

Interviewee(s): Archie Johnstone (AJ)	Interviewer(s): Mark Mulhern (MM)
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REGION	East Lothian
COUNTY	Haddingtonshire
TOWN/VILLAGE	Cockenzie

TITLE	<i>Mark Mulhern interviewing Archie Johnstone</i>
REGION	<i>Lothian</i>
SUBJECTS/KEYWORDS	<i>Family life, family history and heritage, fishing industry, Cockenzie and Port Seton fishing community.</i>
COUNTY	<i>East Lothian</i>
TOWN	<i>Cockenzie and Port Seton</i>
DATE OF INTERVIEW	<i>06/07/19?</i>
INTERVIEWER	<i>Mark Mulhern</i>
YEAR RANGE	<i>2019?</i>
SUMMARY	<i>Mark Mulhern interviews Archie Johnstone about his life growing up in Cockenzie and Port Seton and as a fisherman. They discuss his family background and heritage and the experience of being part of a fishing family that spanned generations. Archie also talks about the tradition of using nicknames in the Cockenzie and Port Seton community and also in the fishing community, as a way of recognising all the different Johnstones and families with the same surname. Then they go on to discuss his family's fishing boat and his experience of fishing on it with his brother and father, as well as his experience of how fishing has changed gradually.</i>

Archie Johnstone – AJ; Mark Mulhern – MM.

Keywords: Family Background; History of the Johnstone Family; Nicknames; School; Leaving School; Fishing; Archie's Father's Boat; Share Fishing; Wages; Shares; Selling the Fish.

Family Background – 0h 00m 00s

MM: Okay, so this is Mark Mulhern on Friday the 6th of July and I'm here speaking to Archie Johnstone in Cockenzie and Port Seton. So, Archie, if we'll just start with a wee biography of you, could you tell me where you were born?

AJ: I was born down the High Street, about, oh, fifty yards from the sea.

MM: Really? Right.

AJ: And I was born at the... On the 13th of February, 1937.

MM: Right.

AJ: And my father was a fisherman.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: And, as it happened, that was at- in the 1930s there was a lot of herring caught in Anstruther at that time.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: There was a lot of herring. And he was away fishing at Anstruther. I was born on the Saturday morning.

MM: Right.

AJ: And my mother, my mother always said, eh, Saturday's child will work for his living. So, av had to work for ma living [*laughter*]. The funny thing about the morning I was born-

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: -course there were very few phones in the village at that time.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: But ma uncle worked in the ship chandlery, Weatherhead's Ship Chandlery.

MM: Right.

AJ: And they had a phone.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, on the Saturday morning, ma father phoned across from Anstruther to here because they werenae coming home, asking what was all happening.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Ma uncle James says to him, 'oh, Mary's had a baby boy'. 'Oh, that's fine. Oh', he says, 'he must be a lucky laddie, because we've got forty [cran?] this morning'. He says 'so, he must be a lucky lad, that's fine, that's good'. So, he was as much going up trying to tell ten, twenty people that they had forty [cran?] cause I was born, like.

MM: Oh well. Ye were a good-

AJ: I have been, I have been kind of fortunate at the fishing.

History of the Johnstone Family – 0h 02m 00s

MM: Good, good.

AJ: I had my lucky bits, aye.

MM: And have you always lived in Cockenzie and Port Seton?

AJ: I've always lived here. We lived down there at the sea, and then I moved up- we moved up into the village a wee bit, not very far and- because my mother and father got a council house.

MM: Right.

AJ: Um, yeah, I was only in that about a year when my grandmother died.

MM: Aye.

AJ: My father's mother.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And my grandfather was in a big house on Gosford Road.

MM: Right.

AJ: On his own.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, the whole family moved along and stayed with him.

MM: Ok.

AJ: That's where a lot of the history comes from.

MM: Yes.

AJ: Cause in ma... Ma *minor* years...

MM: Mmhm?

AJ: The old boy was... He was very keen on history.

MM: Was he?

AJ: He was keen on history. So, he would keep telling me stories and telling me...

MM: Ah.

AJ: Course, a never wrote them down but-

MM: No. You remember-

AJ: There is some that- and sometimes I have sort of come across something and said 'oh, I remember my grandfather telling me about that'.

MM: Aye, and was he from Cockenzie and Port Seton?

AJ: He was from- aye, the Johnsons actually- our- we've traced the Johnsons... We actually came from down near Solway somewhere.

MM: Really?

AJ: Aye, and they came up, they came up to what was Ferny Ness, we called it Fairy Ness.

MM: Right.

AJ: Which is just down from Longniddry.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: On the beach from Longniddry Golf Club.

MM: Right.

AJ: Right doon on the beach.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Course, then- that took me back in the sixteenth...

MM: Oh right, a long time ago.

AJ: 1640s, or something.

MM: Gee whiz, right.

AJ: Long time ago.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: They had no... We have no graves because they were aw buried in the communal graves in Aberlady...

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: Church. But there is recordings of the Johnstones-

MM: Yes, aye.

AJ: -being buried in Longniddry- in Aberlady Church.

MM: And were they fisherfolk when they were in Solway as well, do ye think?

0h 04m 00s

AJ: Now, we don't know.

MM: Aye.

AJ: That's to say that, cause we've got nothing on the census of them being fisherfolk.

MM: Right.

AJ: But when they came here, they were fishing with [?].

MM: Yeah.

AJ: Cause Ferny Ness, that is quite- just out from Ferny Ness, it's quite a rich bit of ground.

MM: Is it?

AJ: Because the sand- they had a lot of flats that lived on the sand.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, ye could go out there and shot a line and get fish.

MM: So, flats, is that like a flounder, or-?

AJ: Flounders.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: Flounders. And in the wintertime, they would get codlings there.

MM: Uhuh.

AJ: So, they had small boats and they worked them off the beach.

MM: Right.

AJ: There.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And they also- they worked on the farms and all that kind of stuff.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: Later on, my grandfather was telling me about, eh, when the fishing was poor, that he was actually helping tae build the railway from Aberlady down to Gullane.

MM: Right.

AJ: And he had to walk from here, every morning, to Aberlady which is five miles-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -do his whole day's work-

MM: Then walk back.

AJ: -then walk back.

MM: Folk walked a lot in those days.

AJ: Aye, they did. But it was... There was always work about-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -this area. I think that's why they came. They came across because they needed to find work.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And then, course, by the 1800s or... There was hundreds of Johnstones.

MM: Aye [*laughter*].

AJ: And they just- well, was it just, aye, just after the war or during the war, there were actually 147 families o Johnstones in Port Seton.

MM: Away? 147?

AJ: 140 families.

Nicknames – 0h 06m 00s

MM: Families.

AJ: Aye, ken, that was different houses then.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: And that was why in the Royal Bank along there, the Royal Bank when ye had yer name down, they had yer nickname down beside ye.

MM: So, they could tell who you were?

AJ: On the ledger book, they went to Johnstone but then they went and looked for yer nickname.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And aw the staff in the back all knew the people's nicknames, but there was families of Johnstones, Donaldsons, Thompsons.

MM: Right.

AJ: Aye, there were several more like, ken.

MM: What was your nickname then?

AJ: Oor nickname was 'Doodie'.

MM: Doodie?

AJ: Doodie, aye, Doodie.

MM: Right.

AJ: And I says to my grandfather, 'how did we get 'Doodie'?

MM: Aye.

AJ: Because there was a time when I was young, we didn't quite like getting called Doodie, ken?

MM: No, no.

AJ: Now, I'm proud we have the name of Doodie.

MM: Right.

AJ: Ken?

MM: Aye.

AJ: Cause it reverts back to our family and a remember I've been here for- my family's been here for so long.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And if anybody's looking for me, they'll say, oh, it's Archie Doodie you're looking for, ken? Because, the thing is, with the nicknames here – ye never spoke to somebody with a nickname.

MM: Right.

AJ: You were standing speaking to them, ye used their first names.

MM: Yes.

AJ: John, Alec, Archie.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: But walk ten yards and meet somebody else.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And the first thing you would say to them is 'oh, a was speaking to Archie Doodie the now. So, ye know yer nickname's being used aw the time.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: But not to your face.

MM: No.

AJ: Ken?

MM: So, where did Doodie come from? Do ye know?

AJ: Well, a asked ma grandfather that. I says 'where did the 'Doodie' come from?'

MM: Yeah.

AJ: He says, 'well', he says, 'my father used to- he used to take the, eh, kids – and they were quite a big family – and his favourite thing was to sit them on his knee and he would bump them on his knee going 'doo-dee, doo-dee, doo-dee', and he must've said 'doodie' outside because...

0h 08m 10s

MM: Aye.

AJ: The nickname started very, very easy.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: Especially around this area. Another nickname I got when I was skipper on a boat, and I didnae know I had it for must've been about four or five year. It was 'Taxi'.

MM: Taxi?

AJ: Taxi.

MM: How so?

AJ: Yeah, ah says 'Taxi'... So as it happens, we were fishing- we were fishing out of North Shields at the time.

MM: Right.

AJ: And we used to come up on the bus.

MM: Right.

AJ: And well, one of the men on the bus, he liked a good drink.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: And somebody had to sit aside him, to speak to him, coming up on the bus because he was a bit of a... He was a bit of a- he was a bit of a nuisance [*laughter*].

MM: Oh, right, ok.

AJ: When he'd had a drink – great man when he was sober!

MM: Aye.

AJ: Of course, I was last on the bus.

MM: Right.

AJ: One seat left, sitting doon with him. So, he had a good drink at the time and he was speaking away, and then he says 'how are ye getting on, Taxi?' Ah says 'Taxi, what are ye talking about?' 'Awww, ye dinnae ken your nickname! Your nickname's Taxi'. And then he shouted up the bus-

MM: Oh dear.

AJ: 'Does everybody ken his nickname's Taxi?' I says 'where did that come from?' 'Ye've been Taxi for a couple of years anyway'.

MM: Oh really?

AJ: I says 'how does he know this?'. And then I remembered we were fishing the sprats in the Forth-

MM: Right.

AJ: -at that time, and we used to- ye used to- when ye fished, ye fished a [quota], which was you were just allowed to land a certain amount that morning.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: I remember him saying it, once we got the [quota] on board-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -and everyone was happy, let us go and get ashore now.

MM: Aye.

AJ: I used to just say, 'right, I'll get a taxi and get away up the road', ken? So, the young guys must have thought this was extremely comical and they started crying me Taxi. I don't think Taxi is used very much now.

MM: Right.

AJ: I think that's kinda died off but I would never know because nobody would say it to ma face.

MM: No, no.

AJ: Ye ken? They'll no say it to yer face.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But it was just Tommy had had a good drink and it just...

MM: It just came out.

AJ: It came out [*laughter*].

MM: But Doodie stuck?

AJ: But Doodie stuck.

MM: Doodie stuck.

AJ: But we were like a clan.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Ma- ma grandfather had five brothers.

MM: Right.

AJ: And a sister. Now, this nickname came from what would be my great-grandfather.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, the sister, she was told she was classed as a Doodie.

MM: Right.

AJ: Her name was Katy Doodie.

MM: Right.

AJ: Ken?

MM: Aye.

AJ: Katy Doodie because eh... When my youngest daughter was born and ma wife says 'we'll call her Catherine'. I says 'ye cannae dae that'. She says 'why no, I like Catherine the name. We'll call her Catherine'. 'If ye call her Catherine', I says, 'all she'll get is Caty Doodie'. I says [*laughter*] I am... most certain that if you cry her Catherine', I says, 'she'll be called Caty Doodie'.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: I says, 'no, no, no, am no doing it'.

MM: So, what's she called?

AJ: So, she was called Janet after her mother [*laughter*]. Well, funnily enough, ma granny was Janet.

MM: Was she?

AJ: She was Janet, aye.

MM: Right.

AJ: But some o the wives took the nickname o the...

MM: Oh, did they?

AJ: Oh, oh aye.

MM: Oh?

AJ: Some o them were- well, it would be... It would be, eh, Peggy Barrel.

0h 12m 06s

MM: Aye.

AJ: Well, 'Barrel' was the nickname.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And Barrel got the nickname because he was wee and roond and stumpy-

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: -when he was young.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, it carried on like that – you're just like a barrel.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: And there was another favourite, it was- these were skippers that had died and gone on, but the other yin, he got the name as 'Tarry'.

MM: Tarry?

AJ: Cause he had bristly hair-

MM: Right.

AJ: -and a man used to rub his hair- rub his head and say to him... 'Your heed would do fine for a tar brush', ken, bristly hair? [*laughter*]. 'Ye'd make a fine tar brush' and it was the difference between tar brush, crying 'tar brush' and just crying him 'Tarry'.

MM: Tarry.

AJ: Funnily enough, one of the ministers came to the village and he came in and he was wanting to know the nicknames.

MM: Right, ok.

AJ: We don't really like joining in to the nicknames.

MM: No, no.

AJ: Ken? There is a book wi all the nicknames.

MM: Right.

AJ: We have a book wi all the nicknames.

MM: Right.

AJ: But, eh, this minister says 'oh, I'll just call you Tarry'.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: 'No', he says, 'you'll call me John Dickson'.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: He says 'John Dickson's ma name, not Tarry'.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But, ye see, they were all- a lot of them, there was a time where they didnae like nicknames.

MM: So, was it just used by people in the village then, really?

AJ: It was just used by... Or the fishing community.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Like in Eyemouth, they did remember the odd names... Well, in Eyemouth- you'd go doon to Eyemouth and say 'Archie Johnstone from Port Seton', off the fishing community in Eyemouth they wouldnae ken where that was but ye'd say 'Archie Doodie'...

MM: They would know.

AJ: They would know right away.

MM: Got you.

AJ: And ma brother was Tom Doodie, ye see?

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: He was at...

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: And ma father was Tom Doodie.

MM: Aye, aye. Right.

0h 14m 01s

AJ: And funnily enough, the oldest sister, the- one of ma father's uncles, his daughter.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: Just before the war, married a coloured gentleman.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And after it was the whole thing wi the... I used to phone up their sons, ye see?

MM: Aye.

AJ: And I'd 'how are ye getting on? Are you in the Doodie clan?' 'Ah, yes, yes, I'm a Doodie, I'm a Doodie'. So, funnily enough, the sons and the grandsons – which'll be the great-grandsons of the old grandfather – they still like to be called Doodie.

MM: Aye.

AJ: They're part o the Doodie family.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: So... How long it'll go on, I don't know, but.

MM: I suppose it shows you're from a place, doesn't it?

AJ: That's right, you're from a place, uhuh.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So that's- aye, that's where we started from.

MM: And did you go to school here?

AJ: Went to school here, aye.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Went to Cockenzie School and then we moved on to Preston Lodge.

MM: Right. So, the primary school, was it a wee school, or-?

AJ: No, it was quite a... It's the Art Centre now.

MM: Oh right, aye.

AJ: No, it was... I mean, twelve classes.

MM: Oh, it's fairly big then, aye.

AJ: Well, aye, twelve classrooms.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: And they built the new one further up, when they started... Well, my oldest daughter, Alison, was born 1960.

MM: Right.

AJ: And she was at the old school for about two years and then she moved up-

MM: Right.

AJ: -to, eh... She moved up to the new school.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, roughly it would be two or three years, so that'd be 1960...

MM: Aye.

AJ: Say seven year old, 1967?

MM: Yeah, ok.

AJ: Up to the new school. Roughly. Seven- '67, '68.

MM: Right. So, when you started school the war was still on the go?

School – 0h 16m 00s

AJ: Yes, aye, the war was on the go when I started at school.

MM: And so, were you at primary school for seven years or-?

AJ: Aye, I was there 'til seven years, and then we went up to Preston Lodge.

MM: Right.

AJ: And of course, school then ye got your examinations every Friday, testing your mental arithmetic-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -and all that kind of stuff, and English and... And I always remember in classes we were all put in groups. The best ones were up the top and then ye come doon and... Ye always knew yer place-

MM: Yeah.

AJ: -and ye mebbe changed with him-

MM: Yeah.

AJ: -once, or ye changed wi the one below ye but ye never- ye never moved up at the top.

MM: Aye. Did you enjoy school?

AJ: Aye, I did enjoy school but the, eh... Well, I liked the secondary school better than I did the primary.

MM: Aye.

AJ: For a reason – I think it was because we were moving about more.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And we were learning more because we were getting different stuff, ken? But, eh, when I went up to Preston Lodge School and it's the same now, I knew exactly where I was in my class before I left Cockenzie School. Because them days they took you up to the hall-

MM: Right.

AJ: -and we were all in the hall, and of course they got to- they were reading out the names for what class you were tae go to. So, the ones that everybody did was French and Latin. At Cockenzie School there were four-

MM: Right.

AJ: -four pupils out of oor class went for French and Latin.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And then it came down to the boys for French, and then the next one was doing French and technical.

MM: Oh right [*laughter*].

0h 18m 00s

AJ: So, they shouted oot ma name.

MM: Aye.

AJ: A says 'I shouldnae be here', cause there was a Johnstone in the year up above me in the class at Cockenzie. He was still standing.

MM: Oh.

AJ: So, they took me oot and went to the classroom. I went up to the teacher and a says to the teacher, I says 'Miss', I says, 'I shouldnae be in here'.

MM: Aye.

AJ: 'Archie, you're here and you're name's on the sheet. So, you should be here. Yes, you're here, this is your class'. 'No, Miss', I says, 'I shouldn't be here...' I says 'I'm no wanting French'. I says, 'I'll

get homework', I says, 'I'm no wanting French' [*laughter*]. Anyway, about two hours later somebody came, 'is there an Archie Johnstone here?', 'Yes', 'Yes? Technical class, on ye go' [*laughter*]. Funnily enough, I was saying I didnae want French...

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: When we started the sea and all that, there used to be- there were French trawlers used to come in working beside us.

MM: Right.

AJ: I says 'if ye had only learnt the French, we could have spoke'...

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: Maybe to tell them, ken, because they were getting bothered wi their gears getting filled up and that.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: But I don't think it would be quite good enough to shout a phrase down a radio.

MM: No, I wouldn't have thought so.

AJ: Nae, of course [*laughter*]...

MM: So, what other subjects- what was the technical class then? What did you do in that? What did you learn?

AJ: Well, ye got aw the basics. It was [electrics?] and aw that, they went through aw that, but the technical class you got woodwork, which was the woodwork- two periods of woodwork a week. And then the other class was metalwork, a metalwork period, and then another day ye had two hours of technical drawing.

0h 20m 00s

MM: Aye.

AJ: What else was there...?

MM: That would be it, wouldn't it?

AJ: The other class, they got two hours of gardening.

MM: Right.

AJ: We got two hours of something else. I didnae ken what we did.

MM: Right, ok. What did ye enjoy best out of them?

AJ: Aye, I had some good woodwork stuff. In fact, a [?], I had that for years but I've no seen that lately.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But a still had it lurking in the garden, like oh I made that in woodwork.

MM: Right.

AJ: But no, I liked all that type o stuff.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And funnily, one o the girls that worked in the... The [Brew] Office in Musselburgh because if we werenae at the sea, we went to the [Brew].

MM: Right.

AJ: And ye got a day's whatever it was. And she came to me later, she says 'Archie, this stuff's getting chucked oot and we came across your name', and it must have been the card that went to the work's office-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -with my, what I'd been doing.

MM: Oh.

AJ: She says 'a cannae gie you it'.

MM: Right.

AJ: She says 'but I could- I could tell ye one good thing about it'. She said something about I was very good at geography.

MM: Right.

AJ: I kenned I was good enough at geography-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -but I didnae think I was- that it would need to be mentioned as a special...

MM: Yeah, yeah. Yes, aye.

AJ: A special thing, ye ken?

MM: Aye. So, eh, what age did you leave the school?

AJ: Fifteen.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Left at fifteen, aye.

MM: And did you- so what did you go in to do when ye left?

AJ: Well, fisherman.

MM: So, was that an apprenticeship or-?

Leaving School / Fishing – 0h 22m 00s

AJ: No, no.

MM: Was it just-?

AJ: No, no, you started in your father's boat.

MM: Right.

AJ: Most of them started in their father's... Some boys, their father didnae have a boat.

MM: Aye.

AJ: They would scout around and try and get...

MM: Aye.

AJ: They would get on... I wouldnae say 'lesser' boats, but one o the smaller boats.

MM: Ok.

AJ: For a couple of years, just training.

MM: Ok.

AJ: Ma uncle had a small boat and that's what his wife used to always say – 'Andrew, you're just a training ship' [*laughter*]. Because they would go there for just a couple of year and once they'd been there a couple of year-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -the bigger boats knew that when he- a young laddie came from there, wanting a berth, he knew everything by then or most of it, ken.

MM: Aye.

AJ: The only thing is, the only difference was, they, uh... My grandson, when he left the school – he's twenty-nine now – when he left the school he went... Oh no, he's thirty. He went to that school in Fraserburgh [North East of Scotland College] for six month.

MM: Right, ok.

AJ: He learnt more aboot mending nets and splicing ropes and navigation, he learnt more in that six month, than what a would say took me six years to learn.

MM: Really?

AJ: Aye, because, let's put it this way, see mending nets?

MM: Aye.

AJ: If a net was torn, ye didnae get to mend a net, the older men 'oh, you go away and do something else'. The odd jobs.

MM: Right.

AJ: It was more like the odd job man.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And then there was- my brother was on the boat: my father, and my brother and me. And we were on the boat, there were six men on the boat. He was the engineer. My brother was the engineer, so I would help him but then he moved up into skipper. My father stepped doon.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So after that I was solely in charge of the engine. So, I was learning about an engine, I wasnae learning to mend nets. You could mend a hole.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But like taking a strip o net oot to put a new strip in, there's a skill in that.

MM: I can imagine, aye.

AJ: There's a skill in that. Ye didnae get tae do that-

MM: Right.

AJ: -because ma father was very good at that.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, he would dae it and then you do this and you do that.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And that was it. And it wasn't until he went ashore with a bad back-

MM: Right.

AJ: -and we came into Berwick with nets, well with two nets torn.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: We put them on the pier, 'oh, well, we need to go and just sort them then'. And a says 'we'll need to put a netting in here'.

MM: Aye.

AJ: I put it in the wrong way.

MM: Oh dear.

AJ: Because if you put it in the wrong way, ye dinnae ken until ye get away doon the bottom end. Aye, this is in wrong.

MM: Right.

AJ: So we had to cut it all oot and start again.

MM: And how do ye know it's wrong?

AJ: Because it doesnae come oot at the other end.

MM: Ok.

AJ: Ye ken, it doesnae fit in wi the netting, so yer netting's like that.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And then you take that piece oot as it's torn. That's in shreds, ye cannae do nothing wi it. Put a new bit in, so ye have to join that bit, that bit, that bit. But the netting had to run like that to meet.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: Now, if it was wrong, it wouldnae meet it when it...

MM: Oh, to the other end?

AJ: To the other end.

MM: Ah.

AJ: Aye, see that was- that was...

MM: Aye.

AJ: And once ye learnt it, you... Ken, and I reckon I learnt more that morning [?].

MM: But that's because they had the time to show you. Aye, aye.

AJ: He wasnae there, ye see. He was at home. So, we were lying in Berwick, trying to sort this thing out.

MM: Oh, got you. Right.

AJ: Then... So that was... You missed him because he did aw that fancy work, ye ken?

0h 26m 07s

MM: Aye. Aye. So, just to go back a wee bit, so when ye left and ye started on your father's boat. So, your father had- did he have just the one boat?

AJ: He had just the one boat, aye.

MM: And he had brothers who fished as well? Is that right?

AJ: No.

MM: No?

AJ: My father never had any brothers. He had two sisters.

MM: Two sisters.

AJ: Aye, he had two sisters. He never had any brothers.

MM: Ok.

AJ: But he was always in the family boat, ken, there was a what was called... Ma granny was a [Sinckler?] on my father's side.

MM: Right.

AJ: His mother was a Sinckler.

MM: Right.

AJ: Now, the Sincklers, they always had boats.

MM: Did they? Right.

AJ: Aye. So, when *The Thistle* was built in nineteen... Eh, what was it? She was... Aye, she was... My father was four year old when they launched it.

MM: Right.

AJ: And he was born in 1901, so it would be 1905.

MM: Right.

AJ: When they launched this boat.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, then the boats were divided up into the family. They all had shares, I suppose it was so they could just put enough money in. The boat was built for ninety pound.

MM: Ninety?

AJ: Ready for the sea, ninety pound.

MM: Gee whiz.

AJ: But she hadnae an engine, so it was a sailing boat.

MM: Oh right, ok.

AJ: 1905, ye see? The engines werenae in the boats then.

MM: No.

AJ: Ye see?

MM: Right.

AJ: So, my grandmother...

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: She got a- she got an eighth.

MM: Right.

AL: And- because she was in the- which is the Sinckler family.

MM: Aye.

AJ: She got an eighth.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And ma grandfather got an eighth. That would mean that they had a quarter.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But the other Sincklers, the two Sinckler brothers – my grandmother's brothers – they got an eighth each.

0h 28m 06s

MM: Ok.

AJ: But the father- the oldest brother-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -he had a half.

MM: Right.

AJ: Now, what they did with that was, he had enough shares to say what he wanted done.

MM: Yes.

AJ: Now, he probably had the most money anyway.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Ken? Because they had other boats before that one, like, ken. So, they actually had two boats at that time.

MM: Right.

AJ: Because they had the small boat, like that one, so she was only forty feet- that the fish- the lines during the winter. But the summertime, they went away herring fishing.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, they would go up to away up in the north of Scotland and follow the herring all the way down to Berwick.

MM: Right.

AJ: And then they finished in Berwick start of September and they brought the boats home. And they cleaned the boats up, painted them, cleaned them up, cleaned the nets, but putting new nets in-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -different nets in for Yarmouth fishing.

MM: Right.

AJ: And then whenever it was the end of September, that's how they always had a holiday for the Box Meeting, the third Friday in September.

MM: Right.

AJ: Now, whenever it came roond, the third Friday in September was the Box Meeting day.

MM: Right.

AJ: And that was the day that they knew they were going to be ashore, so there used to be weddings and aw that.

MM: Aye.

AJ: They could... They could work oot we'll get married...

MM: Cause that day was free, aye.

AJ: That day was free, aye. And they got a free fortnight they'd be working aboot at home.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Before they went away to Yarmouth again.

MM: Aye. We'll talk about the Box Meeting, eh, later on.

AJ: Later on, aye.

MM: Yeah. So, when you- your father's boat that you started on, what was it called?

AJ: It was *The Morning Star*.

MM: Uhuh.

AJ: He [got?] the name off a big boat that went to Yarmouth, fishing. She was 1933, she was scuttled and put on the beach down at, eh, Longniddry, on the Sands up at Longniddry and she's still there yet.

Archie's Father's Boat – 0h 30m 16s

MM: Really?

AJ: That is just the ribs left.

MM: Aye.

AJ: In fact, there's just half o the ribs left. Just- there's just some o the ribs just above the water and no more.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But the stern used to be up.

MM: Right.

AJ: And the stern post would be up, but the folk took-

MM: Oh right.

AJ: -were taking bits of timbers off them now as a keepsake-

MM: Oh, is that right?

AJ: -and making different stuff outta the thing, ken?

MM: So why was it scuttled?

AJ: There was no money.

MM: Right.

AJ: There was no money, and they couldnae sell them and she was one o the kind that was kinda leaky.

MM: Right.

AJ: She was... She was tending to leak quite a bit.

MM: Right.

AJ: They were clumsy built, ken, for what they needed to...

MM: Yeah.

AJ: See, they were awright when it was just the sail.

MM: Yes.

AJ: But when they put engines in them...

MM: Aye.

AJ: The stern pushed it doon and the ribs and that werenae quite strong enough.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So that that's why...

MM: Yeah.

AJ: They werenae just- they werenae made for engines, like that...

MM: No, no.

AJ: So then- well, so, that's the boat they'd be... And they had that boat for six month before I joined.

MM: Right.

AJ: They bought it in the September.

MM: Right.

AJ: And I joined there...

MM: And was it made here? Where was it made, the boat, do ye know?

AJ: It was built in Fraserburgh. That's the one.

MM: Right.

AJ: But she had been built for the Isle of Man.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: She was built as *The Manx Lass*.

MM: Right.

AJ: For the Isle of Man.

MM: Right.

AJ: And then a family here- she was meant for sale- that must've been... I think it would have been about 1950.

MM: Right.

AJ: They bought her here... Or 1949. They bought her here.

0h 32m 00s

MM: Aye.

AJ: But they didnae do very much wi her.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, she wasnae paying.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, they tied her up on the pier. And my father, he had- he'd lost the family boat. The family decided to sell *The Thistle*.

MM: Right.

AJ: And ma father and ma grandfather, they only had a quarter.

MM: Right.

AJ: So... When ma grandmother died, her eighth went to ma father. It didnae go tae ma grandfather. That was the ruling: it goes to the...

MM: To the son.

AJ: The son.

MM: Right.

AJ: Well, anyway, he was working in the west shed for a year and a half, and my grandfather says 'you've got yer ane boat lying doon there and you're going ...' They went and bought it.

MM: Right.

AJ: And they were six months, and then I joined...

MM: So, it was just the two of them bought the boat? Your father and your grandfather, or-?

AJ: My grandfather didnae hae any idea about it.

MM: Why not?

AJ: Just my father who bought it, aye.

MM: Did he?

AJ: My father bought it.

MM: So, he owned that outright himself?

AJ: He owned that outright.

MM: Oh right.

AJ: So, it wasnae a terribly dear. He bought it for sixteen hundred pound.

MM: Right.

AJ: But she was lying there quite a while and naebody was wanting to buy her.

MM: Still a fair amount of money though, aye.

AJ: Eh?

MM: Wouldn't that be a fair bit of money?

AJ: A fair bit of money, aye. Aye, I think he was scraping everything together to...

MM: Aye.

AJ: To manage it.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Whether my grandfather gave him a loan of some money, probably he did.

MM: Maybe.

AJ: I didnae know that.

MM: No. So, when you started to work on that boat, how did you get paid? Did you get paid a wage, or-?

AJ: We got paid a share o the fish.

MM: You got a share, aye.

AJ: Aye. We were called 'share fishermen'.

MM: Right.

AJ: And the share was, after aw the expenses were paid-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -they divided the money up. Half the money went to the boat and the other half went to the crew.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, me starting then would be- I started the sea in 1952... Was, eh, March in 1952 when I finished at school, and there were five men so it was divided into... It was divided into six shares.

Share Fishing – 0h 34m 22s

MM: Yeah.

AJ: But a didnae get a full share, a only got half a share.

MM: Right.

AJ: But the other half was put on hold, and when it came the holiday time, the five men got that half share between them.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, the men were still getting- they were still getting their own share, but my half share because I couldnae do as much as a man.

MM: Sure.

AJ: But what they did was, if you were good enough and they felt you were pulling your weight-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -the next year you went up to a three-quarter share.

MM: Right.

AJ: And then after you'd been there two year-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -if you were good enough, you went on to a full share.

MM: And who decided that? Was that the crew or the skipper?

AJ: The crew decided it.

MM: The crew.

AJ: The crew decided. It was mostly the skipper [?] but... But what it was, it was a fairer way because ye had to know what to do before.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Now, I didnae know anything about it, but, eh, after I got the share there was an auld boy I was sailing with and his wife was friendly with ma mother.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: And old Tommy had been kept saying 'that laddie's working for a full share, he should be a full share now'.

MM: Right.

AJ: Although, I couldnae mend the nets so I was watching the engine.

MM: Right.

AJ: Ken?

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, that was- that is how it was when you were ready, but latter years, the share fishermen, some o the lads went aboard wi a full share which a felt was wrong.

0h 36m 12s

MM: What, they started off on a full share?

AJ: They started off wi a full... Well, a would say it would only be about ten, twelve year later.

MM: Aye.

AJ: They started wi a full share because they were the skipper's son.

MM: Oh, I see, right, aye.

AJ: A lot of them never... They never learnt the job.

MM: Aye. They wouldn't have the incentive to, would they?

AJ: No, no, they didnae. Ken, they never learnt the job, it was handed to them.

MM: Right.

AJ: And the crew didnae like it, like.

MM: No.

AJ: Ken if you take a... When my son came aboard he went on a half share.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And he didnae, ken?

MM: Aye.

AJ: He didnae get his share 'til he was able to work for his share, ken?

MM: Aye. Yeah.

AJ: But it was a fairer way to do it because it was an incentive to catch more fish, to get a bigger wage.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But the...

MM: See, I've never worked in this kinda area at all, when you're working on a boat like that is the skipper completely in charge of everything or... How does it... Or does everyone have their own area of responsibility?

AJ: Everybody has their job.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But you're all- you could all- you could work as a team. It's a team. A fishing boat is a team.

MM: Aye.

AJ: It's a team sport. Likes o then, we used to pull in the ropes away from the winch, coiled them up.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: You were divided into two. There were two men watched the starboard side o the boat, and two men watched the port side.

MM: Right.

AJ: The skipper was in the wheelhouse-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -and the cook was the cook.

MM: Right.

AJ: He was there... But when somebody went for their tea, the cook took his place.

MM: Right.

AJ: So that's how it worked.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, you aw knew when the ropes were coming in.

0h 38m 04s

MM: Aye.

AJ: There was two men in charge and that was the thing.

MM: Aye.

AJ: The cook wasnae there, while the other wains just...

MM: Right.

AJ: Ye ken he kept it going.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And then when he went to haul the net, everybody was pulling the net in together.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Ken, pulling the net in was the heavy bit.

MM: Aye, I can imagine.

AJ: It was- that was the heavy bit, so.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: It was- well, it wasnae until 1969 that we got a powerboat-

MM: Really?

AJ: -to start pulling the net in for us. We used to haul them by hand before that, like, ken.

MM: Jeez. You'd be fit then, eh?

AJ: Eh?

MM: You'd be fit.

AJ: Oh, you were fit, aye.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Aye, and of course when the fish came in, ye had to gut it and wash it and then ye put it doon and there was one man doon below. He was packing it into the boxes. They had to be iced.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And there was a skill in that because if it was warm weather like this-

MM: Yeah.

AJ: -ye had to make sure you had enough ice, and see it to the market. Then you only worked a two-day trip.

MM: Right.

AJ: You went away on the Sunday and you would either land on the Monday night or the Tuesday.

MM: Uhuh.

AJ: And then you went away again-

[phone ringing]

MM: I'll just-

AJ: Oh, no bother, no bother.

MM: I'll just pause the recording the now.

AJ: Aye.

[pause in recording]

I usually go along- I went along for my coffee yesterday at one o'clock.

MM: Oh, I see.

AJ: So, that's- she'll be wondering if I'm coming for my coffee, like.

MM: Right. Aye, we'll only be about another ten minutes.

AJ: Aye.

MM: I think we'll do a series of interviews if that's alright, yeah?

AJ: Aye, that's alright, aye.

MM: So, you were talking about, eh, the ice and having to judge how much ice to take.

AJ: Aye. Well, the size of the boats, we could only take... The first boat that I was in, we could only take two tonne of ice.

MM: Right.

AJ: Now, then, the ice came through the lorries to be delivered by an ice company.

MM: I was gonna ask where it came from.

0h 40m 01s

AJ: They came...

MM: So, that was a company and all they did was supply ice?

AJ: That company supplied ice, aye.

MM: Right, cause the boats themselves didn't have refrigeration?

AJ: No, no. No, nothing like that.

MM: No.

AJ: See, the boats' fish rooms were all made into lockers which was about that breadth.

MM: Oh, so about two feet, three feet?

AJ: Aye, two feet.

MM: Two feet.

AJ: Aye. And it went to the side o the boat, and there was a space o... Well, it was three boxes, which would be another six feet.

MM: Right.

AJ: And then you'd the same on the other side.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, what you did was, that was called the 'ice locker' and there was a hole in the deck that had a plate on it that locked. You took that plate off and you poured the ice doon into that ice locker.

MM: Right, ok.

AJ: So, when you went up you had to break this ice, you took the boards off.

MM: Aye.

AJ: The boards were made so that the plate slid up and lifted oot.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, you chopped the ice. You had to chop your ice and ye had to pour it into the fish and ye had to know exactly...

MM: And when it was put into the ice it was chipped, was it?

AJ: It was chipped, aye.

MM: Aye.

AJ: It was just...

MM: So, then it would all fall into a block.

AJ: It fell into a block.

MM: Aye.

AJ: What the butchers- the butcher at home, ye'd just hold onto the beef for a week.

MM: Aye.

AJ: From the butcher.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: And the butcher would go down on the Saturday afternoon.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Because the men were all away by then.

MM: Aye.

AJ: They were- we didn't work Saturday afternoons.

MM: Right.

AJ: We worked in the mornings. Ye repaired the nets, cleaned the engines, filled the ice.

MM: Right, right.

AJ: Filling the ice was a big job.

MM: Aye.

AJ: He would take some o the boards off and he would dig a hole.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And put the beef in.

MM: Oh!

AJ: So, that was your beef.

MM: To keep it fresh, aye.

AJ: The beef was kept fresh.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, that was it. So, the wintertime, if you put the same ice in the summertime-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -of course it didnae melt the same.

MM: No.

0h 42m 00s

AJ: And the buyer would come down, 'aw, the boxes are no full. They're doon', and if they were on the right level wi the top, the skill was when you filled the box.

MM: Aye.

AJ: The box was exactly... But there was a fish, a row of fish on top o the ice, the top ice-

MM: Right.

AJ: -and then when ye put the next box on and started filling it, it pushed...

MM: It pushed it doon?

AJ: It pushed them doon. And then of course, that was compacting the ice and aw.

MM: Aye.

AJ: To save it... So, that's what kept it, because the ice was always running.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Water was running oot the ice, so it was running doon through the fish on the bottom.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Yeah? So, that was the...

MM: And the boxes at the time, were they wood or-?

AJ: The boxes? When I first started, they were what you called 'six stone' boxes.

MM: Right.

AJ: They were standing and had lids on them because that was the same as they used on the Granton trawlers.

MM: And what were they made of, Archie?

AJ: Wood.

MM: Wood, alright.

AJ: They were made o wood. And then, they went to the open box.

MM: Right.

AJ: That had no lids.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And, eh... They were made o wood as well.

MM: Why did they change?

AJ: It was easier for the market because that's six stone boxes, they took up more room-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -because they were made and they had lids. And you would box them and your lids was sticking up and you put the next box on top and the boxes were lying all... So, once they got their [?] and then on the market, ye see, on the market what they did, if ye went to the Aberdeen Market, was tipped your fish oot o your boxes with lids.

MM: Right, right.

AJ: And they put them into the Aberdeen boxes.

MM: Right.

AJ: Ach, to sell them.

MM: Did they?

AJ: And when we went to North Shields that's what they did. And the fish wasnae the same if you tipped them oot.

MM: No.

AJ: Because we tipped aw the ice oot and aw.

0h 44m 00s

MM: Aye.

AJ: Ye ken? So that's why they changed to the wooden open box.

MM: Right.

AJ: And... But, when we changed to the wood open box, the whole Scottish fleet went on to.

MM: At the same time?

AJ: [South?] net fleet. No, no the trawlers. The trawlers, they were different but the [south?] net fleet was all the same boxes ye see now but it's... They were wood.

MM: And then did it change to plastic? And then polystyrene?

AJ: It changed to plastic, it changed to plastic, aye.

MM: Or polystyrene, no?

AJ: No.

MM: No.

AJ: No, plastic, cause they have to be strong enough for piling them on top.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Polystyrene, ye cannae...

MM: It would break, yeah.

AJ: Aye. Polystyrene does keep them better but it would break.

MM: Yes, aye.

AJ: It would never stand, like.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: Even with the wood boxes, the plastic box is like something, if ye had a bad night and the boat was thumping into the sea-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -ye still opened the hatches when ye got into the harbours, what's gonna be facing us?

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: Some o them used to come forward cause you packed them up at the back.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: But they used to... Ken? The boat hitting like that.

MM: Aye.

AJ: They were wanting to move.

MM: Were they tied down, or-?

AJ: No, they werenae tied down but-

MM: No.

AJ: -ye had wedges in. Ye had wooden... [?] wedges and ye'd hammer them in to try and tighten them up.

MM: Yeah, aye.

AJ: And there was loads of wedges kept in.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And boxes kept in.

MM: Aye. So, em, some of the questions I'm gonna ask you are gonna sound silly.

AJ: Aye.

MM: It's just because I wanna be clear for the recording. So, in the next [couple now?] you're taking the fish in, you're actually gutting them as you go?

AJ: Yes, when they came- when you lifted- when ye pulled the nets in-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -ye lifted the net- the fish-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -up onto the boat.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Once they were on the boat, they were left lying on the deck.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And then you went and chopped the [gear?] oot of it.

MM: Right.

AJ: You put the net oot to shoot again: all along the ropes and then the net, and then shoot again.

0h 46m 02s

MM: Aye.

AJ: While we were going round the whole boat, there was one man watching the ropes, the skipper was taking the boat round and the other three or four men, they had started gutting by then.

MM: Gutting, right.

AJ: Because it was as fast as you could get them, especially in summertime.

MM: Aye.

AJ: You couldn't get them doon fast enough.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Cause they used to heat, ye see.

MM: So, you'd gut them on deck and then send them down-

AJ: Gut them on deck and then put in baskets. And they were put in baskets for their sizes.

MM: Oh, right, ok. So, they were sorted, aye.

AJ: So, when you gutted a fish, you knew that's a small haddock.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And that's a medium haddock.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And we didnae get many large haddocks.

MM: Aye.

AJ: No doon this way, but south North Sea, yer reeling in large haddock.

MM: Ok.

AJ: But then you had cod, or codlings, or monkfish and skate and aw that.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And that'd aw be gutted. Everything had to be gutted. There was nothing that was put ashore that wasn't gutted.

MM: So, it would be quite a mixed catch you would get then?

AJ: You could get a very mixed catch.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Cause, well, probably on a catch, say early days, it was twenty boxes.

MM: Right.

AJ: When a first started, twenty boxes was a good catch.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Ken? And, eh, all that twenty boxes would maybe... Depend on where you were, cause the haddocks was more on harder ground, whittings was on softer ground but on our ropes, I'd say you'd get seven or eight boxes of whittings.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And six, seven boxes of haddocks.

MM: Right.

AJ: Then mebbe a box of cod or codlings. Two boxes of flats.

MM: Right.

AJ: Ken? So, that's how your... Of course, when we started, when I first started, we were on what was called 'the control'. So, you got... Eh, what was it? Two pound a box.

MM: Right.

AJ: For haddocks. And one pound... One pound, ten shillings for whittings.

Wages / Shares – 0h 48m 06s

MM: So, the control, that was the set price?

AJ: That was the set price.

MM: Set by who?

AJ: Oh, it was... The government.

MM: The government.

AJ: All during the war.

MM: Right.

AJ: That started during the war, and it held 'til just about that time and then...

MM: Right.

AJ: The 1950s was the time they started to kind of... But when they took it off the control-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -they didnae go up much.

MM: No.

AJ: The only time you got a better price was deals [in winter?] wi nae doot.

MM: Right.

AJ: Your price would go up a bit then.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But likes o the summertime, when all the boats were fishing, it more or less came doon to this...

MM: Aw, so control was the minimum you would get?

AJ: Control was the minimum.

MM: Minimum. Aye, right, ok.

AJ: That was the minimum, see. It could go up but... Ye ken, that was the minimum.

MM: Yeah. Aye.

AJ: So, I remember my first full week. First full week at sea. That was 1952. Eh, we had a good week and the men got twelve pound.

MM: Oh.

AJ: And I got six.

MM: That's a fair amount.

AJ: Oh, it was big money then.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: Well, I mean, if you think about it, ma chums that went to be joiners or carpenters, they were earning twenty-eight shillings, ken.

MM: Aye, six pound.

AJ: Six pound, aye. Yeah.

MM: Did you feel- how did you feel about that?

AJ: I felt great about it.

MM: You must've done, aye.

AJ: Ooh, aye. I always did... The only thing is, is we just werenae sure.

MM: Aye.

AJ: See, the next week could be three pound.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And the next week. And then, if we had bad weather, ye didnae get anything!

MM: Aye.

AJ: Ken?

MM: Yeah.

AJ: It was... And I dinnae ken if you've heard the song about the- frae the fishing, 'I'm leaving the fishing'?

0h 50m 02s

MM: No.

AJ: 'I'm leaving today'... Eh, 'my brother's a skipper on the island o May'?

MM: No.

AJ: But it's all about- it was made by somebody in Musselburgh, that wrote it.

MM: Right.

AJ: And it was all about the guy that was at the fishing.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And of course, it was so up and doon-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -that his wife couldnae stand it any longer and said 'you're going to come home' and then he got a job in the wiremill.

MM: Oh right.

AJ: Ken?

MM: Aye.

AJ: But... The song goes on to say that the wife wasnae worried about it, she was getting less money. It was-

MM: Irregular?

AJ: -the same money every week.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And he was hame every night.

MM: Yeah, aye. Well, that's the other side of it, eh?

AJ: That's the other side.

MM: Fishing's very dangerous.

AJ: That's... That's the shame o the thing.

MM: So-

AJ: Of course-

MM: -did you have to be careful wi your money then?

AJ: Eh?

MM: Did you have to be careful wi your...?

AJ: Ye had to be careful.

MM: Spread it out?

AJ: Aye. The fishing families- the fishing families, they were aye the richest in the village, always.

MM: Uhuh, uhuh.

AJ: Especially if ye had a boat.

MM: Uhuh.

AJ: Skipper on the boat, always. He had the, always, that wee bit more because he had laid oot money to make money.

MM: Yeah, aye.

AJ: Ken? But the, uh... Aye, ye had to put... Ken, ye had nae holiday pay or anything like that.

MM: Or sick pay, or...?

AJ: Eh?

MM: Sick pay?

AJ: No, nae sick pay.

MM: Nothing like that.

AJ: No. No, what they did was... That was a good question, sick pay. If a man went ashore, sick off the boat, he still got his wages.

MM: Oh, did he?

AJ: Aye.

MM: Ok.

AJ: He still got his wages because the other five men-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -made up his wages.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Then that went on for thirty or forty year. Thirty year, anyway.

MM: Gee whiz, aye.

AJ: And then we stopped.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And then we stopped. I think what they did- what they did was, the man got his wages but whatever he got, as sick benefit-

0h 52m 02s

MM: Aye.

AJ: That was handed back and that was given as pocket money to the five men that had did the work.

MM: Got you. So, they get a wee bit extra then?

AJ: They got a wee bit extra.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But it wasnae very much.

MM: But... Aye.

AJ: Ken? Say five shillings, or something like that.

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: Wasnae much but... But everybody got that if he was went ashore sick. And some o them would be ashore for three month.

MM: Oh, really?

AJ: Aye, once it got... Once it got to a long time when they'd been sick-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -the crew would say, well, enough's enough.

MM: Aye.

AJ: We'll have to put another man in that place.

MM: Yeah.

AJ: Especially if it got to about the summertime, and there were more fish.

MM: Aye.

AJ: It was heavy work, ken?

MM: Aye.

AJ: If you were the man chopping it was heavy work, like, ye ken?

MM: Aye, aye, aye. And I'll just make this the last question for now, Archie. Eh, you've got your fish in your boxes and your bag in the harbour – who do ye sell it to? Or where do you sell the fish? How did that work?

AJ: All those fish went to Newhaven.

MM: Right.

AJ: Now, it went to the Fishermen's Association. They had their own lorries.

MM: Right.

AJ: And they would, eh... My brother who was skipper, he would go through Stonehaven Radio, he would get aw the boats, how many's landed the night?

MM: Right.

AJ: And how many are ye landing? How many have you landed? How many boxes have ye landed? Cause you had to know how many, for... Could the lorry take them all?

MM: Got you, right.

AJ: Ken?

MM: Aye.

AJ: He tellt me fibs wi that and all. But anyway, then he phoned in and then the lorry came doon to... Then, it was used to be Dunbar.

MM: Right.

AJ: And then about a couple o years later, we moved on to Eyemouth.

MM: Right.

AJ: Cause that was nearer fishing towns than here again.

MM: Right. And who is buying the fish, is it shops or is it merchants?

Selling the Fish – 0h 54m 00s

AJ: It went to Newhaven, and Port Seton boats was always Johnstone.

MM: Right.

AJ: Johnstone was a... Who was a Cockenzie family-

MM: Uhuh.

AJ: -instead of being fishermen, the old boy went away to be a salesman.

MM: Right.

AJ: Cause they started taking fish frae the pier and once they started getting more fish, they couldnae sell enough on the pier.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, they took it wi horse and cart-

MM: Right.

AJ: -into Newhaven.

MM: Uhuh.

AJ: And there were six or seven, eight, salesmen in Newhaven.

MM: Right, right.

AJ: But most of Cockenzie fleet worked with Johnstone in Newhaven.

MM: And would he buy the fish off you and then resell it, or-?

AJ: No.

MM: No?

AJ: He sold it.

MM: Cause Newhaven was classed as an inland market.

AJ: Right. Your fish wasnae sold as- per boat.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Like, so you go to- when you went to Aberdeen, you landed – if it was your turn, if you were first on the market, you were first boat to be sold the next morning.

MM: Right.

AJ: And it went through, right through.

MM: So, went boat by boat?

AJ: It went boat by boat. The salesmen came doon boat by boat.

MM: Uhuh.

AJ: But in Newhaven – the fish went into Newhaven – and what they did was, they stacked the fish up in their species.

MM: Yes.

AJ: Haddocks, haddocks would be along here.

MM: Aye.

AJ: So, the buyers, when they went in in the morning, ye know, they could see all this, a hundred boxes of haddocks.

MM: Aye.

AJ: But there's four hundred boxes of whittings.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And they made a... And then, whenever the markets started at seven o'clock, there were six or seven salesmen shouting whatever, 'what are ye giving me for this this morning?'

MM: Aye, aye.

AJ: And that's more or less how it went.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, that's why, if there was a lot of fish in, the price came doon to a minimum price, like.

MM: So, he would sell the fish for you?

AJ: He would sell- now, he would sell them nearly... Now, the men had fish vans, in Port Seton... When I was at the school, just after the war, there were thirty-five different wee fish hooses-

0h 56m 12s

MM: Really?

AJ: -in Port Seton. Really. They would go in- they weren't ever in the van, they would go into Newhaven and he would buy two boxes or three boxes o fish.

MM: Right.

AJ: And he would either bring them out in his van and ditch them... But some o them, went away through to the west coast, ken? And Livingston and Armadale and all these kind of...

MM: Aye.

AJ: These went- they went into the market and bought the fish, and what they did was, they had their tickets on them wi their name.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Most o them- most o them was their nicknames.

MM: Right.

AJ: They put them doon.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And their nickname went doon and then the lorry that had taken the fish in, they would take them back oot and drop them at the...

MM: Oh, would they?

AJ: And they dropped them here, and most times it was the wife-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -and another couple of women.

MM: Right.

AJ: So, they would...

MM: Prepare them?

AJ: Aye.

MM: Fillet them or...?

AJ: Aye, fillet them. They would fillet them, and when he came home they fish was ready for him
gaen oot the next mornin.

MM: Got you.

AJ: And that's about... But there was always a market on a Saturday but there was no market on a
Monday morning.

MM: No.

AJ: Cause we didnae work on the Sundays.

MM: You didn't have anything.

AJ: We didnae work the Sundays, so no Monday market.

MM: Aye. So, Mr Johnstone's taking your fish to Newhaven to sell them?

AJ: Aye.

MM: And then, how quickly would you- how quickly would you get- when would you get your
money?

AJ: We were paid-

MM: The same day?

AJ: -on the Saturday.

MM: Saturday.

AJ: We were paid on the Saturday.

MM: So, would he-

AJ: The cheque came oot on a Saturday.

MM: Right.

AJ: With all the expenses off.

0h 58m 02s

MM: Aye.

AJ: The landing dues and...

MM: Aye.

AJ: Just the landing dues for Newhaven.

MM: Aye.

AJ: The landing dues for Newhaven was taken off.

MM: Ok.

AJ: And that was left. And then you had landing dues for whatever port you had been in.

MM: Right.

AJ: And all that kind of stuff, like. But yer money was oot, and then aw the trip to the bank and got the money.

MM: Aye.

AJ: And then we went... The next shed doon there had twelve tables in it.

MM: Uhuh?

AJ: And then the tables was for... Cause we all got the money at the same time and sort of... [*phew*]...

MM: Mmhm.

AJ: I mean, thousands o pounds was dished oot on a Sunday and aw the crew was standing roond about the table, while the money was being...

MM: Aye.

AJ: Before, when used to do it in the boats, ken, when we came home to Port Seton?

MM: Got you, got you.

AJ: We sat in the boat and we were finishing up on... That was the last job on a Saturday morning.

MM: Right.

AJ: After the net had been mended and the... Well, the skipper, most times, wasnae there for the mending o the net.

MM: No.

AJ: He went to the back, paid the bills to the butcher and aw the... And then he'd come back and the bills were put on the table-

MM: Aye.

AJ: -and it was dished oot, just five shillings. We used to sit, hoping that there'd maybe be half a croon left or something [*laughter*]. Oh, we'll just gie the laddie that.

MM: And that would be...

AJ: And even when we werenae at sea, he went doon the boat on a Saturday morning and got a job to clean the engine-

MM: Just in case.

AJ: -or clean the wheelhouse windows.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Ken?

MM: Aye.

AJ: That was just- that was jobs you were learning, ken?

MM: Aye. So, you would finish up, what, about lunchtime on a Saturday or-?

AJ: Usually about lunchtime, aye.

MM: Aye.

AJ: Lunchtime. Eh, our [rud-skipper?], he could never get- they could never get him to finish.

MM: Oh really?

AJ: He was still keeping on 'til Saturday afternoon.

MM: Oh really?

AJ: He would dae this, that and the other, until they got him hooked on the Hibs and the Hibs were playing really well then, ken in the fifties?

01h 00m 02s

MM: Aye, 'Famous Five' and all that?

AJ: Aye, aye. He was in the bus for the Hibs game.

MM: For the football?

AJ: That was him – best thing ever! The Hibs game! Got interested in the Hibs games and stopped coming in in the afternoon [*laughter*].

MM: [*laughter*] Well, I think we'll leave it there for now, Archie. Eh, thanks very much for that.

AJ: Aye, aye.

MM: If you're happy to, I'll come back and we'll do more.

AJ: Right, aye, that's fine.

MM: I'll just switch the recording off now.