

Summary - MBL 028

Sarah Fishwick was born in the early 1950s and has lived in Silverdale for 27 years. From the age of 11 she lived on a farm in Yealand Redmayne. Sarah has been a councillor at parish, city and county level. Topics covered include - changes to the local landscape, the cockling disaster, issues she was involved with as a councillor and changes to the Silverdale shore line.

	<p>Sarah has lived in Silverdale for 27 years. In 1961, at the age of 11, her family moved from Carrus Farm in Halton, Lancs to Yealand Hall, Yealand Redmayne - at that time a working farm.</p>
1.00	<p>Sarah explains that Yealand Redmayne was a linear village with farmhouses on the topside and long linear fields. There were turf rights on White Moss and Thrang Moss - owned by John Backhouse. At Carrus her mother had breed Suffolk sheep and had a small diary farm and 100 pigs. She was one of the first people to use Landrace boars. It wasn't viable to keep pigs at Yealand. Sarah's mother was one of the Saunders from Wennington Hall.</p>
3.15	<p>Sarah's mother and uncles had moved out of Wennington Hall before the war. Her mother who had joined the land army during the War had always been involved with horses and was master of hounds during WW2. Sarah's uncles were spitfire pilots - one was killed in plane crash. The elder brother sold the estate and went to Australia.</p>
5.35	<p>Sarah's brother and sister went to boarding schools. Sarah hated boarding so went to Kirkby Lonsdale grammar. She was often on her own at home with both parents being busy. Sarah wasn't allowed into the village so would go for walks on her own to the woods and to watch badgers. During haytimming Sarah helped load the trailers. As children they would sit on tractors, bring in cows, rake in corn and hay by hand. Lads from the village would help with haytimming. Sarah would ride a jersey cow and ponies bareback.</p>
9.15	<p>During the summer she showed ponies at local shows and during the winter she would attend point to points. Along with her sister, Sarah started to show ponies professionally. They won various county shows, one of their hacks was 'hack of the year' at Wembley. One of their stallions was exported to New Zealand.</p>
11.50	<p>In the early 60s Sarah would ride across the causeway on to Leighton Hall land. At that point the causeway wasn't level. Pheasant shooting occurred there on Saturdays. Punt shooting for ducks also took place. Sarah would often see Bitterns – easier to see on horseback. This was the period before the land became Leighton Moss reserve. Sarah feels that the introduction of visitors to the reserve reduced the number of Bitterns. Originally farmland, Poole Bridge to under Crag Foot was flooded to help Bitterns.</p>
16.08	<p>Changes to the area? There have been changes to agriculture in the area. With dairy farming disappearing – it is mostly beef cows and sheep now. There is virtually no arable now. Sarah was told by Bill Lambert, that they used to grow potatoes in the area, but no one grows potatoes now. At Yealand her mother grew oats. This was done in the 'old fashioned' way - cut, stooks made, turned and then threshed. Have the farms disappeared? When Lancaster University was established in the 1960s barns were bought up by people from the university and converted. Much of the land in the area isn't farmed now but managed for nature.</p>

	Dykes, such as Myers Dyke, are not cleaned out as they used to. The dyke which runs from the end of the reserve to under Poole Bridge is now full of rushes.
19.28	Sarah's first husband's father had lived at Levens and worked for the water board. He had kept the dykes of the Lyth valley cleared. In early 60s there was a problem with the Levens to Grange road. Birch was cut from Thrang wood (at the bottom of Sarah's field) and taken to repair the road. The moss roads were built on birch trees which bend. In the late 60s Sarah could watch the road at Levens move up and down when waggons drove over it. After this period roads were repaired with a membrane instead. Sarah is worried about the future of the road. She believes that we need to work with nature now.
22.50	Sarah and her husband lived in Birch Cottage. In the mid-70s or early 80s her husband got permission to trap eels in Myers Dyke. He caught 100s of eels, but he also caught an otter in the trap and got into trouble because that was illegal. Sarah wonders whether there are any eels there now because the dyke is not cleared. Sarah feels that some conservationists focus on specific things which has a negative effect on other areas of nature and that people rarely get together and look at nature as a whole.
25.26	Sarah became a parish councillor for Yealand Redmayne in 1971 and talks about trying to modernise Yealand village hall during this period. In the 1990s Sarah became a councillor for Silverdale Parish Council and was involved in setting up the AONB. She became a city councillor (12 years) then a county councillor (12 years). She enjoyed having a voice and making a difference. She talks about the need to make herself very visible during past campaigns and how people picked up on what she was wearing as a woman in a way that they didn't for male councillors.
31.01	Sarah talks about the geographical boundaries for city and county council. Sarah's main objective was to keep services. She talks of the different council housing in Silverdale, Warton and Yealand - much of which built for farm workers, railway workers and quarry workers. Carnforth was seen as rural, but Sarah argued as a councillor that it was urban. In Silverdale they fought to retain the Co-op and post office. She talks of the importance of services for local people. They stopped the Co-op selling newspapers in order to protect the newsagent. Sarah talks about the public meeting about this issue.
36.13	Are there things that have disappeared in Silverdale? Shaws coaches, (with its own petrol station) has now moved to Carnforth. There is now no Silverdale taxi service and no evening or weekend bus service. She talks about issues with traffic and how heavy traffic is forced to take certain routes because of bridges etc. In the 1960s there were more caravans per square mile in the Silverdale area than in the Lake District. Sarah talks about the development of caravan parks in the area.
40.11	Sarah's father had organised permission for Sarah to ride over local land. At the time few others rode horses in the area. Sarah mentions some of the caravan and camping spaces. Sarah talks about the Leeds Holiday Home (now closed). She talks about the experience of the children staying there.
44.02	During the cockling disaster (2004), Sarah was a county councillor. She and others had tried to warn that something was going to happen. Sarah

	walked down to the cove and on to the Lots and watched it unfold through the night. In the morning she was interviewed by Sky. She was shocked at people's misunderstanding of the tide. She then spent the following months attending meetings trying to get people to talk to each other and share information.
48.51	Her father (a barrister) was very involved in various issues affecting Morecambe Bay, such as 'fighting' both barrages and the possible road from Carnforth. Sarah describes the possible route of the road. Sarah shared photographs showing the shore at Silverdale on a day when Price Phillip drove a carriage across the Bay to Kents Bank (in May 1985). Sarah's father-in-law wouldn't ride with them because he knew too much about the dangers to risk it. On the day Sarah took photos from the Lots. The photo shows the grass reaching far further into the Bay than it does now (greatly different from the shore now). Sarah explains that even in 1985 the area of grass was less than when she first started riding there.
55.30	Sarah talks of a current situation of someone padlocking the gate to the cove. She talks of the time when steamers came into cove and would have used the road on to the Cove as a highway.
56. 49	During the 1970s the horse trainer John Cousin, and the McGaffigans, would create a mile gallop on the sands at Bolton-le-Sands which was ploughed every day.
57. 50	Sarah talks about the strong community in Silverdale. She says of the community 'you can't tell the person on benefits from the millionaire, nobody minds, nobody cares as long as you are honest and decent, you don't dress to impress'. Once few holiday homes in Silverdale now there are more. A lot of people commute from Silverdale, but it's always been like this.
1hr 1	Has there ever been fishing/cockling from Silverdale? Not in Sarah's time In Silverdale - the main thing was turfing. Silverdale has a different village life from Arnside and there is virtually no connection between Arnside and Silverdale. In Silverdale everything goes south whilst from Arnside everything goes north.
1h 3	The setting up of the AONB? Sarah talks of the amazing natural diversity of the area. In the past there were 5 different sorts of deer in the area. She talks about deer present now. In the 70s when she lived in Yealand she had 50 fallow deer in front of the house as a consequence her husband got a gun license.
1hr 6m 30	(Gap in tape), Farming, quarrying and railways made the area and tourists keep the services of the village present. People come back to Silverdale because it's such a welcoming community. She talks about housing. Sarah was involved in fighting for the M6 link. At one point Carnforth had the worst air quality in Lancashire because of vehicles stopping at traffic lights and no flow through of air.
1hr 9	Sarah talks about the differences in hedges along the road. Previously large quarry wagons and Shaws coaches kept the hedges and verges back. Now, without these vehicles they are encroaching on the road. Due to the verge encroaching on park road before the railway bridge the slow sign on the road now reads 'low'.
	Interview by Emma Aylett Summarised by Emma Aylett
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