specific time. Process from 100 years ago.
13:10 – 14:25	In 1960s Harry Baxter was given the Royal Warrant from Queen Mother. Shrimps sent to Castle of May, Buckingham Palace. Then Queen's Warrant.
14:25 – 14:50	Discussion of how Royal Warrant obtained. Mark not able to tell.
14:50 – 15:50	Kath and Mark came from. Poulton and Lancaster
15:50 – 17:04	Discussion of picking tradition in Poulton. Rene Baxter and her brother used to fish and pick shrimp.
17:04 – 17:45	Discussion of Bob Baxter's work habits.
17:45 – 18:05	Rosie not involved with fishing growing up. No memories of fishing.
18:05 – 19:30	History of Baxters and family James Baxter and son 1799. 7 th generation in Bob's day. Wet fish in Queen Square, cafes, 1970 into this building.
19:30 – 19:42	Sue Nelson spoken about as knowing the history of Baxters.
19:42 – 21:20	History of Bob Baxter, Mark here from 1991. Monica, and two more then Mark.
21:20 – 25:00	"Butchers and bakers are the only apprenticed food workers" discussion of why Mark and Kath have stayed in the business, character of Bob Baxter, no shortcuts with the produce.
25:00 – 25:45	Bob owner, Bob liked cars, motorbikes and rallying. Morecambe born and bred.
25:45 – 26:26	"Old baulks" Horses kept and fishermen met with "washers full of shrimps".
26:26 – 27:00	Manager before Mark was Bob Baxter.
27:00 - 27:18	Bob's last day when Marco Pierre-White came in.
27:18 – 28:05	Bob passed away 2008 ("nine year ago"), step children were two directors.
28:05 – 29:40	Current business owner, Clare in shrimps business. (Worrall). Everything the same. Named here as Clare Holland, Furness Fish and Poultry.
29:40 – 31:48	Names of fishermen, Mark Willacy, Jack Willacy, Jimmy Arkwright, Terry Franklin, Trevor Owens, Harold Gardner (still alive) salmon fisherman.
31:48 – 32:35	Memories of fishermen. All characters. Jackie Willacy.
32:35 - 33:05	Nicknames of not repeatable.
33:05 - 33:25	Most shrimps now from Clare.
33:25 - 34:00	Clare gets fish from Bay, Flookburgh.
34:00 – 34:55	Recipe: well, kept secret, seasoning, shrimps and butter. "6 spices".
34:55 – 36:15	Process discussion. 30 pound tail meat cleaned, and cooked. Time a secret. Cooled into fridge.
36:15 – 38:00	50 gram pots produce 290, done by hand. Trays hold 10 pound of shrimps.
38:00 – 39:25	Now process includes refrigeration, discussion of why this was introduced. Cooking and butter was a preservation process.
39:25 – 39:55	Testing has shown 21 days shelf life of potted shrimps in a refrigerator. Discussion of shelf lives. 7 days for retail, 14 days for restaurants.
39:55 – 42:00	Discussion of markets, mail order, and process of transportation. All over the country and Canada. Germany armed forces, Brunei.
42:00 – 44:35	Discussion of availability of shrimps and management of supply. 6 months in storage if possible. Very seasonal numbers of shrimp in the Bay.
44:35 – 45:05	Mark has blood pressure problems at times, due to variations of availability.
45:05 – 45:45	Kath asked about supply. When there's a lot store them. Christmas is always busy.
45:45 – 46:00	Kath talks about trends in supply of shrimps.
46:00 – 47:00	Discussion of cause of variation in supply. No-one knows. Suggestion that flooding may have been an issue. Mention of new stone sea defences.
47:00 – 49:12	Discussion of sea tides. Mud and sediment. Changes in sand and silt movement discussed by Mark. Coaching station at Teal Bay has been exposed. Sea defences.
49:12 – 49:48	Discussion of Priest Skear rocks in the Bay.
49:48 – 50:11	Loss of Morecambe harbour may be due to new groynes.
50:11 – 52:12	Discussion of decline in the fishing in the Bay. Future. Quota has affected local fishing by one man boats. Tidal fishing.
52:12 – 53:00	How does reduced fishing affect shrimp supply? Will you buy fish from other sources? Two full time fishermen on this side of Bay, Mark and Ray. A few part-timers. Unique fishing on Morecambe side.
53:00 – 55:35	Discussion of tractors on other side of Bay, does salt water cooking affect fish. Rosie

	is chief taster.
55:35 – 56:25	Rosie explains variations in taste of shrimps. Immense, fabulous, outstanding, far superior.
56:25 – 57:00	Rosie can't explain why the taste is better, just divine.
57:00 – 57:35	Discussion of how to eat shrimps, potato salad, muffin, out of the pot.
57:35 – 58:25	Favourite way of eating shrimps. Amazing power. Mark doesn't eat them.
58:25 – 59:48	Mark's favourite recipe for his wife. Salad, scrambled egg.
59:48 – 1:00:25	Bob liked them with his gin and tonic.
1:00:25 – 1:01:00	Kath talks about how she eats shrimps at home. Daughter and granddaughter likes them, Kath doesn't eat them.
1:01:00 – 1:02:00	Discussion of smell of cooking shrimps.
1:02:00 – 1:02:12	Mark tells of smelly professions he's been involved in.
1:02:12 - 1:03:00	What do the three talk about during potting the shrimps? Singing, and Shopping, handbags, shoes, the TV. The staff laugh at this question. "Good fun".
1:03:00 – 1:04:12	Memories of working at Baxters. Doreen Horlick, Joe, still friends with ex workers, Christmas and that.
1:04:12 – 1:05:02	Numbers of staff over the years, about 10. Staff party for Kath's 60 th birthday.
1:05:02 – 1:06:40	Have there been any special memories, Hairy Bikers, Rick Stein, Flog It,
1:06:40 – 1:07:16	Baxters groupies and various tales. (Kath and Rosie are the groupies!)
1:07:16 – 1:07:50	Other memories, Susan suggested a source of other tales. Lord Soames.
1:07:50 – 1:09:00	Discussion of Brexit. Suggest little effect. Time will tell. Morecambe fishermen don't need veils on their nets. Mark doesn't know why they are exempt.
1:09:00 – 1:10:55	Discussion of where shrimps and water circulates around the Irish sea. Cartons are now labelled due to EE requirements.
1:10:55 – 1:12:96	What should Baxters try to keep/preserve. Shrimps and the family. Quality product.
1:12:06	End of tape