

Interview with Gerald Benson & Ian McClure

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Interviewees : Robert Gerald Benson, born 1954 ('GB'), and
Ian McClure, born 1956 ('IM')

Interviewer : Susannah Bleakley ('SB')

Location : Flookburgh

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Recording duration: 2 hrs 3 mins 7 secs

- SB If you'd like to just tell me, first of all, what your name is?
- GB Gerald Benson. And my mother was Elizabeth Hodgson, more commonly known as Lizzie in the village. Her brother, her father, were all involved in fishing, and she picked more shrimps than I would like to look at, I think. [SB : And your father ?] My father was in the building trade. [SB : And his name ?] Robert Benson.
- SB There were a lot of Bensons about this part.
- GB A lot of different Bensons as well. [SB : All different families ?] Mostly, yes, but not all of them.
- SB And where do you live now ?
- GB I live at the East side of the village. I've lived in the middle of the village, I was born in the corner shop. I went across the road into a place called Stockdale Farm, which was Flookburgh Farm. I've lived 200 yards up there near Sandgate, and now I've moved down there, so four corners really.
- SB Fantastic. And I'm especially treated today because [1 min] I'm in the company of two men, and who do we have here ?
- IM My name's Ian McClure from Flookburgh. Mother and father : mother was Sheila Moorby, father was Jim McClure. I'm third generation of fishermen. Father was fisherman, grandfather, and I've been involved with fishing, as I say, for three generations.
- SB And what does it mean to you ?
- IM Well, it's just a way of life, it's what we've been brought up, and mi son's following on. Hopefully there'll be, you know, a living to made at it. But with rules regulations and one thing and another, it seems to get bloody harder and harder all time. So we'll just have to wait and see.
- SB So how many people are fishing from this community at the moment ?

- IM You'll be lucky if there's six full time fishermen now, whereas, you know, in [2 mins] father's day, there'd probably be at least 20. Yer know, I can remember a tale that he used to tell when there were 21 horses and carts, all in a row, going shrimping. Yer know, it must have been a sight to see. But now, there's probably only half a dozen full time, and they're retired, well, going on for retirement anyway. But it's just way of the world now. Yer know, yer just need so much money to live, and if you've got a mortgage and kids and that, yer can't just rely on fishing. Yer know, its ... some years are bumper years with the cockles and things, and then yer can go maybe ten year with no cockles, so you've nothing to do in the winter months, but yer bills don't stop coming in, do they ?
- SB No. So I've seen that fishermen are very handy, they'll turn their hands to many things, [IM : Ah yes, they've had to do] with different styles of fishing, [IM : Yes, aye, they've had to do] and different trades.
- IM Ah that's right, yes. Luckily mi son's, [3 mins] yer know, a joiner by trade. When he left school, he did several years on the joinery, but still involved with fishing at nights and weekends. But now he's gone full time fishing, and hopefully he'll be able to make a living at it.
- SB So I'm guessing that you won't have fished much with a horse ? [IM : No, no, I'm ...] You're more my age. [laughs] [IM : You can tell with yer good looks, see] [GB : You can remember going out on one, won't you ?]
- IM Yea, I can remember going out on one, yea. Mi early memories was me standing on Sandgate hill. Halfway up there was a big tree that hung over the road, and I was waiting for mi father to come home, and I was up in the tree, yer know, lads being lads as they were, and waiting for the horse and cart to go under, and then drop out of the tree into the cart, yer know. [SB laughs] And he used to play hell with us every time, but he knew we were there, yer know, it was just a [4 mins] bit of fun like.
- SB So what age would you be then ?
- IM Oh, I don't know, 5 or 6 year old or whatever, yer know. Probably got a rollicking for being up the tree in the first place, but never stopped yer.
- SB But you would go out with him then, would you ?
- IM Oh yes, aye. As I say, that was mi first ... what I can really remember, yer know, at that age, like 5, 6 year old. But I can remember going to the nets with the horse and cart with 'im. And when the horse and cart had been out fishing all day, and they used to get it home, they used to take the horse out of the cart shafts, yer know, and then miself and mi elder brothers would have to take the horse down to the field. And we were always told not to gallop it, because it had had a hard day's work. Well, telling three lads who were on top of the horse not to gallop it – it was going to happen. And we used to go down the mile road to the daisy field that we owned, [5 mins] to take the horse down there, and we used to gallop it down the mile road, and think it was, yer know, marvellous like. [laughs]

- SB And tell me about these horses. So how big were they ? And did you give them names ? And were they like ... they were a working horse, but you'd have a strong relationship with them ?
- IM Yes, well, Gerald will tell yer as much about the horses.
- GB I remember telling ... mi grandfather, he walked to Appleby, the night before, to get a horse from Appleby Horse Fair, which is still on. [IM : That's right, yes] And he used to set off, and he would just get back for a pint in the Farmer's, which is now the Pheasant at Allithwaite, and he rided back very sedately, but the horse was your living. I've not been in the fishing trade for years, I've only helped out and still go, I enjoy myself. But, they were the living. They used to plough as well with the horse. I've had a go at that and it was hard work, damned hard work, you know. And it was the same with fishing, because if it was a morning tide, you had to go and get it in the stable of a night, [6 mins] have it tied up in the stable, so you didn't have to go and catch the ... catch it. But it was your living. [SB : Yes] You couldn't do without it, could you ?
- IM No, no, it was all horse in them days, wasn't it. But now they have tractors. And if there was any tractors, you couldn't afford them.
- GB They were never going to take off weren't tractors. You know how things aren't going to do, like aeroplanes years ago, and all these ... oh that will never take off. [SB : Yes] But it did, it's technology, isn't it ?
- SB Well, the early tractors were bad to start, weren't they ? You'd park them on a hill.
- IM They'd be old VTO tractors, [GB : Yea] and you used to bloody wind them, yer know, with handles, didn't they, they had a handle in front, [GB : On a wing and a prayer] aye, on a wing and a prayer, [GB : Aye, Yes]
- SB You wouldn't want to take one out that you weren't going to be able to rely on to get you back.
- IM If you look at some of the old tractors that are out there, you probably would think, what am I doing, really. [GB laughs] But they are very reliable, and they're very well looked after, even though they don't look the business, you know, they're not racing cars, are they ? [7 mins] [GB : No] But they've always used the same ones mostly, Nuffield's, haven't they ?
- GB Aye, Nuffield tractors. [IM : How old's your youngest ?] Oh, they'll be 50 year hard up tractors, like when we get 'em, yer know, about 50 years. But, they're a bit like Trigger's Brush as well, yer know. They're not original, yer know. They might have a wagon engine in, and they might have a radiator off something else, and, yer know, starter motor off something else. Bit like Trigger's Brush.
- SB Well I've heard about grandfather's brush, but your expression Trigger's Brush ?
- GB Trigger's Brush, aye, off *Only Fools and Horses*. [SB : OK] He had the same brush, hadn't he, for 20 year ? [SB : He'd replaced the brush and he'd replaced the handle] Replaced head and replaced handle 10 times, but it's still same brush. [IM : Aye, brand new] [GB laughs]

SB I'm just going to stop this and make sure ...

[Break in recording at 7 mins 54 secs; 2 separate audio files. Track 2 continues now with this transcript]

SB Now tell me about your experiences of fishing. What did fishing mean to you ?

GB [8 mins] From the age of about 5, I went shrimping with mi uncle and with Brian Shaw as well. That was my two people I went with. Odd times with Geordie Shaw off the Square, and he'll know 'im. And really, it was just the big adventure when you're a child. You're allowed to drive the tractor if you, you know, if you start to get a bit more confident, you can drive a bitter further, you know. And I think that was the big thing, wasn't it, [IM : Oh, it was] was driving the tractor, because you were out on the sands, and 200 square miles of nothing, only a few bumps and what have you. And it was really an experience of a life time. And I probably only started, how long ago, five years ago now, [IM : That's right, yes] with Derek Butler up the road, and he's developed a bad shoulder, so I just ... I was talking to Ian, started picking a few shrimps for him, 'cos that's all there is about at the moment, [IM : Yes] but, you know ... It's just absolutely magnificent out on Morecambe Bay. You can't describe it on the tape. You'd have to go out there. [9 mins] Some of the sunsets, the sunrises. It can also be pretty horrendous out there, and you've got to know what you're doing. And that's why I go with fellows who do know, yea.

SB And you said that your mother had picked enormous quantities of shrimps.

GB Yes, more than I'd like to see. She also used to hawk them, go hawking, [SB : Yes] and stand at the market at Barrow, you know. [SB : Yes] Especially in war time, when they would go round on the train to Arnside, with a basket full of shrimps, have to good sell them before they went back. And it would entail going round Arnside and Silverdale in a day.

SB Because you can't keep them ?

IM All on foot, like. [GB : Hawking] Well that was thing, you see, in them days like, there was no fridges. It wasn't how many you could catch, it was how many tha could sell, you know. So they would just go out there, catch what they thought they'd be able to sell, before they went off. Na (no) fridges, na freezers, [10 mins] they didn't have any means of transport other than train like. And so, as I say, mi grandmother, well, same as Gerald says like, my grandmother used to do same, you know. I heard tell of 'em like, during war or just after war there, when they would go cockling, out from Grange, gather so many cockles, and at low water, they would walk across the channel, get across the channel, and come off at Arnside, Silverdale there, and go round trying to sell whatever they gathered, you know. And then, you know, come back to ... just when tides were, you know, right, they'd come back, and then get back through channel again, all in these bloody leather clogs and girt skirts, you know. They must have been a ton weight, when they were bloody wet through like. I don't know how the hell they did it, but, like, they had to do it, and that was it, you know.

GB And also the women cockled, didn't they ? [IM : Oh aye] There are pictures, you know, of women cockling, [IM : Women cockling] you know, with big old length skirts on, they were

black, and scarves, [11 mins] and there with back down, and it's damned hard work. I've only done it a few times, but ...

IM But in leather bloody clogs, they'd no wellies, or ought or that like, you know. They must have been bloody frozen, at times, you know. [SB : I'm sure, yes] What is they talk about, wooden horses and iron men, [GB : Aye, wooden horses and iron men] Wooden horses and iron men, aye, that was it. [SB : Go on, tell me] Well, no, that's what they used to say about, you know, people out here on bay like, you know. You know, hard life and that like, you know. And they used to call 'em, you know, bloody iron horses ... wooden horses and iron men, to go out there like, and stay out there all that time. [Both SB & GB : yea] But as I say, they used to have it to do, didn't they ? They used to have big families an' all in them days, so, you know, they always had to have food on table, didn't they ? [SB : And it was their living] That's right, yea.

GB Their living. Most of 'em, they had a [12 mins] market garden, as that used to be, I believe. And we certainly had one at back of our place, and most people had a decent length of land, as well as a bit round village, dotted round, if you could afford it, [IM : That's right, growing a bit of stuff] The hawkers round here would go and fish, a lot of them, wouldn't they [IM : That's right, they did] and there must have been 25, probably could name 25.

IM Oh aye, I could name 20 odd, couldn't we. [GB : 20 odd] They used to put it on a hand cart, and, you know, on to train, and then away to Barrow or wherever, you know, Ulverston market, Barrow market, and go round with, you know, shove cart off, from station to market place. And thing was, yer had to catch 'em when they come back, you know. Women used to be waiting on station for 'em like, trying to catch 'em before they got into pub with money. [laughs]

SB Well that's understandable. [laughs] But it's economically hugely important, [13 mins] and yet, I know that the stocks can go up and down.

IM Oh yea, aye, very much so. 'Cos at this moment in time, you know, we're shrimping, but we're catching very very few. It's virtually a waste of time really, but there's nothing else much to be 'ad. They have put a stop on the bass fishing, where you're only allowed one fish per rod, and all these sort of rules and regulations. So you just keep going shrimping, and try and get a few pound, and pick 'em yer sel', and, you know, some for market at weekend, sort of thing. So we aren't doing much different to what they were doing 50 years ago.

SB But I think you're the only guy who's selling on the market. Is that right ? The others aren't selling their own ?

IM No, no, there's only me really, as well, that does the potting side of it. [SB : Yes] You know, building down there, and got it [14 mins] all passed, [SB : Yes] and now we supply here there and everywhere. [SB : Well, it looks very smart too] Well, that's right, it has to be, doesn't it, if you deal in food like. [SB : Yes] We send 'em as far as London, and all over, you know.

SB It's stainless steel throughout, [IM : That's right, yea] and so where do you send them to ? Is it mostly restaurants, or ...

- IM Well, one of our main men now is a firm called Cavendish Ship Stores, and they supply the cruise ships. And miself and mi wife went on a cruise last year. I was 60 years young, [SB : Congratulations] and 40 years married, [SB : Congratulations] [laughs] [GB : Child bride] Oh aye, I was plucked from the nest, I was. [laughs] So we went on a cruise, and we went to Barbados, flew to Barbados and then joined up with a cruise ship there. [SB : Wonderful] And on the menu was [15 mins] Morecambe Bay potted shrimps. So obviously we had to have them, and true enough, they were our own shrimps. [SB : Were they really ?] So I'd gone all the way from bloody Flookburgh to Barbados, and sat on a cruise ship eating mi own potted shrimps. [SB : Eating the best food] Aye, eating the best food. [SB : I'm assuming you like them] Oh yes, aye, yes, you don't get a physique like this with not liking potted shrimps.
- GB He likes picking 'em, and he also likes putting one or two in his mouth. [both laugh]
- SB But do you pick them ? Surely not ? Do you pick them yourself ?
- IM Yes, aye, we all muck in, you have to do. [SB : A fiddly job] It is, yea, but we all have to muck in. Years gone by, every house in Flookburgh picked shrimps, you know, 'cos they didn't have these cleaning jobs or, you know, whatever. Women didn't go out to work the same. You know, they were at home, housewives, bringing children up, and so, you know, shrimp picking was one of their incomes. You know, they got a few quid [16 mins] a week by picking shrimps.
- SB So how did that work ? Would they ... would one family have a relationship with one fisherman, or was it not as strict as that, much more fluid ?
- IM They pretty much all ... well, they never all got on, you know, it's just the way it is.
- GB If you picked for one fella, you'd pick for one fella normally. [SB & IM : Yes] If you picked for two, things can then get a little bit ... [both laugh] can't they ? But usually generally, just go away with one. In old days, it was like a privilege to be on for somebody because you got the shrimps. And it wasn't a case of you knocking on ... will you pick these shrimps, they were knocking on your door ... can I pick shrimps for you, am I right ?
- IM That's right, aye, they did, yes, 'cos they were all going for a few quid. I can remember mi grandmother saying, if there was na shrimps in autumn, there was no Christmas, for kids like, you know. And that's how bloody hard up there were, you know. Just picking a few shrimps, in them days what would it be Gerald, about 6 pence a gill, or summat, they use to pay, isn't it, [BG : 6 pence a gill, aye] [17 mins] a gill measure because there was na scales, you know, it was all my measure. And they used to put the shrimps into gill, and then they used to squash the buggers down and get another half a gill on top. [GB : Aye, they were done in pots, you know] So I was probably picking a gill and a half but only getting paid for a gill. So that's how it was.
- GB And that was 6 pence in old money, [IM : Aye, yea] not 6 pence in today's money, which isn't worth much, but ... [IM : Aye, 6^d not 6^p] With us kids, a lot of children used to do ... you would do ... you'd be 5 or 6 when you started picking, [IM : Oh yes] because if you wanted anything, you had to make it, you didn't get it given. [IM : Na, that's right] I know it sounds old fashioned, but if you wanted something, you'd to earn it. [IM : You had to earn it] And

- so if you got picking for somebody, well, you were away. [IM : That's right] You know, couple of bob [2⁵] a week, wasn't it.
- IM Yea. There were a lot, you know ... most people in area, you know, most kids like had to pick so many shrimps before they could go out to play, you know.
- SB So shrimping, what times of year were you shrimping ?
- IM We were shrimping [18 mins] mainly Spring, April, May, on into June. [SB :Yes] More often that not, the ruddy jellyfish stop us, and the warm weather in June. And so usually we pack in from June, July, and then start shrimping again in about the August. Then August, September, October, November, that is the best four months, well, best three months I would say, you know, 'cos August can still be quite warm. And if you can't get the shrimps home alive, you know, to go into the boiler, they won't shell, you know, so you're wasting your time. Unless you're going through night, of course, like, you know, and that's more often what we do. You know, going at half three, four in the morning, to try and beat the sunshine, you know, killing the ... you know, the warmth killing the shrimps before we can get them home like.
- SB Now I've heard this before, so if the weather is hot, there's not much point in shrimping. [19 mins] [IM : No] And what you've told me ... I've never really quite understood that. I thought that they wouldn't peel well, but what you're telling me is that you have to get them home alive.
- IM You have to get them home alive and into the boiler, yes. If they're dead before they go into the boiler, they like just go empty shelled, don't they, [GB : Squashy] squashy. [GB : Nothing there] They won't peel, there's nothing left in 'em. [GB : No] Whilst they're still alive, and they hit that hot water, the shell just crisps up, and, you know, they're alright for picking then.
- SB So I can completely understand if the weather's warm, that's not going to work. [GB : It's not] What's that, about 20°, or ... I mean, today, what's it been, 15 or 17 ?
- GB You'd have been alright this morning, [IM : Yea, been alright this morning] but you're relying on tides, you see. If it's a 6 o'clock tide, it generally going at dinner time, [IM : That's right] Then you're right through heat of day, and then you try to get 'em home, and you ... it's a race, isn't it.
- IM It is. The other one is as well there, you have on the low tides, you haven't got [20 mins] the run of water, have you like, you know, no run of water coming in like, and so, you know, yer water's warm on edge. Well when yer shrimping, in the deeper part of the channel, [SB : Yes] we pull them to the side to empty the nets, well, yer pulling 'em out of the cold water into warm water on t' side, 'cos it's that warm 'cos tides are that low and yer haven't had that rush of water like, yer know, getting rid of it like. So that's ... so, yer know, it starts from there really. Yer know, pulling 'em out of cold water into warm water. [SB : Big stress to them] That's right.

- GB Big shock to them, isn't it ? [IM : That's right] Then they're out of water into nothing at all, only a box. [IM : That's right] And you're trying to get 'em home. And, you know, probably your second do is better than your first do, isn't it ? [IM : That's right, yea] Usually, generally like. And then if you only go for one do, you don't get so many. If you hang around a bit, t' others might have died, [SB : Yes] so, you know, even though you keep 'em separate. You know, first ones caught go in boiler first, isn't it, [IM : That's right, yea] and yer second 'uns, if yer [21 mins] lucky enough to get that many.
- IM Late September, October, November, them's yer best months like. 'Cos the shrimps are fed, been feeding all summer, so they're just at their biggest, and their fattest. [SB : Yes] And, yer know, the weather's cool enough where yer can have more than one do. Yer know, they can perhaps stop for three dos, yer know, so yer getting three times more. And they're good to pick, because of the cold water, yer know, the water temperature has cooled down, and so, yer know, that's when yer have to make hay whilst the sun shines, or not shining as the case may be.
- SB Would people try and cook them on the way to shore ?
- IM We've tried all those methods like, but it doesn't seem to, yer know ... yer have to cart that much stuff out. And yer can't just do it out on shore, because while you're doing that, the tide's coming in. 'Cos yer having to fish low water, or just [22 mins] before low water, and probably fishing an hour's flood tide. Yer know, and then if you're fetching those, from the channel side up on to t' top, to start boiling, well by the time they're getting the water boiling, and all yer bloody gear that yer need to, you know, to do it, well the bloody tide's on it way in, you know, it's round you like, so ... It's all been tried, you know, but to no avail really.
- SB Part of the reason I ask is that when we were doing one of the interviews in Morecambe, the Morecambe lads referred to the Flookburgh guys as 'cookies', and I wondered if this could come from that. Or if you didn't know about that, or if there was no reason to it.
- IM No, don't know about that. [SB : Never heard of it ?] No. They boil on boat, that is, they're different like, aren't they, yer know ? It isn't so bad for them fellas like. Yer know, they get a laal [little] boiler, just to boil so many pound out there, then they chuck 'em back o'r side to cool, yer know, into water. [23 mins] [SB : OK] Yer know. Whereas we spread ours out on to trays, to air cool them, yer know, whereas they cool them ...
- SB I didn't know that they[?] down. [IM : Yes] And before, when you were saying you could have two or three dos, is that trawls ? [IM: Trawls, that's right, aye, yea] So the trawl length is determined by what, the geography of the channel ?
- IM That's right, yea, aye. Just depends how far they can go,[?] soft, or dykes are running in, or gutters or whatever, ya know. Sometimes, yer know, you can trawl for out for 50 minutes, can't yer Gerald, you know. [GB : Yes] Out and trawl for 50 minutes, but there again, you know, yer might only be able to trawl for about 15. [GB : 15. Other day we were out and only doing 10, weren't we?] That's right, about 10 minutes. [GB : 10 minutes, and then going back, and find somewhere there is 'em, you know] Where channel was running,

it was making a brack, and they had to pull out like, yer know. So that all determines what yer catch as well in day, yer know, the elements [24 mins] and the way the channel's running and whatever, yer know.

GB A lot of art and knowledge, and a lot of luck involved. Because you've no sonar, have you, to tell you where they are. [IM : No, that's it] And we're not sure on the migratory system, are we. [IM : No, no, we've had a thought about that, haven't we] We've had several thoughts, and we're no sure. [IM : No, we can't make our mind up] No.

SB So what are the options ?

IM Well, where do the shrimps come from in the first place ? Do they come down from the river systems, or do they come in from deeper water, or ... We don't really know really. Or do they burrow down into sand and hibernate ? I don't know myself' really. [GB : No]

SB You don't see like juvenile shrimps ? [GB : Yea]

IM Yea, yer see juveniles, but have they come down the river system like, yer know, or out of the pools higher up. I don't really know really, [GB : No] and I don't think anybody does.

SB And then where do they go in the winter ? Are they still there in the winter ?

IM Yea, pack their bags and go on holiday ! [laughs]

GB I think they hibernate somewhere.

IM Yea, I've always thought that they burrow down [25 mins] into sand. [GB : They must do] Yer know, burrow down into sand, and like they get in down there out of cold really. Y' know, it's not going to be freezing down ...

GB They don't like cold water, do they, [IM : No] and they don't like warm.

IM That's right. No, they don't like frost, and they don't like the bloody hot, yer know, bit like us really. [laughs] [SB : Yes]

GB It's usually ... if yer go out and there's a laal [little] bit of wind, it's ... out o' West its usually better shrimping weather, isn't it ? [IM : Yes it is, aye] Wind out of East, no good to man nor beast, [IM : Na, that's right] is a famous saying. [IM : Yea] And I think that goes through with fishing as well, Ian, doesn't it ?

IM Oh aye, it certainly does, yea, aye. Even lads I buy t' salmon off on Lune, yer know. Hardly any salmon run now round here, [SB : Really] I give my licence up [SB : Have you] about five, six years ago. You couldn't make it pay. [SB : Did you have a haaf net licence ?] I had a lave net licence, aye, a lave net licence. A friend of mine, well, a couple of friends of mine, they still (ph) wham off salmon, on the Lune, and I buy 'em off 'em to take [26 mins] to the market, yer know. And they say exactly the same. East wind's no bloody good for their job either yer know. [SB : It's always a cold wind, an east wind] Aye, it's always a cold wind is East wind. [GB : Na good to man nor beast] That's right.

SB Well happily, we get more Westerly's, don't we ?

- IM We do, aye. Usually a lot of bloody rain in 'em an' all. [GB : Aye, it's wet side is that] Out of muck 'ole.
- SB Am I getting this right, that you don't see shrimps if you go out in winter ?
- IM No, you don't really. If you trawl down like, really, early spring, yer know, late February, [SB : Yes] and yer can pull out and there isn't a one, yer know. But yet if yer set a whitebait net, yer know, sometimes you would catch a few shrimps in the whitebait net. [SB : Yes] But yet, yer know, yer went trawling for 'em, and they weren't there. So, did they go back out with that tide, yer know, out into the deeper water, [27 mins] and then come back up, or do the buggers bury down into sand ? I don't know. I don't know what to say really.
- SB And you fancy them burying in sand ?
- IM I do, aye, that's my theory on job. [SB : And you're staying with that] [GB : Yea] Probably be wrong. [laughs] [SB : Well I don't know] [GB : Nobody's ever done a study of them, have they ?] Na, you have a job getting a bloody collar on 'em, don't yer ? [laughs] [GB : Or tracker device] Or tracker device, aye. [GB : They'd have to be small for them you catch !] [laughs]
- SB And then the sizes of the shrimps, presumably they have to go through some kind of riddle or something ? [IM : Aye] What size would a large shrimp be ?
- IM Oh, half inch Gerald, or something, tail to head ? [GB : Probably a good inch, a good inch] Would it, aye. Well I suppose when they're opened up, aye. [GB : A good inch] Towards an inch, that would be, yer know, they won't get any bigger than that like.
- GB They fill up though. [28 mins] They fill up. You can get rather thin, what I call child shrimps, [IM : Yea] You know more than me. In spring, they're never as meaty, because they haven't had as much to feed off, or they've been under that ...
- IM That's right, or have they been hibernating, or have they just come into estuary, [GB : to get fed up] yer know, to start feeding, yer know. [GB : Yea] Another one is ... I was thinking that, years gone by, there was sewage and everything used to come straight out of ... yer know, off the land into the sea. It was a dumping ground for everywhere. And now, yer know, with these rules, regulations, and one thing and another, everything's been cleaned up, and so ... Well, shrimps are a mollusc¹, yer know, they eat muck really, yer know, they're on the sea bed eating whatever. [SB : Yes] And so is that, yer know ... [SB : They've got less food] That's right, is that, yer know, knocking back the amount of shrimps that we catch now, because, yer know, they're not feeding 'em. Well, they're not feeding are they if it isn't there like.
- GB [29 mins] And they're not keen on plastic, [IM : No] which is a big (ph) bain on the eye[?]. I hate the stuff, and I know you lads do an' all, don't yer ? [IM : We do, yea] Every time yer get the large bits of plastic ... and I know the bigger fish must be getting them, must'nt they ?

¹ Shrimps are not molluscs, like cockles. Shrimps are crustaceans.

- [IM : Yea, aye] They can't be filtering all that out, can they ? And it's a big problem is plastic, everywhere you go. And it's got worse really, hasn't it.
- IM Plastic bags, plastic cups, plastic bottles, it's everywhere now like. Yer set any nets, yer know, for flounders, we set nets for flukes, [pronounced flea-aks] and the amounts of ruddy bits of plastic and ... plastic bags, carrier bags, well, everything's bloody plastic these days, isn't it, yer know ?
- SB It is a big issue. [IM : It's a world wide thing though, isn't it like ?] It's something I've banged on a lot about, because I'm completely with you on that. And the Women's Institute also has been quite good at picking up some of these issues. [IM : Right, yea] And I'm pleased to say that there is a bit of change. We're seeing much fewer plastic bags than there used to be, and [30 mins] the use of little bits of plastic in cosmetics is being phased out, [IM : Aye, that's right, I heard that on television] but there's still a way to go. [IM : Yea] [GB : Because everything yer get now's got plastic, hasn't it ? Most of things in shops] And it's inflammatory because its coming from hydrocarbons, which are supposedly a finite resource, [IM : Right] and we use it, for a moment, and then throw it away. So it's treated as if it was disposable, and yet actually it never degrades properly. It just stays in the environment. [IM : That's right, still there, isn't it] You're using a finite resource, you're treating it as utterly disposable, and it never degrades. It doesn't make any sense to me, I'm with you all the way on that. [IM : Yea] And we'll keep fighting that one. [IM : Aye, that's it, it's all yer can do] Whilst we're on with things that you throw away, what do you do with the shrimp skins when you've picked them ? What did you used to do ? What do you do now ?
- IM What do we do now ? Well, we've always taken them back to the sands, and the seagulls eat 'em, yer know like. [SB : They [31 mins] just disappear ?] They just disappear, yea.
- GB They disappear within about 10 minutes. Because if you don't see a seagull above tractor, and you drop them out, within 5 minutes, there'll be hundreds of the damn things, won't there ? [IM : Yea, there is] [SB unclear comment] Oh yes, definitely.
- IM They get to know. As soon as they see a tractor, they yer know register : ah, tractor, food. You know, when you're setting nets and things like, yer know, the buggers are there watching yer, y' know, in the distance, and they're there fishing the net before you are if you don't get y' sel' up in morning. [GB : You've to follow tide out, haven't yer] Follow tide out. They sit on the poles of the nets, yer know, just waiting for water to go further down. [GB : Easy money, isn't it] It is, aye. [GB : Easy money for 'em]
- SB You do the work, and they share the benefits. [IM : That's right, yea, aye] And what about cormorants and herons, are they the same ?
- IM Well, yea, there's ... [SB : Fewer ?] It's certainly ... there's fewer. We don't get bothered with them same, y' know. They're more up yer rivers, aren't yer, y' know, with salmon and trout and things. And they, like everything, wants culling. [32 mins] Y' know, yer can't just let things ... Y' know, they're on about TV, y' know, with the ruddy badgers. Y' know, well, cull 'em like, everything has to be culled. Foxes. Y' know, yer can't have a bloody few hens now,

y' know. There's more bloody foxes now than there ever has been. And there's more in towns. Y' know, let's face it, y' know, they spread disease, y' know. But there's too many bloody goody goodies in this country now, y' know.

SB And what about seals ? Do you think seals are the same ? [IM : Same again]

GB We saw one other day washed up, didn't we? [IM : Yea, we did] First one I'd seen, to be quite honest, you'd have seen more. [IM : Yea] I saw one washed up, it was only, what, half a mile off shore.

IM That's right, it was only about half a mile out, but ... [GB : Off marsh there at Sandgate] Whether that had died [pronounced deed] of old age or what like, but ... At Barrow there, there was a colony of seals, wasn't there, [SB : Yes] yea, well, y' know, years gone by, there was probably 6, 8, 10 of 'em. [SB : Yes] And I don't know, [33 mins] somebody told me now there's god knows how many. [SB : 30 or 40 minimum] That's right, so 30, 40, and they're eating every day, all day. Y' know, and they eat, well, all the bass and ... they don't go for any rubbish ! Y' know, they won't eat the flukes or ought like that there is plenty of, they go for the bass and ... When we've been drift netting for bass down there like, y' know, and yer get a seal following yer, oh man, what a mess they make of the nets like. [SB : Yes] Any I say, they'll take a ruddy bass, and go right through the net, come up and, y' know, eat it, and then back down and another. How many they must eat in day I don't know like. As I say, I don't want to kill everything, but y' know, yer just have to have a happy medium. It's same with the smolts and things up the rivers, y' know, the salmon smolts and the salmon par. Y' know, if you've got cormorants and bloody goosanders and that stood there, all bloody day long, y' know ... [GB : Soon clear it] they're soon going to gather in ... [GB : They're good hoovers, aren't they] Yea, and then they wonder why there's no salmon in rivers any more. Y' know, [34 mins] they're blaming fishermen, y' know. Oh, you've got ... gone with 'em all. Bugger all to do with us. That's where they want to be looking.

SB But the words that you used for the young salmon and sea trout, you called them smolts for the ...

IM Smolts are ... I'm nearly sure that smolts are the very small, y' know, and probably about an inch. When they get to about 3 inch long, I think they're a salmon par. [SB : Yes] And then they go out to sea, [SB : Yes] and they come back as a grilse, [SB : Yes] y' know, about what 4 to 6 pound weight, that's an average size I think for a grilse. And then if they spawn, manage to spawn and get back to the river, out of the river into the sea again, they'll go back out to wherever they go, Iceland, Greenland, wherever up there they do all their feeding. And it gets back to the river system again, then it's called a salmon. [SB : Right] And they're usually anywhere round 10 to 20 pound weight, y' know. And I think if it's managed to do it again, the [35 mins] full cycle, it'll come back at 20 odd pound weight. [SB : Amazing] It is. [SB : It is an amazing business] Oh, how they can find their own way back to the same river they were born in, when they've done all them thousands of bloody miles out at sea.

GB Same with the birds, isn't it ? [IM : Yea, same thing] Come back to the same nest from Africa or wherever, [SB : Amazing] on same day nearly, [IM : It is, it's bloody well true] It's nature, isn't it ? [IM : It is, aye] If yer start messing with nature, that's when things happen.

[IM : This is it, yea] That's what we're trying to say, isn't it ? We mess and ... yer don't play around with nature because it has a great way of healing itself has nature. [IM : As our father would have said : it'll turn round and bite thee arse !] [laughs] Aye, I know, yea.

SB And then after a salmon's spawned, then it dies doesn't it ?

IM Yes, unless it can get back to the ... unless it can get back down the river system and into the sea again, and then it will end up. Kelts.

SB So I've hear them called morts.

IM Morts is ... [36 mins] a mort is a ... well I don't know. There's different names for different areas. [SB : OK] It's same as round 'ere like, y' know, with the ... well, we call 'em flukes, flukes from Flookburgh. [SB : Right] Y' know yer get into other parts of the area, y' know, they're dabs, they're flatties, they're [SB : Flounders] flounders. They get all sorts of names. And a mort was like a small salmon, like a stumpy sort of, y' know, reasonable depth but only short. And yer do get some rivers like, y' know, that, in country, they are really short stocky salmon like.

SB And what about a sprog then ? I've heard of morts and sprogs.

IM I don't know about sprogs like. There's morts, or kelt. A kelt [SB : Yes] is a fish that's ... a salmon that's spawned, [SB : Yes] and trying to get back to sea. That's a kelt. But morts ... that's my understanding of it like, just a ... Over in Ireland they don't get [37 mins] big fish, big salmon, y' know, on the Moy and places like that. If yer get an 8 or 10 pound salmon, it's a massive sort of a fish like. Whereas up in Scotland, y' know, yer can ... well I caught one up in Scotland on rod and line 27½ pound weight like. Y' know, but they'd never ever get owt like that over in Ireland like, y' know. So it's different areas, different rivers.

SB And I'm sure they're very much in demand on the market ?

IM Oh yea, aye yea, wild fish is now ... people will pay the premium. [SB : 'Cos they taste completely different] Completely different, yea. [GB : Different colour, aren't they ?] Different colour altogether, aren't they ? [GB : Different texture] Yea. These farm ones, y' know, they're alright ... well, they've had bad press haven't they ? [GB : Yea] Y' know, don't eat it more than twice a week. Well that bloody tells yer, doesn't it. Y' know, so ...

GB I have a little story about a sturgeon that was either washed up, or washed [38 mins] down or whatever. And this was in ... I think it was 1916. I couldn't find the pictures, or I'd have brought you 'em, and it was 6 foot 2 [inches] long, and it weighed 228 pounds, and it was brought back on a horse and cart, [IM : Was that right ?] by a great great uncle. I haven't shown you pictures, [IM : No] I've shown[?]. [SB : Was that Flookburgh ?] Yea, it came back here, and with it being a royal fish, they offered it to the Queen², and the Queen would just have a steak off it. So they cut it and they took it to Barrow, and they got £5 for it. And that would be a lot of money in them days. [IM : Aye] But it was a lot of fish as well. But there'd be eggs as well, they'd be roe wouldn't they, [IM : Yea, that's right, aye] I don't

² It would have been the King in 1916

- know. I don't know but it's quite an interesting fish because it's there, there's a fella stood against it, and he's not quite a big as fish. [IM laughs] And he's on trones[?], y' know where y' ... [IM : Yea, aye] I'll find it.
- SB They're a beautiful looking fish. [GB : Oh fine fish, yea] [IM : Yea, Sturgeon] Beautifully marked with long elegant tails. [IM : I've caught 'em in Canada] [39 mins] [IM : Yea. Yer don't get many round here, do y' ?]
- IM Na, na. River in Canada we were fishing 'em, there was loads of 'em. And they were bloody massive sorts of things. [GB : Really, right, good eaters] When you're hooked into one like, yer didn't ... well, yer couldn't get it on boat. Y' know, they used to just pull it down side boat, and then take a measurement, [GB : Right] and then estimate the weigh like, from measurement.
- SB It's always going to be memorable if you have a sturgeon. I've seen photographs of one at Sunderland Point, [GB : Right] and a lot of men standing round it, in fact looking rather embarrassed frankly, [all laugh] but a very old photograph again.
- GB That's over 100 years old now, isn't it, just over, I think. [SB : Yes, absolutely] That was on Barrow market, the fella that bought it, had a stall, and they didn't sell it on their own, they didn't. Lot of fish there, isn't there. [IM : Aye, there bloody is that, aye] And the Queen, she could have had the lot, because I mean it's royal. [IM : Yea] And it said on it, y' know, on the side, Royal [40 mins] Sturgeon, with the weight and the length, [IM : Right] it is actually, yea.
- IM They wouldn't need so many chips round it, would they ? [laughs] [GB : Few peas] Few peas or beans. [laughs]
- SB Not something I've ever eaten. I've never had caviar either, [GB : I haven't either] but I do like roe sometimes, once in a while.
- IM Aye, never fancied it. Cod's roe we sell on market certain times of year. [SB : Yes] I don't know whether we can get it now. I'm going back 10 year ago since we 'ad cod's roe.
- GB This is good looking one, this is son [laughs] I take after mother. [IM : Obviously] Did that go on tape, sorry. [laughs] Spoiling yer tape !
- SM That's alright, it's all part of it. It's all good fun. So we've talked mostly about shrimping so far, have you been cockling as well ?
- GB No, yer not allowed to go cockling. I've ... we've dropped people off years ago, and just actually left 'em on the sand, [41 mins] to cockle, and then picked 'em up on the way back, years ago. [IM : Going shrimping, yea] because the cockling wasn't worth ... there wasn't as much money in it as shrimping, y' know. [IM : It wasn't as lucrative as what shrimps was] And it was probably all the lads who didn't shrimp. Y' know, Martin Gregson's grandfather, [IM : Ah yes] he used to ... y' know Jonty Shaw, [IM : Jonty Shaw] aye, Jonty Shaw. And he used to cockle. We'd leave 'im there, he'd get 5 or 6 bags, I don't know, 3 or 4 bags, and we'd pick 'im up on way back. But it wasn't as much money then, in that, y' know, I think.

- SB And why was it that women would do cockling but not shrimping ? Is it significant in our time ?
- IM War time. It was war time. [SB : Yes] There wasn't demand ... y' know the men weren't here. They still cockled, y' know, just after the war like, y' know, if fellas managed to get a job or whatever, or they were ... But it was women's work was cockling like.
- GB They used to have a sidings at Cark Station, just specially for cockles and fish, [42 mins] just on the side near the cemetery, wasn't it. [IM : That's right, they did, yea] It was the fish sidings they called it. [IM : Yea] That's not there now, sadly, because obviously, they ... y' know. That was one of the things, they used to send 'em away down there, in bags, a lot of tons as well I believe.
- IM Many a bloody time they used to gather cockles in winter, mi father tells a story like, y' know, that they would gather cockles, put 'em on t' train, and they would end up down in these mill towns, y' know. And many a time, he said, he got a letter back, or a y' know whatever, to say they'd been condemned. And he said, so you'd done all that work, and y' know, a couple of days work, and then paid to get 'em onto train, and then you would get a letter back, no money, they'd been condemned. Now whether they 'ad or whether they hadn't, y' know, yer would never find out, because you had no means of getting down there, or whatever, so they happen to sell the buggers and just y' know, ne'er paid yer [43 mins] for 'em. But I said to our father, well, I wouldn't have bloody sent 'em any more. He says, well when tha's nowt else, he said, yer had to send 'em, y' know. 'unger's a sharp thorn, as they say. [SB : Say that again] 'unger's a sharp thorn. [SB : Hunger's a sharp thorn] Aye, that was yan (one). [GB : That's a good one is that] Aye, 'unger's a sharp thorn. [GB : Aye]
- SB So when did that change ? So now we've got your potting, but there's been other people, Furness Fish & Game, then there was ...
- GB It was Flookburgh Fishermen's before that. [IM : It was Flookburgh fishermen's before that] Flookburgh Fishing, it was a co-operative. Quite a long ...
- SB And when did that start ? Because that must have made all the difference.
- IM Oh it did. [GB : Gog was Chairman. Uncle Gog, uncle John was Chairman] Yea, that's right. [GB : ...[?] for years, wasn't he] Charlie Bartle, [GB : Charlie Bartle] he was manager, wasn't he. [GB : He was, aye] And it was 'im that really ... I always understood he started it like. [GB : Would it have been late '50s, early '60s ?] I would say so, yea. I can remember 'em, y' know, when I was a lad, going in there, there was what, 4, 5, [44 mins] 6 women in there working, wasn't there ? [GB : Yea] Long table, all way down bloody ... all way down factory. And they used to ... well, as I say, pretty much what ... same as what we do now, y' know. It must have made a hell of a difference to village must that, y' know, moving 'em on. They had the big fridges, y' know, big freezer units where y' could walk in and everything. Well, y' know, y' couldn't afford that by yourself. But with having, y' know, a consortium of, I don't know, what would there be, 20 fishermen ?

GB 20 fishermen involved in it, wasn't there, yeah. What they couldn't sell on hawking, and what they couldn't sell on market would go down there, and ... [IM : that's right] and go into storage and potting and what have yer.

IM That's right, they did. They froze 'em down, and then lifted 'em out and potted 'em, and moved 'em on, yer know.

GB Then there was the other shrimper ... there was the other ... they called it shrimp factory, didn't they, Young's had one. [IM : Yea, Young's shrimp factory up at Cark] Aye, the Young's that's still going now, [45 mins] had one up there. They were in amongst.

IM That's right, aye. [GB: Scampi, weren't they, mainly ?] Up Cartmel Road. Just go through Cark and over Lower Bridge, and it was there was ... And they used to do more with Scampi. [GB : Scampi] Scampi used to go down fro' Scotland, [GB : Scotland, aye] in a wagon, and they used to have women working in there peeling 'em, yer know.

GB Aye, yer don't pick a scampi, yer peel it. Yer pick a shrimp, yer don't peel it. They say they're peelers, aren't they, but yer not really, yer a picker, aren't yer. [GB : That's it, a picker] Yer do peel 'em, but yer a picker really. [both laugh]

SB So how long does it take to pick shrimps, if you've got a pile ?

GB Well yer can have, what would you say, there's 6 pound in a bucket, about, yer know, a two gallon bucket, there's about 6 pound.

IM Yea. At certain times of year, yer know, yer might get 7½ in it at back end, [IM : Big 'uns, aye] when they're bigger and fatter shrimps like, at back end.

GB And that'll be a pile there, although yer can't hear on that, but it's a lot of shrimps, isn't it. [GB : It is a bloody lot of shrimps, aye]

SB So, [46 mins] you showed me a pile that was, oo, the size of four loaves of bread, say ... three loaves ? Depends how thick yer bread is. [IM laughs, then : how big's a loaf ?]

GB Big loaves of bread, probably five loaves of bread it'll be. [SB : Yes] Five loaves of bread, and that'll take yer, if yer good, four to six hours, would you say ? [IM : Yea] Yer can do a pound and a half if yer good, maybe two, if yer your Misses like.

IM Say there's seven pound in a bucket, we'll say, and a good picker, at right time of year, yer know, when they're fatter, every one shells, yer know, they'll pick two pound to hour. [SB : Right] so 3½ hours. [SB : Yes] So yer weren't so far wrong Gerald, 4 hours, were yer, probably about 4 hours. [GB : Aye] And then they'll want to stop for a cup of tea. Bloody slocks ! [all laugh] They want paid next. [GB : Aye] They want paid next.

GB And you will not become David Beckham [47 mins] or, yer know, Omar Sherif or anybody like that doing picking, [IM : Picking shrimps] you'll still have to, yer know, pick yer pension up, at house of plenty, won't yer ? [IM : House of plenty, aye, that's it] You won't make yer fortune.

- SB And then the ... so you pick them. When you've brought them in, they're alive, you put them in the boiling water, how long are they in the water for ?
- IM About 20 minutes. [SB : OK] About 20 minutes takes to boil 'em. Just fetch 'em up to the boil. Just depends, yer know, everybody's boiler is different, yer know. Ours'll hold for about 6 stone, and then yer know yer get another chap down road whose boiler might only hold yer know 3 stone, so obviously it's different time I expect. That boiler of ours must hold about 6 stone in the shell, and it'll take probably up to 20 minutes to come to the boil, leave it to simmer for 3 or 4 minutes, and then get 'em out and on to a riddle, and try and [48 mins] discard any little bits of fish, whatever's in there, little bits of weed, and then they run down onto trays, and then put out, yer know, just somewhere to cool, [SB : Yes] before they're taken to the shellers, yer know, to pickers. And then when they've been, yer know, when they've been peeled, when they've all been picked, we cook 'em again in the butter and spices and salt, and then we put 'em into the little pots, yer know, like two ounce pots average sort of size really. And then they're frozen down and moved here there and everywhere really.
- SB I hadn't realised that you cooked them again when you've added the butter. [IM : Ah yes] I thought they were put in the pots and the butter was poured on them. [GB : They use to say yer scolded them]
- IM Yea, well, that's right. They used to scold 'em [GB : Scold 'em, didn't they] in olden days, didn't they, they'd scold 'em with hot water, yer know. That was mainly to get rid of a lot of the juices out of the shrimp, [49 mins] which is the goodness by the way, yer know, the taste. But they wouldn't keep. If you were stand in a market stall in them days, when yer didn't have a fridge, yer know, no fridges overnight or ... and then you were stood on a market stall for six hours next day, they'd have been off before yer customer got home. So they used to scold them to get rid of a lot of the juice out of them, which was the bloody taste and the ... yer know, taste of them. That was the only way they could do. But now yer see, when they've been shelled by hand, yer know, they need to be cooked again, yer know, to kill any bacteria or anything or whatever, yer know, that they may have picked up from being boiled the first time, and then, as I say, boil 'em again for 20 minutes in the butter and spice, and they're fine after that like.
- SB So the first boiling you do in fresh water ?
- IM That's right, yea. But the Morecambe lads, they boil in salt water, [SB : Yes] yer know, complete different, but ...
- SB Do you think they [50 mins] taste different ?
- IM Yes. Our's are a bloody sight better than Morecambe fellas, bound to be, aren't they ? [laughs] [SB : Obviously] They keep a lot better, that's why we do it. Well, one of the reasons is, yer know, we don't boil at sea, we fetch 'em home to boil, whereas the Morecambe lads, they boil on boat. So they've got plenty of water there, so why cart any. [SB : Yes] But they don't keep the same when they've been boiled in the salt water.

- GB It is a very labour intensive job is getting a pot of shrimps. [IM : Aye, it is that] You wouldn't believe. If yer went out and did it, yer know. [IM : Anybody saying they're dear, they want to bloody well try it, don't they] Aye, yer never know, piece of cake that, aye, but it certainly isn't. It's not an easy way to make a living. [GB : No] Not like a farmer having 20 cows in field, they'll probably have 20 next day, won't they ? [GB : Aye, that's right, aye] And he knows they'll be a laal [little] bit bigger. [GB : Aye, and bloody good subsidy an all too[?]] I wasn't going to mention that. [laughs] [GB : One payment sub, [51 mins] or whatever they call it now, I don't know]
- SB So if we look at who's still working the sands and shrimping, if we come round from Barrow, are there people working, shell fishing, in Barrow ? Well, there's the oyster farm and then there's some people been playing with mussels and things, isn't there, [GB : Yea, that's right] but no-one really goes out shrimping, is there ?
- IM Yea, there's just one lad, [SB : Is there ?] He lives in the Guide's Cottage at ... [SB : Oh, I know Ray (Ray Porter)] Ray, yea, he's full time really. That's all Ray does. He doesn't have another job, yer know. So he's out pretty much every day is Raymond, [GB : Yea] he doesn't miss often. [GB : No, he doesn't] He's full time fishing, [SB : Yes] shrimp fishing. I think he has a salmon license as well, but that won't be worth bugger all really to him now.
- SB And then further up from him, I don't know if ... is Janet Butler fishing ?
- IM They're pretty much retired now. [SB : I would have thought so] They're farming mainly, yer know, they're farming. [SB : But are there other people ...] But they are involved with moving cockles [52 mins] to France, is Janet and John Butler. They've always done it, but their son takes ... is taking over. But he's more into farming side than fishing. So it's all dying out really. Whether there'll be any bugger in 40 years time, I don't know.
- SB Well, you said your son was cocking ?
- IM Well, yea, mi son's full time, yer know, shrimping, cockling, musseling, whatever's going on. But there isn't many, yer know, like him like now that want to do it.
- GB How many is there of that age, about two ? [IM : Pardon ?] Will there be two that age, and everybody else is our age, [IM : That's right, yea] which is late fifties early sixties and older. Yer know, John Wilson, he'll be 74, [IM : John Wilson, aye, somewhere in that region, yea] His lad'll be 40 won't he ? [IM : Yea] Only what, 37, 38 [IM : That's right, yea] He'll be one of youngest. [IM : He will be about youngest, I would say]
- SB So how old's your son ? [GB : Tony'll be 38 won't he ?]
- IM Our Tony, about, aye, 37, 38, somewhere in that region. [53 mins] No use asking me, I don't know how old I is miself, never mind him ! [laughs]
- GB It's not a thing that anybody's going in to, is it ? [IM : Nah, that's it] Not really, they're not diving in to it.
- IM Well, same as our lad there, yer know, he's getting a mortgage, he's getting two kids, [SB : Yes] Yer know. And they have been quite lucky these last few years where they've, yer

- know, they've had musselling down at Lytham, yer know, and then they're cockling rather down at Lytham, several years ago. Was it not last year, year before, there was a lot of mussels out on (ph) Hardacre, so they've had work pretty much, yer know, say 10 months out of the 12, which isn't too bad on our game, 'cos sometimes yer can maybe only have ruddy 8 months.
- SB But they've had to travel for it.
- IM They've had to travel for it, yea, but if that's what yer have to do, that's what yer have to do, don't yer ? But yer can move about so quick now, whereas yer couldn't years ago, yer know. [GB : No] If you have a van now, yer quad bike, [54 mins] and a trailer, yer can get anywhere in the bloody country, can't yer, yer know, in a matter of hours. [GB : Yea] Yer know, yer can be down on Wirral, [GB : Yea] yer know, 4 hours later from leaving home, and going out onto their beach and cockling, or, yer know. I know yer have to have licenses and everything, which we have, yer know, we're all paid up members of, yer know, the license job like.
- SB And have you worked elsewhere ?
- IM I have, yea, aye, under protest. Aye, under protest, but I have been like. I've cockled in Scotland, I've cockled in Wales, cockled on the Wirral, and then we go round to Barrow for the musselling in the winter months. But there's nothing like, yer know, working from home, as far as ... If yer can tumble out of bed, and ... [GB : If you could choose shrimping or cockling, you'd have shrimping] you'd have shrimping every time.
- GB If yer could make a living 12 months of the year out of shrimping, I would say, you'd have ... [IM : That's [55 mins] what you'd be on with] You'd be doing that.
- SB Even with the picking ?
- IM Yea, well, if yer can get 'em picked [GB : He's got some very good people who've picked for him] That's right, I have. [GB : Very good] All mi family's been involved with it all their lives, yer know, as well, and so, I don't do too bad, yer know. I do moan and groan when I can't get 'em all picked, but, I don't do too bad really. [GB : Very rare is that] [IM laughs]
- SB And so once they've been picked and potted, how long will they keep ?
- IM 12 months in the freezer, I don't see why not. There is a bar code on 'em that says 3 month, but they're fine for 12 months. But, yer know, rules and regulations for safety.
- SB And they're considered a great delicacy. Has that always been the case ?
- IM Yea, down to the fact that they are just a lot of bloody work to do. [SB : And they're delicious] And they are very good, yea. [GB : I even like 'em] Aye, put skin [56 mins] on yer back like velvet, and make yer sleep without snoring, [laughs] our Les used to tell 'em on Kendal market. [GB : He did, aye] [SB : And ...]
- GB Sorry. It was last year or two years ago, they were rather glutted out, weren't they, with Dutch. [IM : Yea, aye, Dutch shrimps] But to me they weren't a patch, I did try some, and they weren't a patch on these 'ere, yer know.

- IM They all had a like an additive or preservative on 'em as well, and what the hell it was, it tasted awful.
- GB Awful, they were completely different, weren't they. [IM : Yea] They were even looked a different colour to me. [IM : Yea] They didn't look appetising when they were on yer plate, yer know.
- IM No. They were like in packets, like gas packed, well what they do with a lot of vegetables now, don't they, they gas pack 'em. And these shrimps just weren't the true colour. Whether it was the gas that they were bloody trying to keep 'em. Well, some of those shrimps in those gas packs, yer know, they were in fridges, and yer know the date on them was something like, yer know, [57 mins] a month. Well as you know, a bloody shrimp, fresh shrimps do not keep a month like. If yer can keep 'em for three days, you've done well, yer know. So what is in them shrimps, I wouldn't like to eat, yer know.
- GB Odd times when yer get a lot, and yer put 'em in yer fridge, we try and get 'em done, pickers try and get 'em done in the first two days, yer know, don't we, [IM : Yea, oh aye] and we generally do, don't we, [IM : Oh aye] somehow, but, yer know, if there's a glut of 'em, which would be very nice this year, but, they're better, I always say, straight out of boiler. [IM : Yea, for shelling] as soon as they've cooled.
- IM When yer picking 'em, straight out of boiler. They probably haven't had fridge blowing at 'em, yer see, [GB : No] a cold wind blowing at 'em, and makes the shell a bit stiffer, likely.
- GB Have you never actually picked shrimps ? Did you have a go ?
- SB Only once, like with my daughter, like rock pooling or something. [IM : Oh right]
- GB But you've not picked 'em, actually shelled 'em ? [SB : Yes] [58 mins] You've done that ?
- SB Yes, but not for commercial, not a commercial caught batch. [GB : No] But you can, when we've been on holiday, on the Solway, [IM : Ah, that's right] or even on the corner of Roa Island, you can rock pool and catch [IM : A few shrimps] twenty, twenty shrimps. [GB : Ah, that's where they are !] [IM : Ah, well that's where they're hiding !] [GB : You've been to Barrow holidaying, and up to Scotland] [IM : All them bloody seals are getting' 'em] And they're not all brown shrimps, because there's prawns in between them, but they're mostly brown shrimps.
- IM Pink shrimp. People call 'em prawns but they're not, they are pink shrimps, aren't they ?
- SB When you go rock pooling, with a little hand net, I've noticed there's two distinctly different. If you actually inspect them, they look like shrimps, but if you look at them carefully, they look like a different beast, the two types. [GB : Yea] But that's the only stuff that I've peeled. [GB : Yea] No, I tell a lie, I did buy some shrimps off Ray Porter some time back, [IM : Right] and they weren't picked. [IM : In the rough] [GB : In the rough] [59 mins] [IM : In the rough, as they call 'em, yea] So I've picked them as well. [GB : Interesting job, isn't it, for about half an hour ?] Yes, not easy. [IM & GB both laugh] But you will not sell any in the rough, or do you ?

- IM I sell a few, yes, I sell a few. There's a few people on the market stall come and buy 'em in rough. You remember that's how they used to do it, how mother used to do it. And they do taste nicer straight out of the shell. Yer know, 'cos we haven't scolded them, or added any salt or anything to ... yer know. So straight out of the shell they do taste nicer like, specially when they come straight out of boiler still alive yer know. I could do half a pound any bloody day. [laughs]
- GB We saw some last year, me and the Mrs, in La Coruna in Spain. I was standing there, [IM : Yea, that's right] and they were in a bucket, and they were alive, and they were all very very thin. Now how they were going to ... if they'd boiled them, there'd have been nowt left. [IM : Nah] But they were selling them. So whether they ate them in the shell, I don't know. [IM : They probably would, yea, they probably [1 hr] would over there] Over there, 'cos they like any sort of fish, don't they. That's where a lot of cockles go.
- IM Oh aye. Anything in a bloody shell they'll buy in France and Spain, won't they.
- GB Chuck it in. That's how they have a stew, isn't it, a castaplana. A big like a ... [IM : Aye, shell and lot] Lot in, aye.
- IM I can remember being in Spain, I think it was Spain we were in, and it was crab yer know on menu, and I thought, oh, I like crab, I'll have that. And when it come, yer know, yer put it in yer mouth, and all shell was still in among it. Yer couldn't see it 'cos they'd put it through a bloody mincer. But when I get it in mi mouth, I could feel bloody shell, and I thought, oh bloody hell, I couldn't even eat that. I was certainly ready for home, I'll tell thee, when I got back from there. [laughs]
- GB Aye, you've got to have cast iron stomach to eat some of that stuff.
- IM Aye, yer do that, don't yer. But out in Rochelle[?], and France and that ... We pretty much live on an island, and we don't eat fish, yer know, when yer think about it like.
- SB Well. But you're making a living off selling fish, so some people are.
- IM Well yea, [1 hr 1 min] some people are, yea. But, as I say, the amount of fish that's caught, yer know, on our shores, and how much lands up over in France, is unbelievable. Coming down that motorway, at any one night, there must be a dozen wagons, artic lorries, full of crab, lobster, langoustines, yer know, salmon from salmon farms. On Mull, yer know, I have some friends up there, and they reckon there's half a dozen artic lorries on there, pretty much all time. [GB : I saw some two weeks ago] That's right [GB : All long, just on side near that Tobermory, there was loads in] That's spider crabs, yer know that lot there, [GB : Yea, that's right] they land, don't they, and big brown crab. But yer know we don't eat hardly anything like that in this country, and it all ends up abroad.
- GB Two and a half thousand miles of coast line, approximately, [IM : Yea] a big coast, isn't it ? [IM : It is] Yer know there's all different variations of fish isn't there ? And regional variations.

- IM There is. We only eat so much, [1 hr 2 mins] like yer Haddock and Cod in yer chip shop, don't yer. Yer know, there's plenty more bloody fish besides them like, yer know, that taste fine. Yes know coley, and yer know ling, and things like that. But it's all down to these bloody television chefs, isn't it, yer know, what they're promoting. [GB : What's in the fashion] Yea, what's in fashion. [GB : What want to go ... what would you make look nice on a menu]
- IM I've seen our father throwing bass away. [GB : Yes] Yer know, years gone by. Oh, he used to set ruddy nets out there like, same as we still do, yer know, and probably setting them for salmon, yer know. And got there, it was a bloody eight pound bass. Oh, bloody bass, and he throw bugger o'er back of net, yer know, but now ... [SB : 'Cos he couldn't sell it ?] Well that's right, couldn't sell it, nah bugger wanted 'em. They were, yer know ... but now, yer see, it's everything what these chefs are on with, now there's all this wild sea bass, and yer know, it's all taken off, [1 hr 3 mins] isn't it ? [GB : Aye, whatever's just in the fashion at the time] That's right, fashion at the time, isn't Ged, yea.
- SB So what is it that you sell on your stall ?
- IM Well, this time of year, in the summer, yer know, we've pretty much got everything that's been caught round this area like. Yer know, I've fresh fruits, potted shrimps, cockles that are frozen down from the spring, when we were cockling there, but the cockle beds shut down [SB : Yes] yer know in April time, but I freeze a lot down to see me over the summer months. So we've shrimps, cockles, potted shrimps. Then we have the flukes [pronounced flea-aks], yer know, flounders, whatever yer want to call 'em, flea-aks, then we're picking up a few plaice in the shrimp trawls as well, and so we've got them on. [GB : You've had some sole this last month, haven't you, queer job really] Sole, we've bin picking up some quite nice Dover Sole, yer know, in the shrimp trawls, we've bin picking a few of them up, [1 hr 4 mins] so they've been going to the market as well. And then Lune salmon, that I've said to you about before, I catch ... I get them off mi friend who whammels for wild salmon on Lune, so I've been picking a few salmon up off him. Plus, I have a bit of stuff that I buy in from Fleetwood as well like, [SB : Right, yes] the ... yer know ... bit of haddock, bit of cod, and whatever, just making the stall up really. [SB : Yes] And then yer know, whatever we grow as well. Yer know, we're growing ... [SB : Are they keen on cockles ?] Yea, aye. They're a good seller in winter months, [SB : Yes] yer know, when you're allowed to fish 'em. We're not allowed to fish 'em in the summer. So we're allowed to fish 'em in the winter, or we can take 'em in the shell in the winter, because, yer know, it's a lot cooler and they'll travel no problem, and they'll, yer know, they'll stay OK on the market stall all day. And a lot of people come, and we still sell 'em by the measure. It's probably bloody wrong, but [1 hr 5 mins] that's how mi grandfather did it, and mi father, and so that's how I do it. Yer know, so much a measure, rather than so much a bloody ... [GB : But folk know how much it is though, don't they] Oh, that's it, aye, yea. [GB : So much for a cup full, isn't it] That's right, yea. A quart, a quart measure. [GB : Pint or a quart] Aye, pint or a quart. And so I still have quart measure that mi grandfather had. And just scoop 'em up and so much a quart like. [GB : Is it old enamel one ?] Aye, enamel. [GB : Old enamel one] Quart, quart measure.
- SB Lovely. And what do you do yourself with the cockles, if you're going to eat it ?

- IM We just boil them. We don't put oats or anything like that ... I've heard all sorts of tales, yer know, to get the sand out of them. Yer know, they put the cockle in a bucket, ...[?] full of water, and then they'll sprinkle either some salt in, or a handful of porridge oats. And they reckon the cockle absorbs the oats, and squirts out [1 hr 5 mins] the sand. Now whether it bloody does or it doesn't, I don't know. But I wouldn't like to do it when I'm boiling, yer know, half a bloody ton. God, I'd need a lot of oats, wouldn't I ? [laughs] [GB : You would. You'd have to put field down] So, yer know, we just fetch 'em home and give 'em a good wash off on way home, yer know, in a clean net or wherever, on way home. And then we'll probably give them a good spray with hose pipe before I drop 'em into boiler, just to try to get as much sand as you can. And then when they've boiled, we put 'em down the electric riddle, and separate the meat from the shell, and drop the meat into a bath of cold water. Sometimes yer can put a handful of salt in if yer wanted, and then just stir 'em round, and try and get the sand from out of the skirts, yer know. [SB : Yes] And then let them sipe, and ... [SB : Sipe ?] Let the water drain off 'em. [GB : Sipes out] Aye, siping . [GB : Water sipes out of 'em] Aye, water siping [1 hr 7 mins] off 'em. Then yer can either take 'em straight to market, or freeze 'em down.
- SB So they come away from the shells on their own, there's no messing there ?
- IM Just on ... we have a riddle that shakes along, [SB : Yes] yer know, shakes, bumps 'em. When they've been boiled, the cockle shell busts open, and the meat will just drop out like. [SB : Wonderful] But when yer doing it on ... yer know, yer doing several, yer know, bags, it's too bloody hard a work doing it by hand, which has been done, and done it many a time myself'. But if yer boiling say 10 bags at a time, we put 'em down electric riddle, and let it ... let that take the bloody work.
- SB Absolutely, yes. Well, there's a lot there.
- IM Aye, I could talk Robin off a box of starch ! [laughs]
- SB So, have you got more you want to tell me about in the past, and past times ?
- GB Well no. I've just brought a couple of books there, they're interesting. That's all. And, [1 hr 8 mins] yer know, there's a few bits of tales in there. I don't know whether my mate's actually even seen these, I imagine, have you ? [IM : I don't know whether I have] It's yer auntie off Square, isn't it, Madge. [IM : Oh Madge, yea, Madge McClure] Madge McClure, there's bits of stories in there about Flookburgh, [IM : Oh right] and a few bits of pictures, but obviously we can't take a photograph on that. [SB : Yes] But I've jut brought them for you actually, just to [SB : I'd love to[?]] yer know, just to have a look at yer know. I mean they're only books that have, yer know, sort of local folk have done. Yer know, there's one or two about the blitz in Allithwaite. There's ... I don't know if this is the one with ... it is actually, I don't know if yer want to turn that off and have a read of that, but that's about all the old fishermen in there. And the chap who died, I think he was in his 90th year, was it, 90 odd, [IM : Walter ?] or was he 93, [SB : It says Walter Benson] Walter Benson, The Shrimp Song, [IM : Oh Walter, he was about 90] 93 or '4, and he was buried in Flookburgh Cemetery about a month ago was Walter who wrote that, and that's quite a good [1 hr 9 mins] tale about ... and you'll see how many different shrimpers there was. Those people who are

- all mentioned there are all shrimpers, and there would be more besides that, wouldn't there ? [IM : There would, aye, yea] That's that Shrimp Song³, about 20 verses of it.
- IM Oh right, aye. They used to ... when we were kids, we used to have to be ... they used to put us on bloody stage on Village Hall and make us sing it. [laughs]
- SB Would you like to sing it for me now ?
- IM No, I bloody wouldn't ! [GB : He would !] I didn't want to bloody sing it then !
- GB They had a karaoke the other night in Ravenstown Club, and he was very good.
- IM I can take mi shoes off an' all ! [both laugh]
- SB This is wonderful, and it mentions, as you say, it mentions lots of people, [GB : Lots of different people who ...] We start off with "Moke and Jack Hunter". Is it Moke ?
- IM Moke ? Bobby Moke, [GB : Bobby Moke] Aye, Bobby Moke. [GB : Bob Dickinson, wasn't it] Yea, Bob Dickinson. [GB : That's two] Allithwaite Jack [1 hr 10 mins] [GB : Hunter] Hunter was Harold Manning, Jack's father. [GB : He only lived two doors from here.] Jack's father was Hunter. [GB : That's two people]
- SB "And then if course there's Uncle James"
- GB Ah, well that's James Benson, Jamesey. [IM : Aye, that'd be James] That's his uncle, Walter's uncle, whose mentioned in the ... [IM : That's right, lived down Church Villas, back of Village Hall] He used to ride round like he was a Lord of the Manor, didn't he ? Jamesey. [IM : Aye, he did, on his bike]
- SB "You can find them in the Pub at night, they're catching shrimps galore, If they get as many as they say, there won't be any more". [GB & IM both laugh] "Then there's Gordy Shaw and Tosser"
- GB Gordy⁴ Shaw, Tosser Shaw
- IM Gordy Shaw and Tosser "Now they're an artful pair" [GB : He knows it] "If they catch shrimps taglag tonight, in the morning they'll be there". [laughs] I think that was about our Jim and Crafty actually, our father and Crafty. [SB : That's right, "There's Jim McClure and Crafty"] That's right [SB : "Now [1 hr 11 mins] they're an artful pair"] "If they catch shrimps taglag tonight, in the morning they'll be there" [SB : What's taglag ?] Taglag, catching a lot. [GB : hundreds, thousands, taglag, they come at yer taglag] [SB : OK] Catching tons like.
- SB So "there's Gordy Shaw and Tosser, and not forgetting Gog" [GB : That's mi uncle, John, who I was telling you about, uncle John] "For he will set off by himself, when it's not fit for a dog."

³ The Shrimp Song is on page 25 of "Looking Back ... recollections of life in Cark, Flookburgh and District", published by The Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal in 1980 and reprinted in 2001 by In Essence, Main Street, Grange.

⁴ Spelt Gordy in the printed Shrimp Song, but pronounced Geordy.

- GB Aye, yes, he used to get quite a bit to drink, [IM laughs] in the local hostelry, which is now closed unfortunately, yea. [IM : Mind you, they all did in them days, didn't they] They did, aye, they liked a pint. [SB : Yes] [IM : Drunk and disorderly, refusing to fight]
- SB "Did you ever hear of Gog and Tosser when they set off for Cod Hollow, Next day old Tom went dizzy when these tracks he tried to follow". [GB : Been in pub the night before] [IM : Been in pub night before and tracks were all over] "When Harold Coop ... [IM : Whiskers] [GB : Whiskers, aye] goes [1 hr 12 mins] shrimping you can only see his teeth" [IM laughs]
- GB Harold ... d'you ever watch Benny Hill ? [SB : Yes] Cosmo ? And we're pretty sure that Cosmo was done off Harold, because he was in here once, [IM : Yea, he was] and he had the horn rimmed glasses, and I'm pretty sure that Harold, yer know, [IM : His bloody glasses were like jam jar bottoms, yer know, they were that thick] great big thick ... yea
- SB And what about his teeth ?
- IM Well, he must have had a good set of teeth by sound of it.
- SB "When you ask him where his horse is, he says it's underneath". [IM & GB both laugh] "Now Tarro often shouts out 'My horse the net can hardly pull.', and when he lifts his tail out, it's a herring box brim full". [GB : The tail's the end of the net] Yes. [IM : Cod end, aye, cod end it's now known as] "Now Tosser and Gog Hodgson [GB : Again] thought they'd try to net for flukes, [1 hr 13 mins] they toiled three weeks for nowt, so Tosser said 'Let's try some hooks.'" [laughs] "And now there's Harold Manning, quite a daring chap is he, a fresh spot I will find for shrimps I will or else I'll see". So Harold Manning, so that's Jack's uncle ? [IM : Father] Father.
- GB Lived on corner here, two houses away. [IM : Hunter] Hunter, aye, we've just mentioned him as well. They all had nicknames, most of them. [IM : Oh aye, they all had nicknames in them days] Yea.
- SB So what's your nickname ?
- IM Fruity. I'd two fruit shops in Grange, when I was about 25, 30 year old, and so that's where that stems from.
- SB And what about your son ? [GB : He hasn't got one has he ?]
- IM Osmus. [GB : Aye] Where the hell that's come from I don't know. [GB : No, that's a modern one, isn't it ?] [SB : What is it ?] Osmus, whatever that is I don't know. But the other one was [1 hr 14 mins] for mine, and I wasn't going to tell yer this but I will, 'cos Gerald has ... Hard Fella, who'll probably be in that book, was called Brindle. And he used to come from Grange to Flookburgh to help with Gerald's relations, in the market garden business. And there's a bird, yer know, like the Tewits. We used to call 'em, well[?], Tewits. And Brindle always used to say to me, you're stuck up with foot arse egging. Well, they always nest on ground, yer see, does Tewits. So thou had to bend thee arse to thee foot to pick egg up. So that was foot arse egging. [SB laughs] And that's ... and round village everybody knew, yer know, that

... about Brindle and me and like. And they always used to shout when I was coming home from school : [1 hr 15 mins] where's thee going Ian ?. I used to say : I's going foot arse egging with Brindle. [laughs] And that's how it come about really. Aye, foot arse egging with Brindle. [SB : Foot ... Arse ... Egging ?] Foot arse, aye, the foot, [GB : Bum in air] Aye. Bend thee back, [SB : Yes] so there was, yer know, bend the arse.

SB And the birds that you're talking about, is that what I would call a Lapwing ? [IM : Yea, that's right, a Lapwing] a Pewit. And what is that you call it ? [IM : Tewits] A Tewit. [GB : There's a spot down there called Tewit Lane] Yes, I know that. [GB : Do you know Tewit Lane ?] There's Tewit Field in Kendal. [IM : Yea, aye] I didn't realise that was ... [IM : Aye, yea, no, Tewits] It onomatopoeic, it's from the sound that they make. Yes. fantastic.

SB Right, so let's get some more of these nicknames sorted out. So we've got "Gordy Shaw and Tosser". So who were they ?

GB Tom Shaw, Thomas wasn't it. [IM : Yea]

SB Tosser was Tom Shaw. It's not a very polite name that is it ? [1 hr 16 mins] [IM laughs]

GB It wouldn't even be thought of in them days ! No, bit nowadays, [SB : Yes] yea, I know what you're saying now.

SB Yes. And forgetting Gog. [IM : Yea, that was Gerald's uncle]

GB Uncle John again. And he was called that because he used to, when he was ... [SB : John Benson ?] No that's John Hodgson. [SB : OK] It's very complicated, my family. [SB : It sounds complicated] I better hadn't go in to because we've Bensons on one side, Bensons on another side, and Hodgsons on another side. And the Bensons weren't related, yer know. But he was called Gog because he used to say : we want goggy eggs, Mum, Mother. And a goggy egg was a hen egg. We want goggy eggs, when he was little un, so that stuck.

IM [in background getting a drink] Anybody want some of this ? [GB : I'm alright, thank you] [SB : So we're both no thank you]

SB So that's Gog. And then we've got "Jim McClure and Crafty" [GB : Yes] Who's Crafty ?

GB Crafty ? Come on[?]. Crafty ? [IM : Hell fire, [1 hr 17 mins] you're asking summat now. Crafty?] Tom Benson, wasn't it, t'other one ? [IM : Pardon] Wasn't it t'other Tommy Benson ? [IM : No, I don't think so] Crafty. [IM : I don't think so Gerald. I don't know really, to tell yer truth] I thought it was Margaret Benson's father. Walter's brother was it ? [IM : Jay ?] No, that's John. That was John Tommy was died young, 41. He had a heart attack on sand, died on sand. [IM : Oh father fetched him of sand, didn't he] There you are. Isn't that not Crafty ? [IM :[?], that's right] That was Crafty, wasn't it ? [IM : Aye, it was, that's right] Tom Benson, aye, another Benson. There was three brothers, I think that's right. [IM : You're probably right Gerald, aye]

SB Well, that doesn't sound like a happy occurrence.

GB No it wasn't. [IM : No] It's very rare that happens. I've never heard of it before, have you ?

- IM No, I know mi father fetched him off in cart like, dead. [GB : Had a heart attach, hadn't he ?] They were two[?] mates. It affected [1 hr 18 mins] mi father quite a lot, mi mother used to say. [SB : Yes, I'm sure] Because he worked with him, yer know, such a lot. Well, they weren't just mates, yer know, [SB : Cousins ?] they were like brothers like sort of thing. [GB : Nice fella] Very nice fella like, always weared a beret, on side of ears like was his beret, aye.
- GB And they always tried, fishermen, never hardly ... it says on there about them going out on their own, but generally they had a mate. [SB : Yes] And if it wasn't, it wasn't a phone call like it is now, are you going. It was rung up or knock on door, are you going in morning, yer know, and they always used to go with two.
- IM Try and knock about in pairs if yer can, just in case owt happened. [GB : It's a dangerous spot]
- SB And is that what happen on this occasion ?
- IM Yes. From what I can gather, he just had a heart do, and that was end of him like. [GB : There'd be no air ambulances then, no mobile phones, no nowt, was there] No, no nowt, no. Our father just had to pick him up, and pulled him into cart, and fetched him home like. [SB : Well I can completely understand that that would affect him] Oh, it did, yea. [SB : He'd have seen him going really, wouldn't he ?] That's right, yea. Aye, they'd have been [1 hr 19 mins] working together, and just, yer know, there one minute and gone next minute. [SB :[?], or said I feel a bit queer, or ...] [GB : Yea, might be having a bit of a do here, and ...] But our father would have never tell me anyway like. [SB : Yes] Yer know, they never, they never tell me owt like.
- GB No, it was a ... yer were told what yer needed to know, not what yer wanted to know, in them days. [IM : That's right] It was a different era, wasn't it ?
- SB I can completely understand that it would have affected him, because he would have been close, and he would have been trying his best for him.
- IM Well that's right, yea. But, yer know. As Gerald says like, yer know, this day and age like, yer know, they'd be out with phone, and helicopter down and[?] [unclear as three speak at once]
- GB Well, when yer out there, yer near to Blackpool, near to airport, aren't yer ? You'd have them there in five minutes less than getting here, wouldn't yer, with air ambulance, yer know.
- IM I hope history doesn't repeat itself, 'cos Gerald comes out with me, and he's ... [GB : I've had a near do] He's had a near do. [SB : Have you ?] [GB : Yes, I was dead for nine minutes] [SB : Were you ?] [GB : Aye] [1 hr 20 mins] [SB : You're looking very well on it !] [GB : I'm not so bad for a dead fella, am I ?] [SB : You're not doing badly at all. I wish I looked like you do, when I've been ...] [GB : Well I don't, I don't want a woman to look like this !] [IM : It's same as I said, only vermin's bad to kill, tha knows !] [laughs]
- SB Was that at home, or were you ...

- GB No, I was on steps at golf club. [SB : Oh heavens] I just went over like a [whistles] Grange fell. [SB : Yes, it's steep up there] I fell off. Well, I was on step, I hadn't even gone out. I just went over, and luckily, one of lads was there who was a fire engine, a fireman, and he had a go, he'd only had a go on a dummy but he did well on me. [SB : Yes] Not much difference, is there ? [IM laughs] Oh, I got ... and then a lass who was in Grange, who I was at school with, she had a defibrillator there, and she rushed, she was just in Grange getting some shopping, she rushed up, and the nine belts, yer know, nine of those [whistles] with machine, [SB : Yes] took us [1 hr 21 mins] nine. [SB : Yes, got you going again] They said, you're not brain dead. I said, I'm not sure I had a brain before, so it can't be. [IM laughing : It's bad to tell !] So I'm here to living, and I'm only ... I'm just coming up to being ... I'll be 5 before so long. Maybe I'll be glad when I'm a grown up, won't I ? I'm only 4 this time round. [SB : Yes] I think that's why I enjoy going out fishing now. [SB : Yes] I did it 'till I was about 12 or 14, I don't know, then yer sort of fall out of t'way of it, yer know, and then yer just think, well, this is it, yer know. [IM : Well, yer followed on [?] with yer father building though, didn't he ?] Aye, that's right, aye.
- SB Well there's nothing like ill health to make you think about life, and what you want from life, and make, you know ...
- IM There's a[?], didn't he ? [SB : Yes] [GB : But it must be alright, because nobody's said what ... yer know, nobody's come back and said it's not] There's folk dying today that's never[?]
- GB Me other little job now is driving [1 hr 22 mins] a hearse, [SB : Yes] so I'm hoping to keep in front of game ! [IM & SB both laugh] [IM : So when his name comes up, he's got to be there, ready to cross it out !] I'm looking for a cheap o. Aye, but they're funny funerals. So it's a bit diverse really, I think everything is in Flookburgh, because yer just used to do it, didn't yer. [SB : Yes] Yer know, yer all had a bit of land. You would have a bit of land, [IM : That's it, yer did] And you would make up, yer know, yer'd go and get water cress out of t'river, and yer'd have a mint bed, and yer'd have a bit of rhubarb for market, make yourself a few bob to put in Post Office. [IM : Yer could always sell a few quid] Aye, Post Office Savings Bank was best spot. [IM : That's right] [SB : Yes] Yer know, you've got a few quid in there ...
- IM Our grandmother used to say, yer know : there's always work for them that want it, yer know. [GB : That's right, an' all, i't it, aye aye. Folk don't want to do a lot] Over qualified, where the bloody hell does that come from, yer know ? [GB : Aye, over qualified] Over qualified for a job. [GB : Hold a brush] If yer can do the job, yer can do the job. [GB : Yea] Yer know, [1 hr 23 mins] they can't say yer over qualified, surely.
- SB Yes, but you guys are very practical, and you're doing very practical work. [further comment unclear as GB starts speaking][?] completely different.
- GB I think we're village folk, and I think village folk, yer know ... they want it given, don't they ?
- IM Aye, we should have put that bloody gate across about Allithwaite, shouldn't we, and kept 'em out ! [laughs]

- GB Maybe we should have lifted that bridge across t'other side of Flookburgh, kept Piggytowners out an' all.
- IM Mi grandfather used to say about viaducts, there's Janet's either side of us, the Janet Arnside and the Janet Ulverston. Either side of them viaducts, he said, they're all bloody foreigners, he said, keep 'em away. I wish I'd take notice and went and married yan ! [all laugh]
- GB It was quite feudal in old days, wasn't it ? [IM : Pardon] There was two particular parts to this village, or probably four. You were either up town, which is up town from Square this way, [SB : Right] or you were down town. And it was very different, wasn't it ? [IM : Oh aye] It was almost feudal. [inaudible comment from SB[?]] No, there were no posh bits. [IM : They were over bridge] Over bridge [1 hr 24 mins] [IM : Over bridge] Snob hill. [IM : Snob hill, aye] Snob hill, Piggytown, yea. [IM : That's what we always used to call bloody over Piggytown, snob hill] Piggytown's that way, to Allithwaite. Did you come that way or not ? [SB : Yes] [IM : Over bridge] Yer know when you come over railway bridge, those bungalows on other side, that's snob hill like that. That's the height. [SB : You call it snob hill ?] Snob hill, yea. [SB : OK] Don't tell anybody, but[?] over there. [SB : Otherwise known as Piggytown ?] Piggytown. [IM : Piggytown, that's it] A fella used to have pigs, [SB : OK] years and years and years before our time, yer know. [IM : Yea]
- SB And you say you had the upside and the downside ?
- GB There was up town and there was down town. And it wasn't up the village because Flookburgh is actually ... I think it's a town, isn't it ? [inaudible comment from SB whilst GB is talking [?]] It's got charter, yer see, it was made a town, yer know. Yer can actually go and stand on the Square now, even though they have marked it off as a car park, yer can go and stand on there on a ... is it a Wednesday, or a ... one day a week, and yer can have a stall, [IM : That's right, one day a week on Square] [1 hr 25 mins] and they can't move yer on because the middle bit of that Square is parish land, it's not council land, and a lot of people think it is.
- IM Well, since they've done all this lot 'ere, to what this walkway is, haven't council claimed it then ?
- GB I don't know. I don't think council did it. I think parish did a lot of it. [IM : Did they ?] They paid for a lot of it I think. [IM : Oh, I though council had bloody well done it] No, I don't think so, no. [IM : Well, if that's true, yer know, if parish has done it, well, it'll still be church ground] Well, I don't think they'll ever be able to stop that. [IM : Nah, not if it's charter like] Yer know, it's in that ancient charter, isn't it, yer know. [IM : That's right, aye]
- SB So up town and down town, what was the difference between them ?
- GB Well all up here was ... they had money, and all down town didn't, yer know. [IM laughs] There was nothing really.
- IM Us up town 'ere spent a bob or two, them buggers down there wouldn't.

- GB They kept it, oh they kept it. Smithy used to be across road, by the way. Yer know[?]
 [SB : You only had one smithy, just one ?] One smithy, aye. But there was a smithy in Cartmel, there was one in Allithwaite. [SB : Yes] There wouldn't be one in Grange⁵ because, well, ladies wouldn't want one, [1 hr 26 mins] would they ? [IM & SB both laugh] They were posher in Grange like. Lindale had a smithy, they all ... our village had a smithy. [IM : that's right, yea] Go and get horses shoed, an old bugger he was. He was an old bugger, yer were frightened to death o' going there, yer know. Take horse and get it shoed, oh[?]
 [IM : Aye, Bert (ph) Rowlandson] [SB : What was his name ?] [IM : Bert (ph) Rowlandson, aye]
- SB Is there something about blacksmithing that turns people a bit wild ?
- IM I don't know, but by gum, he was rough old bugger was Bert. [GB : He was] Mind you, we were nowt but bloody lads, yer know, [GB : Threatening, wasn't he ?] 8 or 10 or 12 year old. There's a bloody good fella, yer know, with a bloody anvil, and, [SB : Yea] yer know ... But he used to be hellish with bloody animals like, yer know, rough old bugger like. But they all were rough buggers in them days. [SB : Yes] But that's how they had to live likely. [GB : Yea]
- SB Yes, I've heard that. 'Cos where I live, in Crosthwaite, I live near the smithy, [IM : Right] and the guy who does it now is mainly [1 hr 27 mins] mending agricultural machinery and garden furniture. [IM : That's right] But his ... now what is it, his brother in law, used to be a farrier, Wilf Mitchell, I don't know if you know the name. [IM : Right, no] But Wilf's dad, who I never knew, Wilf's still alive he'd be in his mid late 70s, Wilf's father, I've heard it said that he was an evil man. That's what they said, and he was the farrier who looked after the horses. [IM : Right] And I've heard it said many times, exactly as you're saying, that you wouldn't want to ... [IM : I wouldn't bloody cross him] No, you wouldn't want to. [GB : No]
- IM Bloody weird. Bloody nearly tears when I used to be coming out of 'ere if out old fella : 'ere, get that horse, take to, yer know, across to Bert. [GB : Aye, yer didn't want to go again] I didn't. [GB : Once was enough] I was bloody nearly tears getting across, yer know. He frightened me to death, and that's top and bottom of it. As I say, 10 year 'ard, or whatever I was in them ... yer know. [SB : Yes]
- GB There were certain like no go areas, yer know, where folk were a little bit ... [1 hr 28 mins] I call 'em hard men, I think we're very soft now. I am compared to mi father, and I'm softer than mi grandfather. But I think in them days yer had to be hard. [IM : We've had a softer life really, haven't we] We've had a softer life. We've had a good life.
- IM We've had ... we've done bloody ... yer, know, we haven't had a hard life. [GB : No] We've never bin to bloody war or owt have we ? [GB : No] We didn't have to get a war, or do National Service or owt o' that. Yer know, we weren't bloody dragged across bloody ... yer know, from one country to another, were we like, yer know, so. [GB : No no] We've had a softer life, but we have had a life like. Plenty hard enough working, yer know, bloody times o' day yer have to get up, and one thing and another, but .. [GB : Yer know what they say

⁵ There was once a smithy in Grange, on Windermere Road

- about hard work : doesn't kill many folk, but it makes 'em a gay shape] It doesn't kill any bugger but it contributes a lot.
- SB Makes them a gay shape ?
- GB Aye. I don't mean gay like ... that sort of gay, [SB : No] Gay was like a bad shape, or a funny shape. [SB : Yes] Funny shape.
- SB [1 hr 29 mins] Shall we finish the nick names ? [GB : Yes, quite diversified really] Where we up to ? So we had "Gordy Shaw and Tosser, and not forgetting Gog". "Jim McClure and Crafty". Now do we know who Crafty was ? [GB : Yes, Tom Benson who died on sand] Oh he was the one. So why was he called Crafty ?
- GB Well, crafty is ... yea, he would be knowing what he was doing, I would think. [IM : Aye] Crafty is ... yer know, like the old ... [IM : Crafty a word like, yer know, well, what the hell is it Gerald, just ... keeping one step in front of other] Canny. [IM : Aye, canny] That's right. [SB :[?]] More ... [IM : Well, knowing where to be and what to do, at the right time] Aye. [SB : Yes. But he was a good man, you liked him ?] Oh, he was a great man, aye. [IM : Oh, a great man was Crafty] Aye, he was a great man, yes
- SB The other one we've got ... we've talked about that, it's Cod Hollow. And then "When Harold Coop ...". Is it Coop ? [GB : Aye, Harold Coop (maybe Harold Cowperthwaite?) , that's Whiskers.] [IM : Aye, Harold Coop] [GB : That's Whiskers] Whiskers ? [GB : Whiskers, yes] Presumably that's how he looked. [GB : Yes] [1 hr 30 mins] "goes shrimping, you can only see his teeth". He's the one with the glasses ? [GB : That's it, yea, like this ... a pair of binoculars] And the next one is : "Now Taro often shouts out ..." [GB : Taro, he lived across road, didn't he] [IM : Taro, next door] [GB : Aye, next door, and Pongo was across road, wasn't he ?] [IM : Pongo was across road, his brother] [GB : Butler] Another Butler ? [IM & GB : Another Butler] Taro was which Butler ? [IM : Taro Butler, Les Butler] Yes. [GB : Father, uncle, Pongo was his father]
- IM Uncle, Pongo was his father. Pongo was Les's father, and Pongo and Taro and Jack were brothers. [SB : Are those real names, Pongo and Taro ?] [GB : No] I haven't a bloody clue whether they would be or not.
- GB No, they're not real names, no. Tom was another one, Tom was Taro. [IM : Aye] The there was Jack Butler. And then Pongo, well I forget Pongo's. he was [1 hr 31 mins] always Pongy, wasn't he ? [IM : Aye Pongy, Pongy Butler]
- SB And then we've got, OK, so it's "Now Tosser and Gog Hodgson thought they'd try to net for flukes, they toiled three weeks for nowt so Tosser said 'Let's try some hooks'. And now there's Harold Manning ..." And you say that's Jack's dad ? [GB : Jack's dad, yea] " Quite a daring chap is he, a fresh spot I will find for shrimps [I will] or else I'll see. So down on those sands he went, where foot had never trod, at last a likely spot he found and said 'I'll call it Hunters Hod.' So in those unknown waters Harold thought he'd drop his net, smacked horse and lit a Woodbine up and wondered what he'd get. And when he pulled his net in, round the cart he did a jig, he's seen some tackers in his time, but never none so big." So what's a tacker ?

- IM Bloody good shrimp [all laugh] [GB : There's big uns and whoppers, and they're whoppers] Oh my Godders. [1 hr 32 mins] [all laugh]
- SB Well the size you showed me then was the size of a scampi. [IM : Bloody good shrimps, like a finger] Like a finger, like a fat man's finger. I've seen some tackers in my time but never none so big. "Now the young bloods of the village, when it's night time they play wary, they put their horses in their carts and stick around for (ph) Cary." Cary ? [IM : Aye, there was a fella called Cary, wasn't there ?] [GB : There was, aye, across road again. He was an up downer, wasn't he ?] [IM : Yea] "But Cary puts a flanker in and goes round by the croft, but they know what he is up to so he shouldn't act so soft." [GB : He's gone ... he's tried to fool 'em by going another way to sand] OK.
- IM Didn't want any bugger following 'im. [GB : No, to wherever good stuff was] To wherever he was working. [SB : Ah, that's what it's all telling me, OK] There's tales of 'im, I don't know now [1 hr 33 mins] whether it was mi bloody father that tell me, but I've heard tales that many a time, yer know, through night ... say they'd done well through day, and they thought, well, we'll do bloody sight better at night, in dark, 'cos shrimps used to come to side at night like. And they'd put sacks round bloody horses hooves, so they didn't make any noise going road. 'Cos there was always some bugger .. yer know, yer couldn't do nowt in Flookburgh without somebody knew. [GB : No, twitchy curtains] Twitchy bloody curtains. [SB : Well, it's a small community] It's a small community, nah bloody television, there was, yer know, nah noise or owt like. So if yer heard a bloody hoof : where's that ? Who's that going ? [GB : Yea] Yer know, what they on wi' ? [GB : Everything] Everything like. Well our father said they used to put bloody ... well, he done it hi'self. He said he'd done it 'is bloody sel'. Tied bloody ... tied [GB : Hessian sacks] hessian sacks round bloody horses hooves like, so they didn't make any noise when they were going down street, and they could get away without any bugger knowing. [SB : You'd still make some noise, [1 hr 34 mins] wouldn't you ?] Well, not as much like, wouldn't I ?
- SB So that's what going on there. "Now often down old Cark Hill you hear Brian Shaw and Jack, you bet they're off to the West Dyke, and it will be a good straight track." So is this Jack Manning or another Jack ?
- IM Yea, there'll be Jack Manning or Allithwaite Jack. [GB : Aye. Probably be Jack Manning]
- SB Is he called Jack or is he called John, because I've seen him use both names. You always call him Jack ? [IM : Jack Manning, yes] [GB : Jack Manning] [IM : Yes, as far as I know it's always Jack] [GB : John's just another name for Jack, isn't it, in a lot of ... doesn't seem right that, does it ? It's not a bit like, is it ?] [IM : He's always been Jack Manning to me like] [GB : Jack Manning, aye] He's always been Jack Manning to me, but he sometimes signed a letter to me : John. [IM : Right, well there you are] Maybe it's a pretty posh name. [IM : Aye] [GB : We don't have posh names, do we ?] [IM : Lot of difference between him and a Christian. [laughs] Don't tell 'im I said that] [GB : It's on here old lad !] [laughs] [1 hr 35 mins] [IM : It's on here, aye. He wouldn't bother wouldn't Jack]
- SB "I overheard a conversation I just couldn't help, you see, when Gordy said, to Jack, 'my lad, at shrimping you're U.P.'" Useless P ? [IM : Useless Pillock !] [all laugh] "Now at length the

lads got brainy, and thought their own shrimps they'd pot, and when a building came for sale, they bought the whole job lot." [GB : There you go] And is that he start of the Co-operative ? [IM : That's start of the Co-operative, Flookburgh Fishermen's.] Yes. "And things were going quite nicely when Jim Mason came along, and said, 'Now lads just use your heads, with me things can't go wrong'." That was the name you mentioned before ? No ? [IM : Charlie Bartle ...] [GB : Charlie Bartle] [IM : was main man I knew down there like] [GB : Jim Mason, no] [IM : Whether he was before Charlie Bartle ...] [GB : Might have bin an' all, 'cos [1 hr 36 mins] Charlie Bartle lived down next to ...] [aircraft noise] [IM : Listen to that bloody lot ... Aye, Charlie Bartle was only fella I knew.] [GB : Aye] Well it says Jim Mason. [IM : Probably be before my time] [GB : Me an' all, I think] [IM : Jim Mason ?] "But at first they were dubious, someone before had pulled their leg, t'was a guy who came from Bridlington, his name was Mr. Pegg. But Jim soon proved that he was good and said 'With cash I'll part, and whether you catch owt or nought, I'll pay you ten bob a cart'." [IM : Owt or nowt] [GB : Owt or nowt] Owt or nowt. [IM : Whether you catch owt or nought, I'll pay thee ten bob a cart, yer know] "Now this song was wrote at Christmas time, when I was full of fun, so please take it as it's given, or else out will come my gun." [all laugh] That's lovely. That is lovely. [GB : Well, it's just a different one, isn't it ?]

IM I'll tell yer what, he was a grand fella was Walter. [GB : Aye, nice fellar] Nicest fella yer'd ever meet, [GB : Aye, he was] was Walter Benson. [GB : aye he was,[?] a gentleman, [1 hr 37 mins] wasn't he] He was, aye. [GB : Very nice fella] He would be quite bloody well educated like to ... [SB : Brilliant] [GB : Yes. I thought you might enjoy that] [SB : Brilliant] Shrimp Song an' all he writ, didn't he ? [GB : The Shrimp Song, aye, he did, is that the one you were singing ?] Nah, salmon. Well, thee take the high bar and I'll take the low bar, and all that bloody carry on. [GB : And I'll catch a salmon afore you] And I'll catch a salmon afore thee, aye. [GB : Yea] Aye, I think Walter writ that an' all.

GB There are quite a lot of good tales in there. Now some of them could be tales, yer know. [IM : Aye] Yer know, I mean. There's pictures in here as well, just of Main Street, how it was, [IM : Oh aye] 'cos yer just drove up it, so they might be interesting. I know they're not for tape or owt like that, but there they are. Look, now there's yer lady in cockle, [SB : Absolutely, yes] fair lady cockling. You might have seen something like that before but ...

SB I've seen similar, but I don't think I've seem that picture. And the jumbo is just the same, yes. And that look to me like[?]

IM They weren't as long as what we use now. They were 4 foot 6 [inches] was jumbos in them [1 hr 38 mins] days. [GB : Are they bigger ?] Six foot now. [GB : Oh, six foot] Aye, greedy boards we call 'em. I wish they would get 'em down to 4 foot 6, they're a bloody sight easier to handle. [GB : Aye, I could call 'em something else, but someone else is present. Summat to do with aching] No, they were always 4 foot 6 was jumbos. Mind yer, that was likely 'cos it were women that were using 'em. I don't know. Yer know, but measurement now is 6 foot like. Tha can't have a jumbo more than 6 foot lang. [SB : You can't have one longer than ...] No, 6 foot, that's the limit. [SB : That's the regulation ?] That's limit now is 6 foot. But as I say, they were always 4 foot 6 in them days like. I remember, yer know, down with our old fella bloody jumbo-ing, and he would be craaming, yer know. Mind,[?] so bloody hard

then, if they'd been 6 foot long, I probably couldn't have lifted the bloody thing like.
[GB : No]

SB So when did they change from 4 to 6 ?

IM Well, they just changed. [SB : Just in passing ?] It [1 hr 39 mins] just happened really, overnight, yer know. Younger lads got into job, yer know, and they're worth nah bloody money now is cockle job, and so ... But I think there is a ruling now, 6 foot is long as yer can take like.

SB And the craam is the rake ?

IM No. The craam⁶ is a three pronged thing that ... [SB inaudible(?)] well, yer just flick, [SB : Yes] flick 'em, yer know, with a three pronged craam. Like a hard toasting fork, yer know, with three prongs, then it come up an 'andle, an 'andle about bloody say 18 inch long, yer know, with craam stuck in bloody end of 'andle, and tha just flicks 'em into nets, yer know, to the net, one at a time. [SB : And use used it as a verb as well, you said craaming] Craaming, aye, goin' craaming, out to craam 'em, craaming 'em.

SB So that's the same, the jumbo and the craam is exactly the same. [IM : Just exactly the same, yea] Hasn't changed since[?] [IM : No, it hasn't at all. No it's still a ...] So you only use a rake if they're really really ... [1 hr 40 mins] [IM : When they're thick] Yes. [IM : Aye, when they're rank, as they call it.] [GB : On top of one another] [IM : Aye] [GB : Nice and fresh] [both laugh] And does the rake have another name ?

IM No, it's just a rake. It's just a ... pretty much like a garden rake, if yer will, yer know [SB : Yes] Now yer can get 'em in stainless steel. [SB : Wooden thing with prongs down ?] Yea. [SB : Like a hay rake ?] Pretty much so, yea. Yer know, like ... yea, very much similar, yer know. Yer just use what works for you an' all really. Some fellas would rather have, yer know, straight bloody prongs on 'em, and others would rather have 'em bent prongs. Just depends what sand tha's working an' all. Yer know, yer can look down there, there's plenty o' bloody sand, but it's all different. [SB : Yes] Yer know, tha can jumbo yon bloody spot, oh, it can be soft and sloppy as owt, yer know, oh, bloody hell, this is grand. And then y' go quarter of a mile somewhere else, and it's like break bloody Main [1 hr 41 mins] Street, yer know. Like bloody jumbo-ing bloody concrete. It won't move like, yer know. [GB : That's same when yer got out of tractor, isn't it] It is. [GB : Yer can get sloppy bits and bloody bits that ...] Tha's going along, and oh, bloody nicely, hard as bloody iron, yer know. And then tha can pull up, and jump off, and turn round, and yan bloody wheels has gone down on the bloody tractor like. [GB : Yea] Tha just never knows the bloody time like, yer know] [GB : Don't take it for granted, do yer] No, yer don't. [GB : Take nowt for granted out there]

SB And then the net that you use for shrimping, what you call that, a trawl ?

IM Pretty much so, yea, aye, shrimp trawls, yea, fastened to a beam. We're allowed to use 15 foot, 30 foot sorry, 30 foot of beam. [SB : Yes] But tha couldn't lift 30 foot of bloody

⁶ For a photograph of a craam, see page 64 of Jack Manning's book : *It was Better than Working*

- beam like, so we use two 15 foot like. [SB : Right] Two 15 foot, well, that's what yer allowed, but ...
- SB So how does that work ? You're pulling two nets from one tractor ?
- IM Yea. Well the [1 hr 42 mins] tractor is pulling the trailer, yer know, the chassis as we call 'em. They used to call 'em jalopies, [GB : inaudible comment (?) an 'ard jalopy. [SB : Yes] And all it was really was a car chassis really, yer know, with wheels left on and steering. [SB : Yes] Other than that, that was what was left like, yer know, everything else was discarded. [GB : Just boarded, maybe a gap between boards] Yea, yer put boards on t' top. And then, yer know, yer just dragged that chassis down the channels, with the two nets draggin' behind, yer know. [GB : Yer set the ...]
- SB You've got the tractor, and then the trailer behind that with the nets ? [GB : With a big long length of rope]
- IM Yea, that's how yer can work it, but yer can also can work it by setting the angle on the from wheels of the chassis, to point in banks, and then a long rope, say maybe 100 yards, [GB : Aye, 100 yards] rope, from the tractor to the chassis, one end's fastened to the tractor and one end's fastened to the chassis, and when yer set off trawling, with the wheels pointing away [1 hr 43 mins] from the side, the chassis will go into the deeper water, pulled along by the tractor which is in the shallow water, still dragging the two shrimp beams behind it, and that chassis can go into whatever depth it is there, yer know. Doesn't matter whether it is 10 foot or 20 foot, yer still dragging that chassis down out of sight. All yer can see is the two buoys that's attached to the nets, in case something happens and, yer know, yer loose yer bloody nets, at least yer know there's a buoy on there, and that's where yer nets are.
- SB So the trailer, which you're calling the chassis, [IM : Yea] that stays on the bed, [IM : Yea, that's right] completely underneath, even though ... [IM : oh yea, out of sight] even though it's got a wooden planking.
- GB Yer can generally see draw bar. Yer know draw bar that's joined to ... it's probably about 5 foot long, [IM : Yea] 6 foot long, obviously with a pin to be dragged along, and yer lift that up on to top and tie it up, and that'll be, what, 7 foot, [1 hr 44 mins] and yer sometimes loose that, don't yer ?
- IM That's right, sometimes drops out of sight. But we always fish in low water, yer know, the tide's bin gone for 6 hours, 7 hours, yer know, that's round about our depth really, 5 to 7 foot, [GB : Yea] somewhere in that region.
- GB Odd times they'll drop in if there's any holes like. [IM : Yea] Yer get a big ... now yer see it, now yer don't.
- SB Yes. But there's no knowing where the holes are ?
- IM No. Some signs that can be ... [GB : Bits of run offs, isn't there ?] Bits of run offs and things like that. Flat holes, yer know, that's gonna, yer know, make a hole when flood tide goes at it like, yer know. Like each channel dropping into a spot, yer know, and tha's getting' flood

- tide coming, well, that channel still running' down and meeting the bloody tide coming' back up channel, up 'od. As soon as them meet, they're going to swirl, aren't they ? Well that's going to cause a bloody flat' 'ole as we call 'em like, yer know. [SB : A fly ...] A flat' 'ole, flow 'ole. [1 hr 45 mins] [GB : A flow hole] [all laugh, all repeating various pronunciations]
- SB So there's a picture here – funeral of drowned fishermen, Flookburgh, 1912. [GB : Yes there is] But there can't have been many that drowned, or they wouldn't still be doing it ?
- GB They cross pooled on other side. They went [IM : They went musselling] for mussels, and they were full. They'd too many on, and they tried to get back. And I think, how many went, seven ?
- IM Tale I had was they went musselling out from 'ere to Barrow. Whether I right or wrong Gerald I don't know like. [GB : Other side, definitely] they were on other side of Barrow, but I think they'd done prickly[?] in boat, [GB : Aye] yer know, down from Ulverston, down at Barrow. But they didn't put mussels into bags, or into sacks, yer know. What they were doing, they were dredging with a hand dredge, yer know, like a long rake with a little bit of a bag behind the rake. And [1 hr 46 mins] out of the boat, they were dredging the mussel off the sea bed, lifting it up and dropping the mussels into the bottom of the boat. Well, yer know, you get several fellas doing that for a length of time, yer going to have quite a weight. [SB : No freeboard left] Well, that was one, but when yer down on those mussels scars, it fills up, fills up, fills up, and then all of a sudden it comes with a bloody great rush, once it's filled the bloody mason up round the scars. [SB : Yes] Yer know, it will come with a rush. [SB : Yes] Well, I would imagine, I don't know whether I's right like, but it's probably hit 'em sideways on, and all that bloody weight of mussels in bottom is going to move, isn't it ? If they'd bin in sacks, tied, and linked down, they probably wouldn't have moved, yer know. Without bein' bloody clever or owt like, it's just, that's mi own thought. Whether I'm right or wrong, I don't know. [GB : They didn't get back anyway, did they ?] Nah, they didn't get back poor buggers. [GB : here was a big ... all buried on same day, big [1 hr 47 mins] procession and ...] Whether it's right or wrong, I don't know like, but ... [GB : Our mother said they just had too much on, so they probably did have too much on, not in bags, yer know] Yea, probably, as I say, if they were loose ... I don't know how they ... yer know.
- GB It's like them milk tanker drivers, isn't it, with half a tank. It's not as good as having a full tank because it swishes round, [IM : Nah, that's right, it moves] moves like a hurdy gurdy, doesn't it ? [IM : All bloody weight goes to yon side, and over tha go side] Aye, yea.
- SB So are you ever going to retire ?
- GB He can't, he never started !
- IM I'm the tired bit now, it's just the re- I'm looking for ! [SB laughs] Once I get a pound behind Gerald Benson, I's going to park up. [GB : Keep going, keep going] [SB inaudible (?)] Once I get a pound behind 'im I'll park up. [all laugh] [GB : And I'll give up] No. [SB : Still enjoying it ?] Aye, yea. Me eyes are failing, [SB : Yes] [1 hr 48 mins] partially sighted [SB : Yes] [GB : He does very well to go out there] Don't fit out really [?] [GB : There's lots of fellas wouldn't

- bloody go out there wi' ... if, yer know, they ...] Don't fit out really, but keep goin'. Missus kicks me out in the morning. [GB : Unfortunately, mine does an' all, so I land up 'ere] Aye.
- SB So how is your sight affecting you ? Can you see near, can you see far ? [continues inaudible as IM starts speaking [?]]
- IM No, trouble ... yea, more by voice really, yer know, more by voice. I have to get quite close to faces.
- SB Well, you surprise me because I came and talked to you in the market, and you knew me.
- IM Yea, well you came ... voice. That's what did ... [SB : Well, I'm surprised you know my voice] Voice mainly, but yer did come quite close, [SB : OK] and then I just ... it just clicked in like. [SB : Yes] But, yer know, if yer don't speak, and yer a few yards away, I haven't got a bloody clue who it is.
- GB As a fisherman, [1 hr 49 mins] he wouldn't be going without Tony. [IM : No] Am I right ? [IM : No, that's right] Yer couldn't go, could yer, safely. [IM : I wouldn't go] Yer couldn't go.
- IM Yer know, it's mi son that's, yer know, full time, and he goes, and he knows mi capabilities, and I just follow on being[?] Keep out of way. [GB : Tony gets all good shrimps, and he ends up with ...] [both laugh]
- SB But everyone, you know, if it isn't this it's the other, isn't it. We've all got ...
- IM That's right. Everybody has a cross to bear these days, don't they ?
- GB It's very easy to give up, isn't it ? [IM : Aye] Yer know, I could have given up when I had mi heart do. But I used to laugh about it now, because it's no good doing[?] [IM & SB both inaudible whilst GB is speaking [?]] And people will say to yer, but yours is a lot worse than mine. Isn't it ? [IM : Well, I don't know] Yes, they do me. It might last another year, it might not last that long, but I've had four years that I shouldn't have had. Yer know, you and yer family ...
- IM Yea, aye, we've had sight problems for generations. [GB : Everyone nearly, haven't they ? All yer mother's family] Yea, mi mother was blind [1 hr 50 mins] before she deed, and she deed at about 62. And mi mother, aye, she was blind. Grandfather, yer know, mother's father, he was blind before he deed, and I don't think he made much around 60 like. And I's 60 am this time, and I'm still going sands, so [SB : Yes] Like mi ... I haven't got to 62 yet. [GB : If yer give up, yer'll go, I tell yer, don't give up, don't give up, yer got to keep going] Folks die if they retire, I was always told, which, it has happened like.
- GB Yer've got to have something to get up for, haven't yer ? Yer've got to have something to get up for.
- IM Aye, breakfast usually. [laughing] [GB : I thought yer didn't have any ? a banana ?] [both laugh]
- SB Oh, I hope your son's eyesight is going to be alright.

- IM He's fine, yea. Daughter has it, hereditary it is. And her daughter has it as well. [SB : Cruel, isn't it] It is, yea, but ... [GB : They do very well] I just says to 'em, play cards tha's given, don't I. [SB :Yes, I agree completely] [1 hr 51 mins] [SB continues inaudibly after IM starts speaking again [?]] I could have tell yer something else, but I won't say that.
- SB Nothing you can do about it, nothing ...[?], you've just got to get on with it. [GB : Nothing at all]
- IM There is, yer know ... they probably will boss it in years to come. [SB : Yes, let's hope so] Yer know, they probably will like, yer know. We've had some people down 'ere from Newcastle University. They, yer know, took skin samples, blood samples, whatever, and they said, yer know, we'll bloody boss it like, when we get enough money to, yer know, throw at it and have a go at it like. But the other one was, they just said, that, yer know, there's more needier people than yersel', yer know, that can't see a bloody thing. So they chuck the money at that, rather than just chuck it at partially sighted. [SB : Yes] Which yer can understand like, fair enough. [SB : Yes] So he said ... but anyway they said, yer know, 20 years time he said it might be, yer know, thing of the past. So it'll be grand for our Amy then, won't it, yer know. [GB : Yes, that's a good way o' thinking] Yea. [1 hr 52 mins] [GB : It's only way of thinking, i'n't it] [SB : Yes] That's it, that's how yer do, i'n't it.
- GB We're lucky where we live, we call it God's country round 'ere. When yer turn left at Levens Bridge, and come through, yer know, to think ... We take it a little bit for granted, but you go out on Morecambe Bay at 6 o'clock in the morning, and sun just comes up, [IM : Yea] if you can beat that ... [SB : Magnificent] [IM : It is] Yer can't describe it. [IM : Aye, last thing at night with sun bloody setting, everything turns bloody orange, and, yer know ...] All hills are showing, all hills of Coniston and up there. And it can be also ... yer can also see a bloody thing go past, wasn't there that time. D'yer remember when that [IM : Hovercraft ?] whirlwind thing, [IM : Oh aye] That was the tornado thing. And it went past, and we were on tractor, we couldn't keep up with it. [IM : Nah] And it went right up the other side, yer know, up to Allithwaite, and took a couple of slates off at Allithwaite, [IM : That's right, yea, aye] and we didn't know what it was at the time. And it was late at night, wasn't it. [IM : Yes it was, that's right] Seven o'clock, half seven. [IM : Bloody whirlpool Gerald] [1 hr 53 mins] Aye, yea. [GB looking at another old photograph] That's actually Flookburgh there. That's with carts, you might be interested. That's old Flookburgh and[?] bits. An' they're up here an' all. Craig's house is on. [IM : Oh is it ? Is it ...[?] top of 'ill] I think it might be, I think it could be an' all. [IM : Yea] And I think Hunter's is on. [IM : Yea] And there's some down Market Street an' all. [IM : That's right, there's yon on Square and bloody tree] Aye, outside Church. Flookburgh Church used to be on Square, yer know. [SB : And it was burnt ?] Yea, it was. Well, the whole of Flookburgh was burnt, there wasn't very much left. All these houses that yer see, like Martin Gregson's and that, they're the older ones, but somehow they escaped in that great fire, didn't they ? [IM : Right, aye] We has plague an' all, [IM : Right] plague in 1600s, [IM : Right] and then fire in 1700s, [IM : I wasn't there !] So they say.
- SB What about the waters of Humphrey Head ?

- GB Now then, aye, that's a good un an' all. [SB comment inaudible [?] [1 hr 54 mins] The Holy Well. They used to bottle that, and take in on to Morecambe front, in wagon loads. [IM : Did they?] Oh aye. Mi mother used to say it would cure owt. The only thing it did was give yer a bad stomach, [IM laughs] clear you out, so yer were better. [IM : Clear yer out so yer were better, aye] That bloody ... it was that limestone, yer know. [unclear laughing comments from both GB & IM [?] They've blown it up now. They blew it up, Holy Well. [IM : Have they?] There used to be a house on front here. Have yer been on Humphrey Head? Have yer seen picture of house?
- SB There's a picture of the well ... door of the well house here. So I'm assuming that's what it was. I mean, I always knew that there was a famous well.
- GB There's house, look, there's house, see house there now, look? [SB : I can see it now] That was at Humphrey Head. [IM :[?] I can just about make it out] How anybody lived there, 'cos tide must have got up and in, surely? [IM : Y'd 'ave thought so, wouldn't y'.[?]] [1 hr 55 mins] Well, it might have been lower down, well it was lower, wasn't it, that Bay? [IM : That's right] When they built the swimming pool at Grange, I knew a fella who helped build it. And the swimming pool at Grange, where the bottom of the swimming pool was, it obviously had a drain out, and where it went out, from below the swimming pool, so they could drain it, [IM & SB : Yea] the pipe on the outside of Grange swimming pool, he could just touch it like that. It was 6 foot from the sand. And when he died 20 odd years ago, it was that much. [IM : About a foot] So that Bay had made up 5 foot 6 [inches]. It had made up with sand. [IM : Aye, made up with sand] 5 foot 6, it was about a foot. And yer see all the pictures of the piers and that, and they used to come on day trips, didn't they? [SB : Yes] [IM : That's right, they did, to pier] From ...[?], to piers. There was one off Clare House, if I'm not wrong, Clare House Pier, and then was another I think. [IM : That's right] Yer know, yer can't imagine it now, can yer?
- SB The pool was built 1932/3.
- GB Right. Grange Baths, it was. [IM : Aye, [1 hr 56 mins] Grange Baths] It didn't lido. It's Grange Baths, i'n't it? [IM : Aye, it is] Lido's for posh folks.
- IM We used to jump off backside of the bugger into tide! [SB : Did you?] Make's yer bloody wonder now, doesn't it. [GB : It's a long way down, wa'n't it?] Yer didn't have a bloody clue how deep water was, yer know. [GB : Well, that bar, there a bar not so far off there wasn't there? We used to watch 'em salmoning] Well channel used to go right under Grange, and when tide come in, we used to jump off bloody wall, right into bloody tide. Yer think, Christ Almighty. It could have been bloody 6 inches, 6 foot, yer didn't bloody know. [GB : No. There could have been rocks or owt under it. But yer were kids though, weren't yer] Bloody kids, what yer do like. [GB : Think what yer did then] Frightened yer to death, wouldn't it? Aye, yan lad did it from Ulverston, didn't he, off viaduct, at Ulverston. [GB : Jumped in?] He jumped or dived off ... well he'd bin doing it week afore, yer know, bin doing ... diving off into tide off bloody ... off viaduct. Anyway, he did it following bloody week, and tides had all altered and it 'ad thrown a [1 hr 57 mins] sand bank to yan side, and dived off ... it were that bloody deep, and he dived in an' brok 'is bloody neck and killed 'iself. [GB : Yea] [SB : Not good] Not good, no, but just shows, yer know, how it changes like, yer know. Week before,

- they were diving into a bloody great big pool, yer know, [GB : It can change] happen 10 foot deep. And then week later, it wasn't bloody 10 inch deep. [GB : It can change over night, can't it ?] It does.
- GB That Bay, yer go out there and it's totally different. A week certainly, like you say, a week.
- IM Well after this bloody lot now, same as when yer hit a lot of rain, it's all bloody beck weed coming down, and sludge, and causing ruddy ... [SB : Sludge ?] Sludge, aye.
- GB Sludge. Sand, like real wet slushy ... [SB : OK] messy sand, and it'll be in bottom won't it ? And yer go through it and think, oh my God. [IM : Sludge] Sludge. It's not ideal for shrimping, is it ? [IM : No, no bloody good at all] No.
- SB Gentlemen, you've [1 hr 58 mins] clearly got lots of stories but I think I should let you ... and get myself back, [GB : Aye, well you've a long trip] so I've really really enjoyed it. [IM : No problem] So thank you very much indeed. [IM : Oh, if there's any bloody rubbish yer want to talk, we're the guys ! [laughs]] It's been fab. It's been a ... really really enjoyed, and thank you so much for giving me your time. [GB : No problem] It's been tricky getting together, [IM : Aye, aye] and I've been elusive.
- GB We've got a doctorate from Flookburgh University, yer know. [SB : Ah, you can tell that] Bullshit ! [all laugh]
- SB Oh, it's fascinating, it's absolutely fascinating. [GB : Have yer not bin shrimping ?] I haven't been out shrimping, no.
- GB Well, my son hasn't, and mi daughter hadn't 'till[?], and she hasn't bin out, but mi grandkids have bin out.[?] took us out, that was brave, wasn't it. He took us. [IM : Aye, jumpin' on with Derek, bloody hell] My missus has bin out an' all, [IM : Aye, yea] and it was one of nicest days she's ever had. [IM : That's right, yea] Absolutely beautiful.
- SB I'll tell you who I have been out with. I went out with Steve a long time ago. [IM: Manning ?] Yea, when [1 hr 59 mins] he was looking for salmon, [IM : Ah right, yea] and he had his own way of doing it, where he jumped off the tractor, and set the tractor to go round and round in circles, [IM : That's it, on bar] and went chasing after the salmon, [IM : That's right] with a folding net. [IM : That's right, lave net] Well, is that what the fold ... [IM : That's the lave] OK. But that was ... [IM : There's haaf net and lave net] But that would be 20 year ago now. It was fun, I enjoyed it. [GB : When fellas are fit, yer have to be quick on that job, haven't yer]
- IM Aye, yer have, aye. No bloody good to us now ! [GB : No] Mind yer, there's nah bloody salmon now, so ... very few. [SB : But more in the Lune, you say ?] Yea, but they're no numbers ... the numbers are nowhere near what they used to get.
- SB But they go up and down though. You know, I've read some old reports where the salmon were completely decimated. Yet, you know by Sedgwick, they used to just put a net across the river, [IM : That's right] and catch the whole lot. Then of course, there weren't any,

[IM : That's right] unsurprisingly. So, you know, it's not the first [2 hrs] time; they've gone up and down in recorded history in records that I've looked at.

GB Well, these licenses out 'ere was like gold dust. There wasn't one or two on waiting list, yer couldn't get one, could yer. [IM : Oh hell, yer couldn't get one] I think there were six either side, wa'n't there ? Was there six ? [IM : Seven on Kent and six on Leven] Well, that's only thirteen, yer know. Could yer have both ?

IM Nah, yan or other. Kent was preferable one like. Everybody always wanted a Kent license. [GB : Yea] Hundred and seventy summat will get yer[?] I say we, I wasn't bloody old enough to bloody well lift yan hardly like, but I was on bloody tractor and we picked five up on way there. Yer know, in bits of pools, there was just ... it was that bloody ... they couldn't get up rivers, it was all dry and bloody ...[?] dry was rivers. [SB : Yes] And there was just that many fish about. They were all grills, 7, 8, yer know, 6, 7 pound weight like. [SB : Yes] [GB : Absolutely wick[?] wi' 'em] Oh, yer couldn't bloody ... [GB : Absolutely wick[?] wi' 'em] [SB : Yes] They would jump [2 hrs 1 min] off to catch yer out, yer know. It'd turn and make a mark, yer know [SB : Yes] and then, oh I'll catch that as well, our old fella, and then ... And, yer know, whilst he was catching that bugger, another un would strike right next to 'im, yer know, so he'd get that bugger an' all like. Two in bloody lave net at same time like. [SB : Wonderful] Aye. [SB : Very[?] And goin' up bloody lakes in a van trying to sell 'em, half a crown [2^s/6^d] a pound, knocking on doors. [SB : Gosh] [GB : Aye, yer wouldn't have to do that now, would yer ?] Nah. And if they bought, yer know, if they bought four or whatever, or bought five, they'll[?] like, yer know. Because yer was going again, yer know, ten hours later. Then they were going again. And there was bloody absolutely baths full, beautiful. Well as I say, back to nah fridges again. And they used to put 'em in old tin baths, with water running through 'em, trying to ... [SB : Keep 'em cool] trying to keep 'em cool and keep flies off 'em. Yer know, that's what they used to do, wet sacks. [SB : Yes] [2 hrs 2 mins] I used to have to stand there with bloody hose pipe wetting' bloody sacks, trying to keep 'em cool.

SB Yes. So what would be your favourite choice of fish if you ... [IM : Eatin' ?] Yes.

IM For a meal, yer know, yer can't beat flukes and plaice, yer know. I like both. [SB : Yes] Yer know, just as a starter, bloody potted shrimps on toast, or for supper. [GB : Aye, they'll take some beatin'] Aye, potted shrimps. [GB : They'll take some beatin'] [SB : Yes][?] our lass 'll make crumpets, [SB : Yes] yer know, and warm 'er potted shrimps up, [SB : Lovely] put the lot on top of a crumpet, yer butter yer shrimps and everything, and, as I say, that's why yer get a physic like this [slapping himself & laughing] [GB : D'y know anybody who's got any ?] [both laugh] No I don't, just at this moment in time. [GB : No] Very poor shrimp job, isn't it ? [GB : Aye it is, aye] It'll come.

SB Yes, it has been great. [2 hrs 3 mins] [GB : That hasn't been going all time has it ?] Yes [GB : I thought it was only an hour's tape !] Who knows. I will switch it off now.

[recording ends at 2 hrs 3 mins 7 secs]

