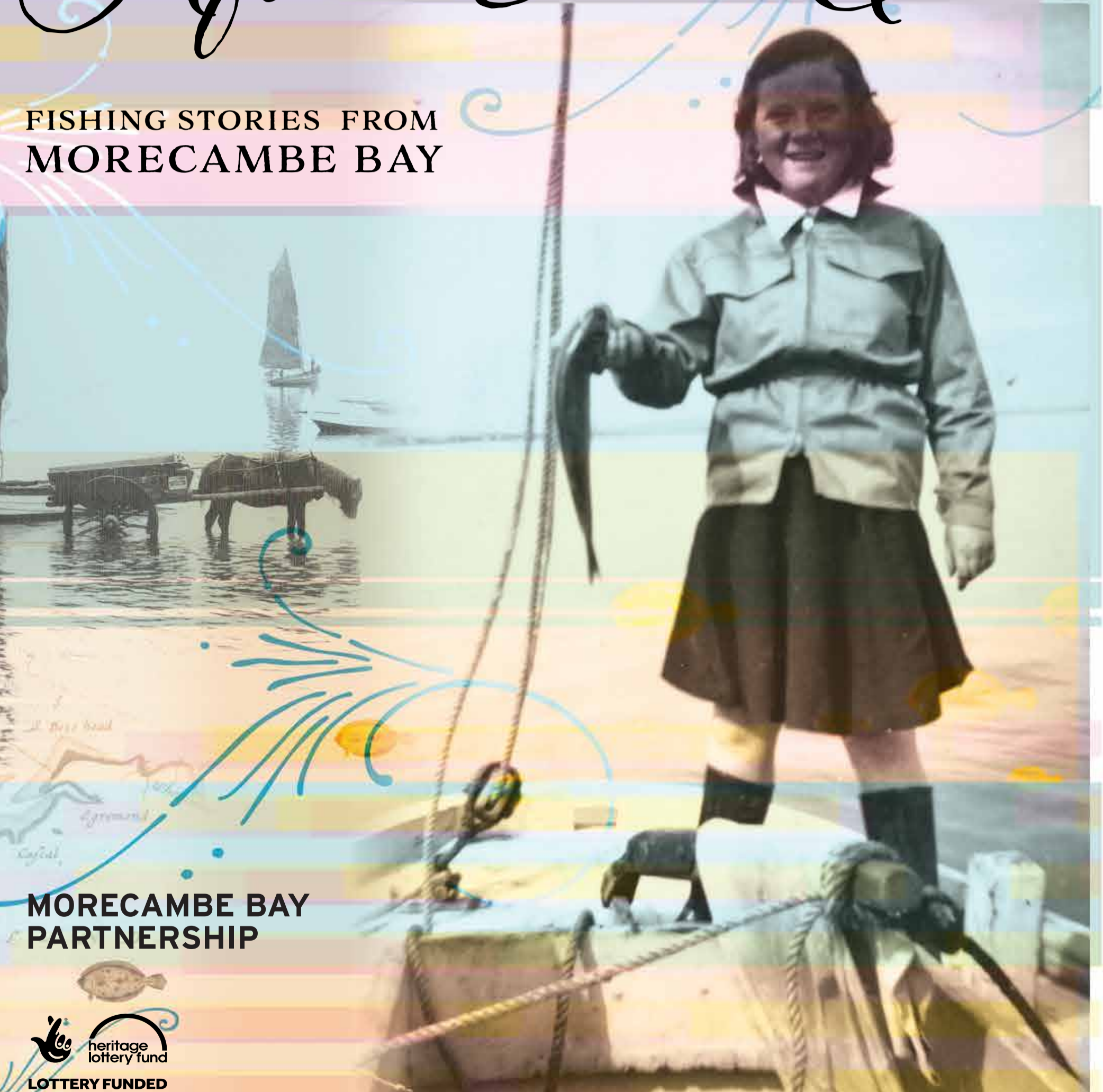


# After the Ebb

FISHING STORIES FROM  
MORECAMBE BAY



**MORECAMBE BAY  
PARTNERSHIP**



LOTTERY FUNDED

# After the Ebb

After the Ebb is a series of beautiful illustrated newspapers by artist Kate Drummond celebrating the memories and stories of Morecambe Bay's fishing communities.

Between 2015 and 2017 *Morecambe Bay Partnership* worked with community volunteers and oral historian Jenn Mattinson to gather an audio archive about the history of fishing around the Bay. Over fifty hours of interviews have now been made.

The archive provides a unique resource for the community and researchers capturing everything from the skills and changing techniques of the industry, to a snap shot of the social history of fishing families and their own reflections about life lived on the edge of Bay.



The archive is available to listen to at Lancashire Archives and Cumbria Archives and also online at: [www.recordingmorecambebay.org.uk](http://www.recordingmorecambebay.org.uk)

This website was created by *Morecambe Bay Partnership* to share historical information about Morecambe Bay.

## CATCHING TALES

### FISHING STORIES FROM MORECAMBE BAY

The After the Ebb newspapers make up one of a series of creative projects collectively called Catching Tales. Commissioned to raise awareness of the archive in the community, they share amazing stories of the fishing men and women and celebrate this part of Morecambe's Bay's identity and history with the wider world. Other Catching Tales projects included:

#### **FLEETING** by Fable Arts

A magical soundscape broadcast on trains mixing memories with music and the natural sounds of the Bay.

#### **GONE FISHIN'** by Jenny Reeves & AbouTime Dance Company

Primary school children from around the Bay created a wonderful performance piece which was showcased on Morecambe Promenade. Taking inspiration from the physical nature of fishing and the tides and elements that shape the Bay, the piece captured the fishing spirit of the Bay.

#### **THE FISHING HUT** by Hannah Fox & John Fox

A mobile pop-up gallery inspired by fishing stories that toured the Bay in 2018. The Fishing Hut contained short animated films, illustrated stories and artefacts that explore and celebrate the culture and heritage of the Bay's fishing communities.

“It all depends what the sea decides to give you.

People make me smile - they'll say to you,  
“Right, could you get me an 8lb salmon today?”

And you think,  
“Well, I would like to - but it might be a 10lb,  
or I might not get one, or it might be 5lb”.

*It just depends,  
what the sea wishes us to have.*

*And that's all there is to it..”*

## “WHEN THE TIDE'S GOING OUT.

We used to start two hours off low water.  
If there's fresh water in, and they've got used  
to the taste, they'll go up.  
And they won't come back.

When it's salty water they go up, and as the  
tide turns they can't get anywhere so they  
start coming back with the tide.

When it's fresh water you're wasting your time  
stood in the water.

With a drift net, you're going out with the tide.  
Four hours after high water.  
We start at the mouth of the river.  
Quarter of a mile down from Sunderland Point.  
Shoot the net.  
Which is 300 yards long, right across the river.  
It's 16 meshes deep, floats on the top and  
leads wrapped round the bottom.  
So that holds it down.  
And you just drift ...

“Philip Smith, he was Tom Smith's brother.

He was a fisherman.  
And, I was on 'oliday that week.  
I worked at Heysham Harbour.

And he said,  
*‘I suppose you'll be down the river,  
mekkin' a nuisance of yourself!’*

I said, “Yes! We will, Philip.”

Anyway, we went down. They went, and we went.  
We were shrimping. We were shrimping away.  
And the next thing we looked - and there's Philip, waving.

**WAVING LIKE MAD.**

So we went over to him. And I said, ‘What's wrong?’

‘Could you boil me shrimps, I've run out of gas!’

I said, “Oh! I've a spare can 'ere Philip. You can 'ave it.”

So, I give it him. Right.

And we left 'im, and away we went.

Anyway, when we come back.

We moored up, and he moored up.

And he brought gas back.

I says, “I tell you what Philip!”

He says, ‘What?’

*“It's a good job we were mekkin'  
ourselves a nuisance down t' river!”*

And he says, ‘Aye. Point taken!’”

*... drift freely with the tide...*

*We'd probably drift for half a mile.*

Haul the net. You can see when the fish strike. Most of 'em. Haul the net. Come back to the side. Set off again.  
You might have two or three goes and get right down into Heysham Lake where the shipping channel is.  
That's where the main of the fish are, normally.

**CALLED THE DROP OFF.**

Where it drops, from the river - into the sea.

And on a massive tide it could be, as you're going over the drop off, it might be 3ft deep or even less in parts.

As you're going over, it'll just drop down to 15ft or 20ft as it goes over this drop off.

*And that's your best place to catch the fish.* Normally”

“Bill Bailey, he used to have a really big trawler, 60 odd foot, in Glasson Dock. I used to go wi’ im occasionally. *Fauna* - it were called. It was a Grimsby registered one. It was when ... there was a lot of fish about.

**We used to get a lot of fish.**

I’d gone out wi’ im, ’bout four of us onboard. We used to go right out. Way out. You could just see Blackpool Tower. We were that far out. Trawlin’ all day. And then come back to Glasson Dock. Mostly in the summer months, I used to go wi’ him. One haul, he had ’bout three ton o’ starfish in the catch. The deck used to just be full. A lot of fish about. Plaice. Dabs. Flounders. Whiting. Codling. Sole. Skate. Yeah. It was like a mixed batch.

And ’e always had a couple of big tubs wi’ **“P.P.”** on. Flounders and small plaice, used to just gut ’em. You’d be stood there gutting for about three hours. I used to enjoy it though, just stood there gutting fish, and wangin’ ’em ... all the small ones ... went in them barrels. Big tubs.

And he used to lift ’em up onto the side of Glasson Dock, and there was always a crowd o’ wimmin. Well, fellas as well. They used to come from Lancaster. I said to ’im, *“What’s P.P. for?”* He said, **“Paupers of the Parish.”** They used to just come and help thereselves.

Rather than throw ’em back half dead, he used to put ’em in these tubs. And they all used to go. They used to just empty the tubs. Wimmin ’ud come down wi’ bags or baskets ... Just tek eight or ten fish, and go! **5**

“... Tom would go with a horse and cart, down the lane towards Sambo’s grave, and then along the West Shore, up to Middleton Sands ... and then strike out. Down the sands.

*And the quality of shrimps he got were absolutely fantastic, they were like mini langoustines.*

**They were absolutely stunning.**

And of course, Tom wasn’t in a position to boil the shrimps, as you can with a boat. They all had to be brought back.

**I remember the shrimps crawling all over the washhouse.**

There was a boiler in the washhouse, where they used to wash the clothes. But it had now been put to good use as a shrimp boiler. *And ... wonderful, wonderful quality.* On board the boat, you had ... a boiler, and in the early days it was lit by putting firewood under it.

**In a wooden boat!**

Latterly, of course, the gas canisters went aboard. But, I used to stoke the fire up, on the boat. Anybody from afar would think you had a steam engine on board, I would imagine... **6**

“... we used to go from Sunderland, after the tide’d turned, and started going out. And you used to go down to the bottom of the river and then, by ’time you got down, you’d wait a bit and tide’d be low. So then you used to start to shrimp when it was low water.

We al’ays started at the top, put the net out. A trawl. A beam it was, at the back of the boat. And we used to slowly go down to the bottom. And then, pull it in. And, you’d get rid of all the crabs. Plenty o’ crabs. And then, we used to put ’em on top of the engine box and the shrimps - used to riddle them out. The big ones out of the little ones. And then keep ’em. You’d do that quite a few trips ... then, if we’d got quite a few shrimps we used to boil ’em on board. We ’ad one of the gas boilers they used to ’ave in ’ouses. We had one of them. It used to work off calor gas. **We’d boil the shrimps as we were still dragging.** And you boiled ’em - and we always cooled ’em over the side wi’ salt water. And boiled them in salt water, yeah! By time we’d finished, we’d be coming back. **Tide’d be flooding, we’d be boiling the last lot.**

We’d ’ave tea. Then we’d start to pick ’em. We used to get round t’ table. And that’s what we used to do. **Pick away...**

We’d get most of ’em done that night. Then we’d finish ’em off next day. Next morning, wouldn’t we? And sell ’em at the door. On a Sunday - you could sell ’em at the door... Just put a sign **“Fresh Shrimps For Sale”** And they’d go. People’ld knock and tek ’em... **3**

“... Of course it just naturally came to me. And I just loved it. I’ve got to tell you. It was just like a gift from heaven to me and I thought, **‘Well. Whatever they can do - I can.’**

**AND SO I DID.** **4**

“No, no, never scared o’ water, not in mi own boat even. We ’ad to follow these boys t’ go t’ Glasson Dock, we ’ad. But, comin’ back one day it came very foggy. But I knew where I wus at with mi instruments told mi, that, so I didn’ worry. No.

**Never frightened at all, no.**

**I can’t swim, nobody could.**

Nobody could swim on the Point. An’ if I go on holiday I won’t go in the baths but I would go in the sea. But not the baths, I never go t’ the baths. So, jus’ the sea.

I don’t think anybody ever ... none of them could swim! None of the Smith brothers or mi cousin Harold; he couldn’t swim, mi cousin Thomas couldn’t swim, none of us swam, our parent’s didn’t swim!

I don’ know why that wus; but none of us ... An’ I still can’t swim today, but I’m still ’ere! ’Ave always felt safe by the water! *Always ... yeah.* **I wouldn’t like t’ live too far from the sea, I wouldn’t. ‘Cause I love it so much! I do...** **1**

“Many was the time we walked. We walked the causeway, five years old. If the tide was on, after school at half past three, we used to come through a pathway through the fields. And that would be two and a half miles, probably. You’d have a long Gabardine mac, I’d have one of me dad’s old sou’westers. I still have one upstairs.

**And ... you’d put your face into it.**

And you carried on. That was it, made the best of it.

You weren’t looking behind you for a car coming. There was none. You were coming through the fields, anyway. So, it set you up well for the future.

As regards to weather, you became a bit of a tough nut to crack, you know. Nothing much deterred you. So it was a good grounding.

*Don’t whinge.*

**Get on with it.**

**You’ll dry out...** **6**

“It’s haaf netting, yes. I carry an 18ft 6” pole. You’ve got to imagine a goal post like on a football field. But imagine it’s 18ft 6” long, and about waist high. I carry it on my back down to the water, I edge into the water, and I wait for the fish to go up the river. **And that’s when I catch the fish.**

Sometimes they go past your net and you can just feel them touch. Other times it’s so hard they nearly knock you over.

**Then you’re fighting to catch them.**

**And they’re fighting to get free.**

Some of them are 20lb.

It’s a heck of a time, really!

And the adrenaline is unbelievable.

Even now when I catch a fish, when I’ve finished and put it on the line at the back my legs are shaking with the adrenaline.

**The excitement is overwhelming.**

**It really is.** **4**

“*Oh. Night's lovely.*

It's a different world altogether. It's quiet, for one thing. I'm so quiet in the water that ...

One year, I was so quiet I turned around and there was about twenty little shelducks all over the back of me net. I had to shoo them off! 'Cause I thought that I'd hurt them if I lifted them.

***And the other year - the otter came in the night.***

When a fish is swimming towards you it puts a thing out called an acker. It's like a 'v' on the top of the water.

*You can see the water moving when it's quiet.* And I was stood in the water and I'm thinking,

*“Oh my God. If this salmon is as big as this I'm never going to hold it.”*

I was nearly sweating and me heart was beating.

The moon was up, and I could see this acker coming towards me.

It just got in front of me and I didn't know really if I was panicking or not, to tell you the truth.

And then it disappeared. And I thought - *‘where's it gone?’*

And I looked round, and back of the net was an otter.

It hadn't been a fish, it had been this otter swimming down.

***Yeah, it was amazing. Totally amazing.*** 4

“*The kind of fishing I do I stand in the water four hours a day, twice a day minimum.*

*From June, July and August. And I stand up to my waist and deeper in the water.*

*Morning, noon and night. And to explain it to you is just like - imagine going to Disneyland, or your best fantasy. And to me that's it.*

*You see stars that you'll never think could ever happen showering down on you.*

*You see otters swimming to you in the dark. You see rainbows that are upside down, or little circle rainbows. You see clouds that you couldn't possibly describe.*

*They're just like little angels floating around really ...*

*And it's a wonderful world the water.  
But you've got to have great respect for it, really.* 4

“*Reg Bailey once said to me - he said,  
“I'll tell you something Margaret”, he said.*

*“You'll look down and you'll have barnacles on your legs,  
because you've never been out of the water!”*

*I was obsessed with the haaving.*

*I was never out. I was in all the time.*

*And, do you know?*

*I took that as an absolute honour,  
that he said that to me. I did!*

***Yeah! I had barnacles on me legs.*** 4

*In the front room, which was very tiny, by the fire place, he had a hook.*

*And he used to knit his nets from there to the door.*

*You hadn't to go in when he was knitting them.*

*Me Dad. He used to knit them there.*

*And his sister, who lived in our 'ouse ... she did his needles.*

*Filled his needles for him. And he filled some.*

*And I did some. But they weren't tight enough.*

*He did show me how to knit a net. That's what he did.*

*That was the winter. That's how he spent his winter, doing that.*

*And then in the summer, he used to take them out, and in front of the house.*

*Right along the green - so far along. They used to ... what they call 'steeling on'.*

*Used to have a rope that went along, and the nets used to fasten them on.*

*So many on, and then a piece of lead. And that was called steeling on.* 2

“*I did nearly drown once.*

That was just a mishap.

I'd been fishing with a haaf beam, the 18'6" beam.

And I edged my way across the river.

Which I shouldn't have done. *But you do.*

This particular day, we'd had a storm the day before.

As I was coming back with the beam,

I stepped back where I have always done.

But there was a hole.

I went down the net wrapped round my feet.

To keep me warm in those days I had chest waders, and a fluffy suit underneath. It just would soak water up...

A chap, another chap that was haaving with me, he ran up the shore.

***And he left me floating down the river.***

I grabbed his beam.

The trouble was he went to call the Coast Guard.

But me and Trevor *are* the local, first call, Coast Guard shouts. So, I knew that the Coast Guards would be trying to ring *our* house to tell *me* to go and look.

They sent the Lifeboat straight away because by now I'm sort of floating down ... the suit was pulling me down.

***All you can see is water.***

And luckily for me - there was a chap called

Dick Worthington fishing over by the Lighthouse.

Who couldn't swim - right.

And yet he waded out with his haaf net beam.

Caught hold of me and dragged me in.

***I mean, I was unconscious by now.***

But - this is the funny side right.

We had an old fisherman - Harold Gardner.

After they took me to hospital and I came home. The next day, I had to go and apologise to him!

Because, as the boat had come up to see if it could save me, it cut through his net.

And to make matters worse.

On the way back it had cut through it again.

***I had to go and apologise for being saved...***

And, I did go back in the next day to fish.

So I was OK. *It didn't put me off.*

When I was floating down, I must say.

The only thing I could think of was that, I used to think ...

I hope that, you know - I could live just to see my grandchildren be born - you know ...

So, now.

***Now - we've got nine between us.***

***I always think - this is just lovely.***

***I've got my wish.*** 4

“... it's always nice to come home.

And, why is it nice to come home?

We're an isolated community, cut off by the tide very often, which is super.

Far from the madding crowd. Far from the horrendous traffic situations wherever you go nowadays ...

Although I'm guilty of joining them. We have cars. We have to commute. We have to socialise, of course we do.

But...it's always nice to come back to this backwater.

### AND THE SILENCE.

And you can say to people *'Just listen to that.'*

*'Listen to what?'*

*'The silence.'*

*'Oh. I've never heard silence before.'*

And, it always used to hit me when I was working full time, and you got to the end of the causeway, you went over the hump down to the bottom, rattled over the cattle grid. And the whole world closed in on you.

Coming home, the reverse.

Over the cattle grid.

Over the hump.

*And this big sky opened up in front of you*

... AND THE LIGHT, AND THE WATER, AND THE EXPANSE OF EVERYTHING. MAGIC, YOU JUST CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY”



*It's just all been an adventure. And that's what everybody should do.*

### HAVE AN ADVENTURE.

*Always think.*

That yesterday you can't alter. Today's OK.

*But tomorrow's an adventure, isn't it?*

“IT'S A STAND OUT MEMORY EVERY DAY 'ERE!

We have some good laughs. Yeah.

We have some right good fun.

Going out in some weather when you shouldn't.

That's the only trouble wi' drift netting for salmon.

The rougher it is, the more fish you get.

And, we go out when nobody else is out.

You know. And you're in a 20ft long open boat.

You've to 'ave your wits about you. It's a bit rough.

You always 'ave bad times.

But you forget all the bad times.

You always have bad days where things go wrong.

Rope round propellers.

Running aground.

Or, net getting all rolled up.

You know. But you get used to it, don't you?

IT DON'T MATTER 'OW GOOD YOU ARE.

YOU NEVER STOP LEARNING WHEN YOU'RE FISHING.

Something will always go wrong.

And nine times out of ten, it's when it's going dark.

Leaving things to the last minute”

“... we had a friend, he lived in Heysham Village, and he had a house.

A bungalow - just off Knowlys Road. It looked right over the Bay, lovely bungalow ...

Anyway, he used to come to Sunderland on his bike, and we got talking to him, didn't we?

We made a friend of 'im, and he used to come every other Sunday, didn't he?

**PARADISE ISLAND.** He called it.

And I used to say, *'What about yours?'*

*'Oh. But this is better.'*

And sometimes he used to come, he used to sit on 'Point end, there.

Just past the houses, and sit there.

He said, *"Paradise"* he said.

**NOBODY. QUIET. DESERTED**”

## SUNDERLAND POINT EDITION EXCERPTS

*Iris Birks<sup>1</sup>, Dorothy Calverly<sup>2</sup>, Ken Calverly<sup>3</sup>, Margaret Owen<sup>4</sup>, Trevor Owen<sup>5</sup> & Alan Smith<sup>6</sup>.*

*Photographs courtesies of Alan Smith and Lancaster City Museums.*

*“You just took it for granted like, didn't ya?  
Yeah. You went fishing ...*

*...we always call it going to 'sands.*

**'CAUSE IT'S ALL SAND OUT HERE.**

*When you talk about it. You say, “Are you going to t' sand today?”*

*You don't say, “Are you going fishing today?”*

*You say, “Are you going to t' sand?”* **6**

**IT'S JUST A WAY OF LIFE.**

*It's what we've been brought up wi' ... me son's followin' on.*

*Hopefully there'll be a living to be made at it.*

*But ... it gets 'arder and 'arder all t'time.*

*So, we'll just 'ave to wait and see.*

*You'll be lucky if there's 6 full time fisherman now.*

*In father's day there'd be at least 20.*

*I can remember a tale that 'e used to tell  
when there was twenty one horses and carts.*

*All in a row - going shrimping ...*

*It must 'ave been a sight to see.* **5**

**“**What is it they talk about?

*Wooden 'orses and iron men, is it? Aye.*

**WOODEN 'ORSES AND IRON MEN.**

*Well, that's what they used to say  
about people out 'ere on t' Bay, like.*

*You know. Hard life, and that.*

*They used to call 'em ...*

*wooden 'orses and iron men.*

*To go out there,  
and stay out there.*

*All that time.*

*As I say ...*

*They used to have it to do.*

*Didn't they?* **5**



**“**From the age of about five I went shrimpin' ...

*Really, it was just a big adventure when you're a child.*

*You're allowed to drive the tractor, you know.*

*If you start to get a bit more confident - you can drive a bit further.*

*And I think that was the big thing - was driving the tractor.*

*Because you were out on the sands and two hundred square miles of nothing ...*

**IT WAS REALLY AN EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME.**

*It's just absolutely magnificent out on Morecambe Bay,  
you can't describe it ... you'd have to go out there.*

*Some of the sunsets, some of the sun rises.*

*It can also be pretty 'orrendous out there.*

*And you've got to know what you're doing.* **1**

**“**Nothing special.

*I were Jack Burrow's daughter and part of a fishing family.  
And I was just there.*

**JUST THERE. THAT WAS IT.**

*There was nothing ... I wasn't making any statement.*

*Absolutely not.*

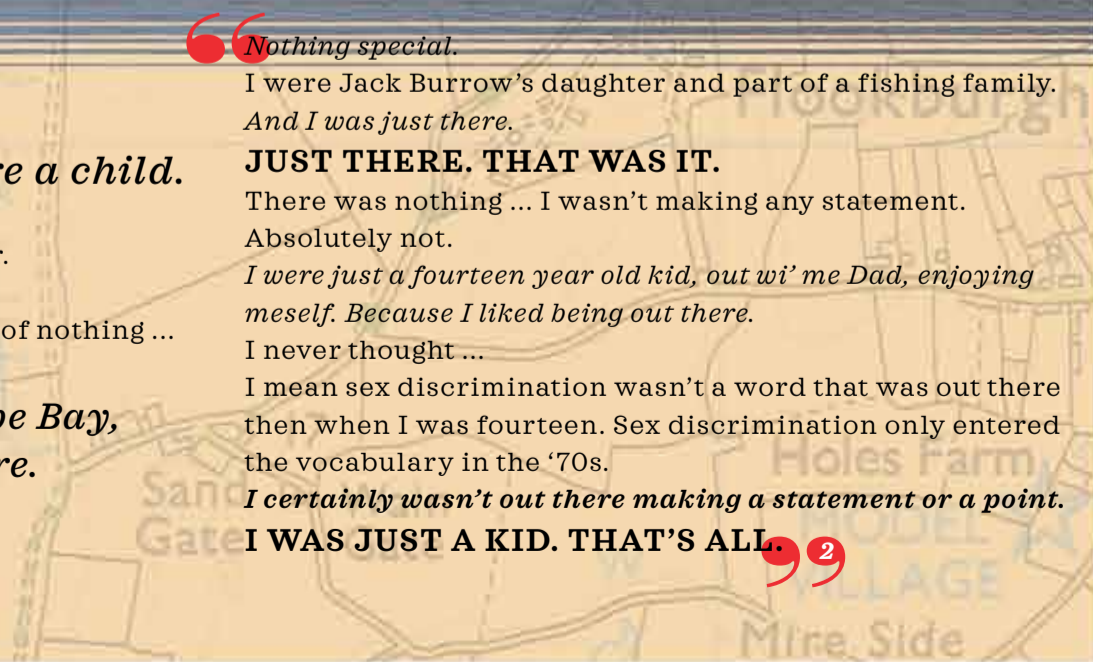
*I were just a fourteen year old kid, out wi' me Dad, enjoying  
meself. Because I liked being out there.*

*I never thought ...*

*I mean sex discrimination wasn't a word that was out there  
then when I was fourteen. Sex discrimination only entered  
the vocabulary in the '70s.*

*I certainly wasn't out there making a statement or a point.*

**I WAS JUST A KID. THAT'S ALL.** **2**



“The first boiling is in freshwater. Morecambe lads they boil in salt water. Completely different. *Ours are a sight better than the Morecambe fella's!* They keep a lot better - that's why we do it. One of the reasons is - we don't boil at sea. We fetch them home to boil. Whereas the Morecambe lads - they boil on board the boat. So they've got plenty of water there ... but they don't keep the same when they've been boiled in the salt water. *No.*”

It is very labour intensive is making a pot o' shrimps. You wouldn't believe, if you went out and did it ... Anybody saying they're dear - they want to bloody well try it, don't they! It's not an easy way to make a living. Yeah, down to the fact that they are a lot of work to do. But, they are delicious.

**“Put skin on yer back like velvet - and mek you sleep wi' out snorin'!”**

That's what 'owd Les used to tell 'em.

On Kendal market. **5**

“Left school on the Friday. Went cockling on the Saturday. They offered me jobs in Barrow shipyard. I could've gone there. In them days you could get a job at anything. **All I wanted to do was to go out there.**” **6**

“IT WASN'T LIKE A NINE TO FIVE. *You'd go as and when the tide was in or out.* Sometimes we'd go out with one tide, in the boat. And come back with the next. **So, we'd be out for some time.**”

What I liked about going out in the boat, especially at night and coming back at night with the tide, was we used to ride the tidal bore.

**You'd get all the phosphorescence on the bow.**

**It was brilliant.**

Seeing and hearing this roar.

You didn't 'ave to row.

*You thought you had a super-duper outboard motor on the back of the boat - pushing you through.*

**IT WAS BRILLIANT.**

You'd have to be careful that you didn't go over it.

Otherwise, I think it'd swamp you when it came back. **2**

“The jumbo, it was ... invented 'ere. In me grandfathers time. Before that they used to drag 'em out of t' sand. Rake 'em straight out of t' sand. Or get 'em wi' what we call a *craam* which is a three pronged little fork and they would hook 'em out. You could see t' eyes o' cockles - what we call *groatin'* ... ... when it squirts its water out. And you'd pick 'em one at a time.

One day, they'd took a feed for the 'orse in an old galvanised bath tin.

Two lads got in and wobbled it about a bit.

**And these cockles come up.**

So this fella thought, *“Well, I'll mek a board like that!”*

Put some handles on it.

And that was the invention of the jumbo.

**So the story goes.** **6**

“**THERE WAS A LOT OF FIGHTING.** But, if ever you needed owt there was help available. *But, it may or may not have been wi' somebody that you had an ongoing feud with.*”

I mean, you laugh at these things ... they weren't particularly serious in the sense that it wasn't the Wild West.

But as he says, you're out on the sand, and particularly when you're getting into the mechanical age.

**If the tractor stops, for whatever reason, you've a long walk and you're leaving a lot of money behind.**

**AND ANYBODY, EVEN YOUR WORST ENEMY, WOULD PULL YOU 'OME.** **3**

“**MUSSELING. THAT'S RATHER DANGEROUS.** Compared to cockling.

Because musseling, especially in January and February - the best mussels are always at the ebb. Usually seven or eight hours ebb.

*Which is ALWAYS in the dark.*

It's nearly always working in the night or early mornings. **AND IT'S PITCH BLACK.**

The best mussels are always the ones that are in the water the longest. So when we mussel we go on the biggest tides. It comes in more, but it also goes out more. So a lot of the time, some of the mussels aren't exposed for weeks on end.

You'll go on these big tides and you'll mebbe have an hour's working before the tides coming back.

**We call it the 'dash for the cash'.** **8**

“There's tales ... it might have been me father that telt me. Tales that many a time through the neet. Say they'd done well through the day and thought, *“Well we'll do a sight better at neet in t' dark”* **They'd put sacks round the 'orses 'oooves so as they didn't mek any noise going down road ...**

**YOU COULDN'T DO NOWT IN FLOOKBURGH WITHOUT SOMEBODY KNOWING, YOU KNOW.**

Twitchy curtains. A small community.

No television - no noise or owt like.

If tha 'eard a hoof,

*“Where's tha going?”*

*“What they on wi'?”*

Well, our father said ... well, he's done it his self. Tied hessian sacks round 'orses hooves So as they didn't mek any noise when they was going down the street.

**And he could get away wi'out anybody knowing.** **5**

“Used to go wi' me grandad. They wouldn't let me go by me'self for a long while. *There are good reasons for that.* They didn't generally go in ones because if somebody gets stuck they need some help, and while there's a lot of rubbish talked about quicksand in the Bay, there is mud that you can get stuck in. **And it moves about.**”

You get things that they call flow holes.

You get turbulent water and it will scour a hole and then as the tides change, the hole will fill with mud.

**So you've now got a big depression, filled with mud.**

At certain times on a very low tide it'll put a two or three inch skim of semi-solid sand over the top of it. So, you can actually walk across it quite often.

**Then you'll realise it's wobbly.**

But - you ride into that wi' a tractor, it's just ... **GULG!** You're straight into the hole.

Your tractor hits the mud, your wheels go round.

**BUT YOU DON'T GO ANYWHERE.**

In the good old days, the horses had a bit more sense than a tractor. When they put their foot on that they would, what they used to call, they would **STRIKE.**

*The 'orse would sort of ... get on wi' it.*

I mean it can't go backwards cos everything's behind it, but they would strike out, and go.

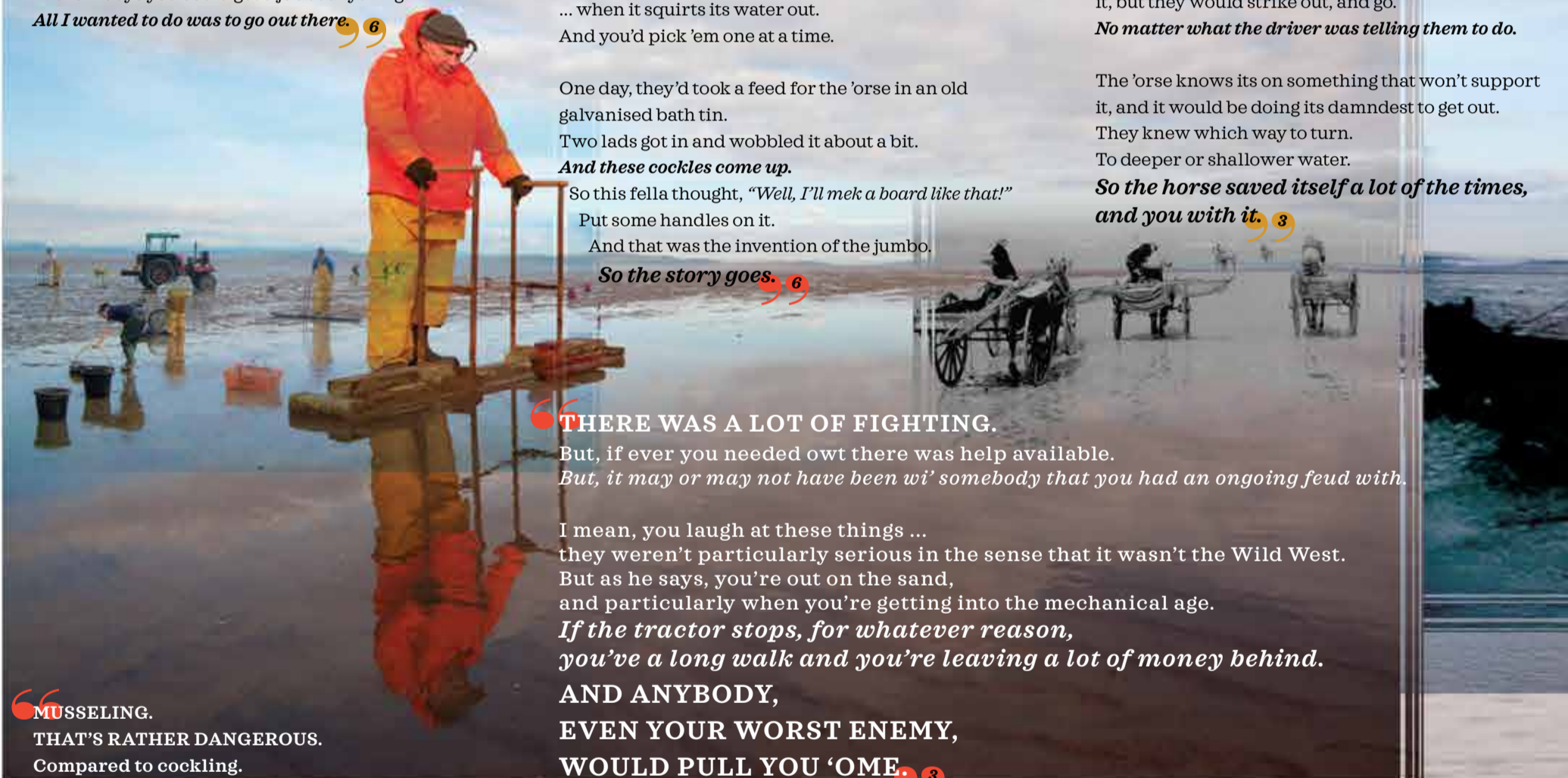
**No matter what the driver was telling them to do.**

The 'orse knows its on something that won't support it, and it would be doing its damndest to get out.

They knew which way to turn.

To deeper or shallower water.

**So the horse saved itself a lot of the times, and you with it.** **3**





Just melted the butter and boiled them up in butter.  
And added the spices.  
Cayenne pepper, white pepper and nutmeg or mace.  
*We just did 'em to our taste, didn't we, really?*  
And then you seal 'em wi' butter.

It was done originally 'cause there was no fridges.  
No freezers. It was done to keep 'em.

**Seal 'em wi' butter.** 7

**IT'S MORE CHALLENGING IS SHRIMPING.**

With cockles and mussels - once the beds are established and they open them to go fishing it's just a matter of physically getting 'em.

With shrimping, there's more skill to it.

The same with setting nets.

There's a lot of skill in that.

**Anyone can set a net - but it doesn't necessarily mean they're gonna catch anything!**

A lot of it's a waiting game setting beach nets.

Traditionally in summer time there's a lot of muck floating about. Bits of seaweed and jellyfish ...

All sorts of things like that, which clog the nets up.

Then all of a sudden it sort of clears out.

**AND YOU'VE GOT TO BE READY THEN.**

You can set 'em on top of a bank and your nets can get buried. A good fisherman could set 'em, mebbe quarter of a mile away and his are nice and clean.

**You've gotta know how the water's running.** 8

They used to have a sidings at Cark station.

Just specially for cockles and fish.

The 'Fish Side' they called it.

THAT'S NOT THERE NOW SADLY.

They used to send 'em away down there in bags.

**A lot of tonnes as well, I believe.**

Many a time they used to gather cockles in winter.

They would gather cockles, put 'em on t' train and

they would end up down in these mill towns.

And many a time, you got a letter back ...

... to say they'd been condemned.

So, you'd 'appen do all that work.

A couple o' days work, and pay to get 'em on t' train.

Then you'd get a letter back.

NO MONEY.

They'd been condemned.

Now, whether they 'ad or whether they 'adn't

you would never find out 'cause you 'ad no means of getting down there.

So, they'd 'appen selt the cockles.

And not paid you for 'em.

I said to our father,

*"Well, I wouldn't have sent 'em anymore."*

He says,

*"Well when there was nowt else. Thou 'ad to send 'em."*

**Hunger's a sharp thorn, as they say.** 5

I remember when I was young, not four or five.

But young, sort of still in single figures.

I went shrimping with me Dad.

And I was sitting in the front, and we'd gone on a night time, which you don't often do.

*It's only certain times of the year when you get the shrimps coming to the side and you trawl in shallower water in the dark.*

He was fishing ... and I was sitting on the front.

As I say, you go down - you're going the same way as the water.

*You just have to go a bit faster than the flow of the water.*

And when you fish the net you actually stop - and the

net is easier to pull back up to the cart. Then the fisherman has to lean over and get hold of the top of the beam and lift it up onto the back of the cart.

At which point the 'orse has to set off so that the net itself doesn't go underneath the cart and get tangled up. And, all the fisherman would do is it just - *click*.

You know, "*Click! Click!*" and 'orse would set off.

Just as you're lifting it up - you're going, "*Click! Click!*" and 'orse would set off and everything's fine.

Well, I was sitting up the front and me Dad's leaning over the back and I just went, "*Click! Click!*"

**'ORSE SET OFF!**

And 'e went headfirst off the back.

Into waist deep water!

In the middle of November. Night. Stars out.

**You could 'ear 'is castanets chattering all the way 'ome!**

*And I wasn't in good order for a while ...* 3

It used to be, when we were using 'orses ... it used to be,  
**"When's it sand time?"**

**FOUR HOURS AFTER 'IGH WATER. ROUGHLY. FOUR HOURS AFTER 'IGH WATER.**

So, now - everybody has their tide tables.

They know when it's high water.

So they know when they're going.

And a quarter of an hour before four hours you'll 'ear a tractor start up somewhere.

**Next thing, it's like Le Mans! And everybody's gone!**

It won't be a minute after four hours. *Everybody's waiting.* 3

I don't know what age I was,

but I didn't know the way 'ome from Cartmel.

*But that didn't matter, cos you're on the 'orses back.*

*And it knew where it was going ...*

And don't let anybody believe that a 'orse is nice to ride, cos they're not! They shatter yer spine.

I got all the way to Ravenstown corner, and ...

Stupid thing - you should never ever do it.

I'd wrapped the binding, the twine, round me hand.

And as it come past the corner, it put its 'ead down.

**Well, I went straight over the top. SMACK.**

Right outside Auntie Nellie's.

Hit the ground. Blood pouring out of various parts of me. Sat there yowlin'. And the 'orse stands and looks at me for about half a minute, and then got bored.

*It just walked off.*

*It went 'ome on its own. Left me.* 3

**IDON'T THINK YOU'D BE SWIMMIN'.**

The way tide comes in down there I don't think you'd

'ave much chance of swimming anywhere.

We were down one morning and we were waiting.

Our Michael was just a bit further down and I'd

pulled out and I was waiting for him.

I was stood riddling at back of me tractor and tide

come, **and it got to running.**

It ran me chassis in and I jumped on t' tractor.

I just pulled out and got onto the top, and all the water

lifted high and mebbe a good quarter of a mile wide.

I set off wi' tractor doing 20 mile an hour.

**I kept looking back, and it was still there.**

Kept looking. "*Aye, it's still there*".

Tractor was doing 20 mile an hour.

The tide was keepin' up to me.

**QUITE FRIGHTENING.** 6

Shrimps are a mollusc. They eat muck really.

They're on the seabed eating whatever.

They're not keen on plastic - which is a big bain ...

**I HATE THE STUFF.**

Everytime you get little bits of plastic and I know the bigger fish must be getting 'em.

*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, 'asn't it?

**PLASTIC BAGS. PLASTIC CUPS. PLASTIC BOTTLES.**

**It's everywhere now.**

You set yer nets you know, for the flounders - we set nets for flukes - and the amount of ruddy bits of plastic and plastic bags, carrier bags ...

**Well, everything's bloody plastic these days isn't it?** 1

**“I’ve always just wanted to go to ’sands.  
Ever since I was a child.  
I feel quite privileged.**

You’ll talk to people in your life, and you’ll talk to someone and they’ll say they’ve worked in Glaxo or Sellafield or wherever and they’ve ’ated it.

**I’ve ALWAYS known what I wanted to do.**

And I can remember going to school, about thirteen, fourteen and there was three of us called in and the jobs career lady came in and she said, “*What do you want to do?*” And there was a farmer’s son and he was going to be a farmer and I was going to be a fisherman and can’t remember what the other lad ... his Dad was a mechanic I think ... She said, “*Don’t you want to do anything else?*” And I said, “**No. No.**”

I never have had the urge to do anything else.  
**Just go fishing. It’s great.** 8

**“Cockling was a very hard job, manual hard job.**

And sometimes the sand could be nearly as hard as concrete. You were banging on it and it would be really hard, and sometimes it would be quite soft and sort of half quicksand, if you like. But I remember saying to my Uncle Bill one day, “*Eeh, it’s hard here, Uncle Bill,*” and he’d say, “***Aye, but tha’ll have to be as hard as it is,***” And that was all the answer you got.

**NO SYMPATHY AT ALL.**

And if you were going out early in the morning, say three or four o’clock in the morning, they’d just give you a shout and you’d to bounce out of bed and go.

**But I really enjoyed it.**

I enjoyed working with those men who’d been been fishermen all their lives and knew every aspect of it, and one learnt quickly from people with that experience. 4

**“It was all ’orses and carts when I left school.**

I don’t know ... there’d mebbe be at least fifty ’orses in this village. I’d see as many as thirty going out there at once, ’orses and carts.

We’d two ’orses when I left school and then by time I got to about sixteen or seventeen tractors were coming in. A few ’ad messed about wi’ tractors a bit earlier on. One reason they come in, winter of ’63... *it was just like being in Antarctica out here, ice flows forever more.*

We were cockling out from Silverdale down there, and that become all tractor work. You had to have a tractor. And we got on wi’ using tractors then and when we come back to work ’ere we just got on wi’ tractors and ’orses went out of date.

Everything changes. I suppose it’s for the better.

**It’s called progress, isn’t it?** 6

**“LEARN OR DIE!**

If you go often enough you find out where yer are.

One of the things, if you go often enough - and in those days people were going regularly.

And you might or might not realise it but - there’s a lot of sand out there and sometimes there’s a bit of water!

The water tends to make ridges on it. *’Owever, when you go out with a tractor - you leave two lines.*

*And when you come back you leave two lines.* And so does anybody else.

And one tide going over it doesn’t actually tek that off ...

You get miles of where there’s just a shiny path. It doesn’t show you as a road, it doesn’t show you as wheel marks.

But where wheel marks ’ave been you get like a different texture in the sand. And, if you recognise it - it’s a road.

You get a shiny path. And it’s the same for shrimping at night.

*You can see quite clearly ... in starlight where there’s a silver ribbon*

*Which is where people ’ave been earlier in the day, on the day tide. Or even a day or two ago.*

This used to be handy thirty years ago when there was thirty or forty people going.

Now there’s three, four, five - it doesn’t leave the same trails.

**BUT WHAT YOU ’AVE IS ... PROBABLY THE WORST INVENTION EVER ... THE G P S.** 3

## FLOOKBURGH EDITION EXCERPTS

Ged Benson<sup>1</sup>, Hilda Burrow<sup>2</sup>, Bill Butler & Derek Butler<sup>3</sup>, Jack Manning<sup>4</sup>, Ian McLure<sup>5</sup>, John Wilson<sup>6</sup>, June Wilson<sup>7</sup> & Michael Wilson<sup>8</sup>.

Photographs courtesy of Peter Cairns 2020Vision, Cumbria Image Bank, Jack Manning & John Kingston.

“ So I was left with my Dad.  
Which gave me an amazing upbringing really.  
I mostly thrived on happy neglect.  
You know benign neglect.

*He let me have so much freedom when I think back now ...*

He treated me like a lad really.  
When I was older, like eleven, twelve ...  
... he used to tie my plaits the day we set off so tight with a bit of rope on the bottom.  
And he never used to look at my hair again for whole rest of holiday.

*And I loved it.* 1

“ It was an adventure. It was exciting all the time.  
I suppose I liked being with my Dad.

That first trip I remember when I was five ...  
Piel Island it was late in the season.  
And we went to the pub ... I was blown away because  
there was no electricity, there was just oil lamps.  
*It was creepy ...*

I can remember a fireplace. These kittens  
on a hearth. And a glass of lemonade.  
These fishermen were a yarning ...  
And I bit a lump out of the glass.  
I felt so embarrassed...  
They were "Oh! Are you alright?"  
"Yes course I'm alright"  
Dad said "We'd better pay for the glass.."  
"No course you won't!"  
*They were really lovely and welcoming.*

And then I can remember thinking how  
wonderful it was with all these oil lamps  
and everything around.

*It was just like magic.  
Being on an island.*

After we'd been in the pub that night  
we rowed out and we slept on the boat.  
My Dad wrapped me up in the sail  
and stuck me up in the forecastle.  
We had an oil lamp on the boat too ...

Later on I used to go to Piel Island for  
weeks with my Dad in the summer ...

*... he just used to let me run wild, basically...* 1

“ We all went fishing, all of us as young boys.

Hand netting with little tiny hand nets.

Getting rubber dinghies, pretending they were trawlers.

And then when I was about eight, I got a trip with a fella called George Mount  
on his boat called the "Jane". He took me out for the first time, and it was great.  
*And then from then on, we just carried on ... It was brilliant.*

Yer 'ad to do as yer's told.

But that was the way to grow up to fishing.

They all knew what they were doin'.

There was some really good fishermen and it was brilliant ...

*And that set us boys off on a road of going to sea.* 5

“ ... you spend a day at sea. Quite exhilarating.

The weather is never the same.

*The sea can be fantastic.*

You never know what you're going to catch.

There's all these uncertainties.

And then when you do get back in - it's great.

*The feeling of coming home again.*

*Or going ashore, after being out all day is great.* 6



“One fella had a net made.  
I said, “*That reminds me of a stocking.*”  
He said, “*Well. It catches.*”  
I said, “**Well. To my mind it's not a net.**”

A chap brought a net in, it had 20-mesh-tail-end...  
And it weren't catching.  
I said, “*You know why?*”  
He said, “*No. Why?*”  
“*Well, shrimps'll come down that side and go round up that side. They can't get in the tail end. Too narrow.*”  
He said, “*No. You're talking wet.*”  
I said, “*I'll tell you what. I'll put a tail end on for you. And if it dun't catch ... it's free. If it catches, you pay me for it.*”  
He said, “**YER ON!**”

And his wife rung.  
She said, “*I just thought I'd tell yer, Ernie lad. He's cook-a-hoop! His net's caught. He's brought home five stone of shrimp!*”  
“*Thought I'd tell you. 'Cause he's not gonna tell you!*”  
All 'cause 'e dun't want to pay for a tail end! 4

“**Our pots contain 85% shrimp and 15% butter...**  
Which is the highest ratio.  
A lot of people do 70/30.  
Some even do 60/40 ...  
**That's the way it's always been.**  
**Nothing's changed...**  
*Same spoon, isn't it?*  
Yep ... the actual buttering spoon.  
It's silver. And that must be at least 90 years old.  
**That was Bob Baxter's christening spoon.**  
**And we still use it!** 7

“**What I got up to is nobody's business!**  
I used to row about in dinghies that were fastened up to the wooden jetties. We had one.  
Well - me grandad had one, me dad had one.  
And we had the big boat anchored off. Moored off.

So I was forever taking the boat, the dinghy, around.  
I said to a school mate after school one night,  
“*C'mon we'll go for a row.*”  
So we got in and tide was going out.  
She wanted to go under the pier.  
I was always going under the pier.  
But there were places that you went.  
And places that you didn't...

Anyway, for some daft reason ... the end of the pier was all criss cross beams ... *and the tide was ebbing.*  
**We stuck the dinghy like a bird's nest up in the pier.**  
And we had to climb down.  
We left the dinghy up there.  
**My dad went mad.**  
**'Cause we'd climbed down the pier and left it stuck like a bird's nest you know.**  
And my Dad went mad at that.  
Next tide he went and got it.  
**Played hell at me he did.** 1

“The fishermen used to organise their own funerals.  
In the Methodist church.  
All the fishermen and families would be present.  
Four fishermen would be selected to carry the coffin.  
They would carry the coffin out of the hearse and into the church. After the service they would go and ... pick up the coffin and take it out of the church.

Then all the fishermen present would form a line up in front of the hearse and walk in front of the hearse onto the promenade until we got to Green Street.  
*Then at Green Street they would come off ...*  
**Come off the road to form a line along the promenade.**  
The hearse would slowly pass it on the way to the cemetery or the crem.

**And that was known as...  
the fisherman's last look at the sea ...** 9

“**Snigs are little, baby eels. Elvers.**  
Snigs are eels, basically.  
I don't know where Dad set his snig pikes.  
But, I know as a teenager ... when you sneak in at two o'clock in the morning ... when you should be in bed and you'd been to the dance.  
Well, I let myself in through the kitchen door.  
(We didn't have a fridge. We had a larder.)  
And I didn't put the light on.  
**Took me shoes off.**  
**And suddenly I'm screaming!**  
I'm treading on all these snigs.  
They'd escaped from the bucket in the larder.  
All over the kitchen floor.  
**And I woke the whole household.**  
**Did I get my blessing really ... Yes, so that was snigs.** 1

“**I didn't do so bad!**  
Because I was so striking ...  
... the Bay City Rollers were at the Morecambe Bowl.  
And the lead singer was doing one of his hits and directing it at me.  
Then when he'd finished he said, “*Can I say something?*”  
And I said, “*What?*”  
And he said, “**Yer hair looks like an explosion in a mattress factory!**”  
Oh yeah, we did alright. **We had a good time!** 2

swim unaided and self-propelled, from Deep to Shallow, one length of the Super Swimming Stadium Bath, one of the longest baths in Britain, and is hereby elected and accepted as a BLUE SEAGULL

“I spent a lot of time in the swimming stadium.  
Because I was interested in swimming.  
My summers were spent in the big swimming stadium.  
You got a blue seagull certificate for a full length...  
**I did my blue seagull on one of the coldest days of the summer...**  
And me Dad didn't believe I'd got it.  
So he went to the stadium to check.  
He said, “*Did somebody do a blue seagull?*”  
“*Aye, a little thing. She wouldn't stop.*”  
Me Dad said, “**No. There was money at the end of it!**”  
I think there was 10 shillings.  
2 and 6 pence for swimming across the half moon...  
I got 5 shillings for swimming the breadth.  
**Then I got 10 shillings for the full Olympic length.** 2

“**I was the first guy in a Morecambe Bay fishing boat to have a VHF radio.**  
That was so I could talk to the Fleetwood fishermen.  
You wanted to talk to them, 'cause they would tell you where the fish were...  
So without that, you were done.  
You were deaf.  
You couldn't hear a thing.  
You thought, “*Well what's going on?*”  
Once I put that radio in, I had a few friends who said, “*Charlie, you need to be here.*” or “*You need to be there.*”  
**So that was why I put it in.**  
I remember that first week, Roy Mitchinson said, “*Put that radio in. You'll make that back*”  
**And I think I made that price back in the first week - the price of the radio...** 5

“You used to get stang fish occasionally. Stang fish.  
They were weavers.  
And they are a terrible stinger...  
*And if you got stung with the stang fish you were ill.*  
**You were really ill.**  
They are still wary of them.  
Fishermen are always wary of stang fish.  
Oh, you were in excruciating pain.  
Really excruciating pain ... the whole body.  
Localised - but it kind of spread through you.  
*They always said it was the worst thing you could imagine.*  
**But men are soft aren't they?**  
I don't know whether it was as bad as childbirth.  
But they always said it was the most excruciating pain.  
*I never got stung.*  
**My Dad did.** 1

**We would mackerel fish of course.**

You couldn't go so fast because you slowed down to mackerel fish. We had about four lines out. Two over the back and two over the side on a pole. It didn't have to be a fancy fishing pole ... the line was not very thick. Just like thick twine. Then on the end of it there was maybe about five yards of nylon, or gut in those days.

For bait to start off with he used a bit of silver paper out of a cigarette packet. As soon as you got a mackerel ... *You shaved a bit of its silver off and put that on the hooks.*  
**So it looked like a little fish.**

And you were either in the mackerel or you weren't. And if you were in them you'd get up to about two or three hundred at once. **So we ate mackerel.**

We'd have flagons of water. But at the chemists shop we had an off-licence. So we used to take big flagons of cider with us. And I've had, more than once, several times ...  
**Mackerel just headed and gutted.**  
**And boiled in a bucket of cider.**  
**Because we'd run out of water!** 1

**I would run wild on the Island with all the other kids.**

Sometimes we'd go up to Barrow. Up the channel. Anchor at Ferry Beach. And he would leave me on the other the boat in the middle of Barrow Channel.  
**Well, I had to amuse myself.**  
*I used to do daft things like rolling around in the dinghy...*  
But one night I was rolling around and it was dark. I could see 'cause there was lots of lights around. It wasn't pitch dark. It was Barrow Channel and there were roads on either side of the channel and lights and boats.  
**But a bloomin' submarine came up.**  
It was not under the water. It was above. It was only going slowly. But I thought, *'Blimey, it might not see me.'* And I was scared. And I thought, *'Once it gets here, once it's passed me, there'll be a big wash.'* And I didn't want this... So I remember rowing like mad to get back on board. And I did. I got back on board. Just as this submarine came past.  
*But I was wary of it.*  
**I wasn't that brave.** 1

**We'd anchor all night and go to bed.**

And the line would be a big hefty sea rod. Two of them, one at each side. At the end of the rod, was fluke for bait. The lines were bloody big you know. Fixed in a bucket. So if you got a bite, the bucket couldn't leave the cockpit 'cause it was tied in. *The bucket would rattle in the cockpit to wake you up.* How lucky was I to be able to do that? **I just loved it!**

The bucket rattled. I remember getting stuck one night in the cabin doors - trying to get out of the cabin and into the cockpit. And me and me dad and his mate were all wedged in the door ...  
**I remember that! And it was such fun.**

The tope used to fight like hell. I've got photos of lots of tope experiences... This was a bit of a cheat really. They put this tope into the *News of the World 'Fish of the Week'* competition... I was there. And I was well in up to the elbows catching this tope. But they gave me the credit for this tope.  
*And I won.*  
**I won the 'Fish of the Week' competition.**

I felt guilty because I hadn't done the whole thing.  
**Had I hell - it was the size of me!**

My picture was in *The Visitor*. With this bloody tope on a broom handle next to me! I was about 11 at this time, and I was a little fatty. And it said *"stalwart Jacqueline Brooks"*

I didn't want to be *'stalwart Jacqueline Brooks'*  
**I felt right daft about it ...** 1

**The Bay's a tragedy waiting to happen, isn't it?**

People walk out too far. They literally walk into the tide. They fall in if they're drunk ... There was an incident, I remember now. Some young men, in summer. They ran out of, I think it was *The Queen's Hotel*, I think ... They ran. They'd been drinking all night. They ran across the promenade. Straight down the slipway. Into the water. Presumably having a laugh ... *midnight swim and all that...*  
**And the tide was going out.**  
There was certainly one, maybe two, drowned. They got two or three of them, because there was somebody night fishing on the Stone Jetty that caught one of them. *Presumably by his fishing lines ...* I think it was two that they didn't rescue. Me Dad had to go for them. But that was just lads being silly.  
**Out of the pub - into the tide. It was just, well - stupidity and a fast ebbing tide.** 2

They were built by Crossfield's. They were very special to this area. On account of the fact that they were quite shallow draught. **So if they came aground it didn't damage them.** They had this low counter. Very good for shooting the nets off the end.

**They could sail like witches.**

They were built to trawl sailing. I mean later on, even in my day they were all engines. **But they would still trawl under sail. If the wind was right.** 1

Swimming, roughly - Grange to Morecambe. *But you couldn't swim in a straight line because of the tides.* When you got to this side, the finish, the tide would be ebbing out and it would bring you down. *So, you'd have an easier swim down to the end.* It usually finished round about the Stone Jetty. They'd get in the water at Grange, and they all had their own individual boat that rowed them across. You stayed with that boat all the way across. You had to go up and down, you'd to weave ... because of sandbanks and tides. You couldn't just get in at Grange and look at Morecambe and think - *'Right, I'm going over there!'* The advantage you had with having rowers who either were fisherman or had fished was ... they had a pretty good idea where the tide was flowing.  
**And you could take advantage.**  
Most of 'em made it. But you'd to be very careful ... if you got onto a sandbank, you were snookered. **'Cause if you stood up, and took one step - you were disqualified.** 3

**We would be out at weekends with me pal Davy Brown rowing.**  
We'd be hand netting.  
**Going with the fishermen come summer.**  
We'd walk down the pier  
And jump off.  
And swim to the side  
And get told off by the people on the pier.  
**We were forever swimming, jumping, swimming ...**

In the days when I was hand netting. I was in competition with two or three other little lads. We were all pushing our hand nets about.  
*Who would catch the most?*  
And we were really pretending to be like proper trawler men. We would sell the shrimps. Get them picked at home and sell them to the local shops.  
**Then we would compare who had the most at night.** 5

**“I was lucky. I fell overboard.**

Landed in the water ...  
First thing you do - I got back to side of me boat.  
I kicked me thigh boots off. 'Cause they were  
filling wi' water ...  
'Cause they would have took us down.  
As the fishing officer said, *“If you have the  
misfortune to fall overboard, always grab hold of  
your boat and get rid of your boots first.”*  
Otherwise they just weigh you down.

A voice told me, ***Don't panic!  
Go to the back. Go to the back.***

And I got to the back and got one foot on ... the  
engine were still running. The boat was going  
because I was bringing me net in.

And, I don't know how... I must have fainted.  
***I don't know how I got aboard.***

But I got me hand on to the deck, and I don't  
remember after that.  
And they said, *“How you got on board wi' only  
one hand, I don't know. How did you do it, Ernie?”*  
And I said, *“I don't know.”*  
I said, ***“It might have been a swordfish  
come underneath ... and stuck me up  
the backside!”*** 4

**“Me father was a different kettle of fish ...**

Shrimping.  
Lifeboat.  
Inshore swims.  
Cross Bay swims.  
Pleasure boats.  
Fishing parties.  
*Anything, to go on the Bay...*  
*Anything to do with the Bay.*  
***You couldn't get him off it.*** 2

**“Me mother didn't want me to go to sea.** That was the only problem.  
She said, *“Oh.”* when I went to sea the first time.  
I walked down the back street an' I was sixteen.  
And she said, *“Oh - let 'im go”*  
She says, *“After one trip, he'll come runnin' back.”*  
Which I didn't do. ***I stuck it out 'til I were sixty.*** 5

**“**Sometimes they would go out and not get very much.  
So you would move from one area to another.  
To see if the shrimps had gone there.  
It was ... chasing them round till you found where they were.  
'Cause my Dad said once, he said,  
***“I swear the little beggars are burying themselves today!”***  
He'd tried various places...  
***He swore they were burying themselves in the sand...***  
***And not coming out!*** 3

**“**He used to drag us behind the boat on that rope!  
He'd set up a rope ... and a big piece of wood, a tiller handle...  
And threw it over the stern of the boat.  
We went overboard and held onto it while he was pulling us through the water!  
I remember once, swimming in the middle of the Bay.  
And I was happy as Larry!  
He'd say, *“Go on then, if you want to get in!”*  
'Cause he'd take us out for pleasure as well. You know, on a nice day.  
*“We'll go and get the boat, and we'll go out.”*  
And, I was swimming round. Happy as anything.  
And I don't know what made me say, *“Any idea, how deep is it Dad?”*  
*“Eee, I don't know. Twenty five, thirty foot?”*  
***“WHAT? I wanna come back!”***  
I couldn't touch the bottom ... I'm not staying!  
***I was alright till he told me how deep it was...*** 2

## MORECAMBE EDITION EXCERPTS

Jackie Bailiff<sup>1</sup>, Barbara Dawe<sup>2</sup>, Jean Dennis<sup>3</sup>, Ernie Nicholson<sup>4</sup>, Charlie Overett<sup>5</sup>, Marc Overett<sup>6</sup>, Mark Smith (Baxters)<sup>7</sup>,  
Cath Whalley (Baxters)<sup>8</sup> and Keith Willacy<sup>9</sup>.

Photographs courtesy of Jackie Bailiff, Lancaster City Museums & Morecambe Library.

“If the weather wasn't too bad in summer when we were off school, me Dad would say,

*“Do you want to go in the morning?”*

***And he'd let me go trawling with him.***

It could be anything from one or two o'clock in the morning, to four or five depending on the tide.

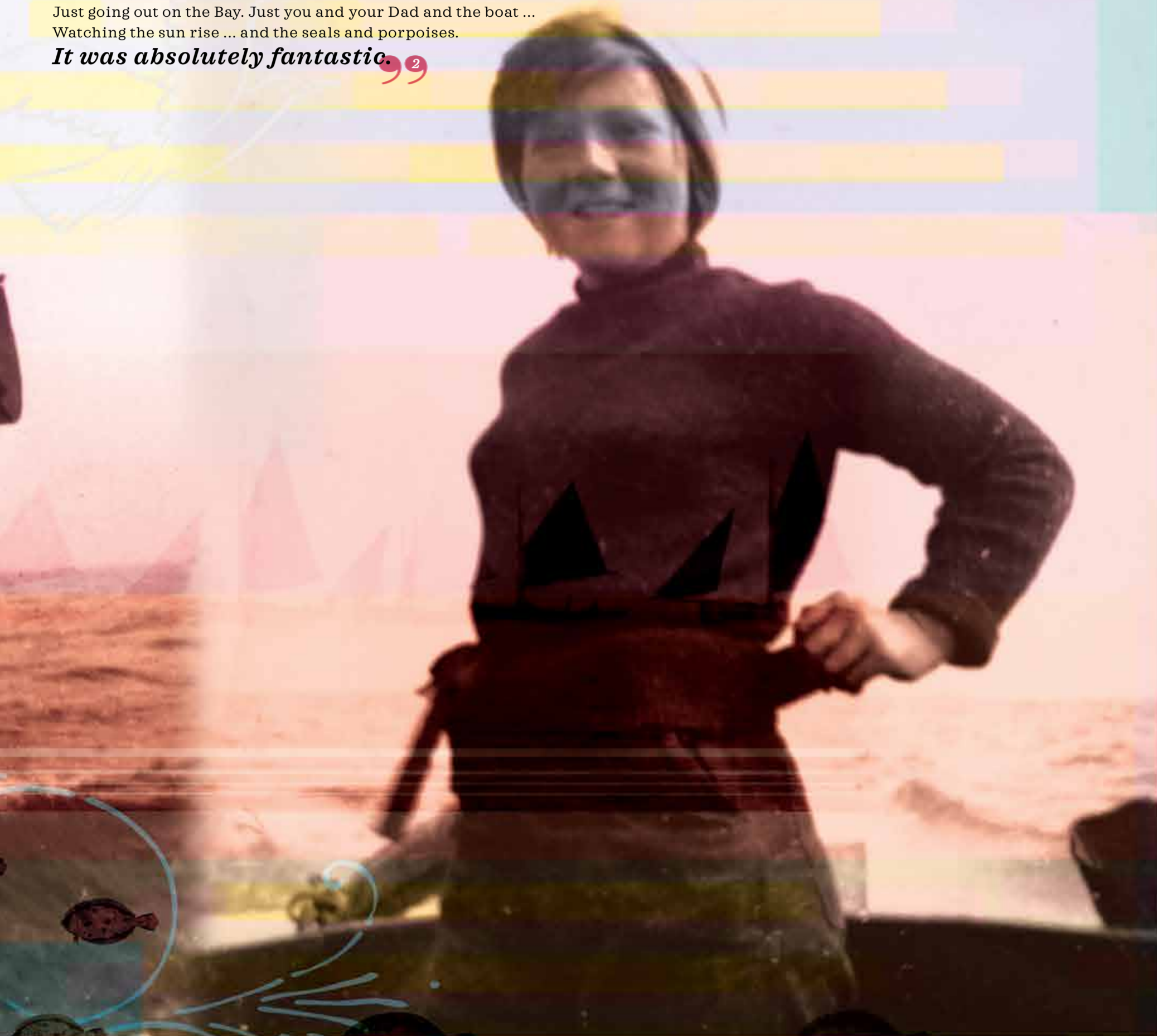
He'd let me go on the boat with him.

***I thoroughly enjoyed that...***

Just going out on the Bay. Just you and your Dad and the boat ...

Watching the sun rise ... and the seals and porpoises.

***It was absolutely fantastic.***”



# CREDITS:

*After the Ebb* draws out spoken details from the main body of Morecambe Bay Partnership's oral history recordings creating a series of fascinating typographic visual newspapers.

*After the Ebb* was conceived of, researched and designed by Kate Drummond.



Kate is a Glasgow-based visual artist, designer and creative producer.

[www.tickled-pink.org](http://www.tickled-pink.org) || [kate@tickled-pink.org](mailto:kate@tickled-pink.org) ||  [@kate.drumm](https://www.instagram.com/kate.drumm)

***After the Ebb & Catching Tales* are brought to you by  
Morecambe Bay Partnership.**

*Morecambe Bay Partnership* celebrates and conserves; connects and collaborates. From birds to beach cleans, from cycle ways to catching fishing tales *Morecambe Bay Partnership* delivers projects that make great things happen for our communities.

Our supporters make the Bay a better place, sharing skills, volunteering and donating. Hundreds of local people have contributed so that we can look after special heritage sites and care for nature, create safe cycle routes and open up access for disabled people to enjoy the Bay and bring great art and celebration to connect our communities. This fishing project is another example of great local volunteer support.

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