

Interview with Mr. James Penman (Clarkie), 25 Dunbar Court, Masadonia, (Macedonia?) Glenrothes formerly 36 Main Street, Buckie on 13th June 1988.

What was the number of your first boat?

The Betty York.

Can you remember the number of it?

No.

Was it wood or steel?

Wood.

What was your job on it?

I left the school an I jined the Betty York at the beginning of the summer as a cook and kiler. Ye hidna nae cooken tae dee. Jist made tae an that like, kiler, kiling the ropes, cook and kiler.

How many hours did you put in a day?

24 hours.

What were the working conditions like?

Nae bad, not too bad.

Were you taught how to cook or did you do it yoursell?

Well I jist teached mysel.

Have you any funny stories when you were cookin?

That's anither boat ye see. When I was cook aboard the Blossom the drifter. I was 16 and cooken for eight men. I didn't ken how to cook, I hid a good idea like an a, I jist worked awa an there wis nae complaints. One thing I aye hae tae laugh at it fan I made a jeely. I made it at ten o'clock and the denner was at 12. Ye ken far the jeely landed, ower the side.

What were the conditions like aboard the boat?

A right. Ye didna ken nae difference the conditions in them days. A'body wis the same level. Nae posh boats wi push buttons.

What like were your galley conditions?

Oh ye jist hid a galley, bit aff the wheelhouse at the end of the casing, an a stove stuck intil it. That wis a, an a coalbunker.

How did you get your stores?

Oh the stores the day ye came in. If ye wanted ony stores ye went up tae the butchers or the grocer an took them doon wi ye. On a Saturday you ordered the weeks stores and the grocer or the butcher put them doon tae ye.

Did you haul the nets?

Aye.

How did you do that?

I wis kiler.

Did you help tae haul the nets as well?

Aye sometimes.

How did you kile the ropes?

In a big box, roon an roon wi the sun. There wis half a mile of rope that wis attached the first net you put awa. Ye steamed oot, putten the net oot a the time an the net wis runnin oot. Then fin ye wis finished ye jist give her maybe a dizen a lengths clear of the net, made fast for'it an swung her up tae the win.

Did you help tae tar the nets?

No. No.

You never tarred them at all?

No. My job wis handen up the bowies. I wis doon the howl handed the bowies up tae the man on the deck an he passed them ower the ither man's heid an he put them awa intae the water.

What was your pay like?

Pay, no pay.

Not anything at all?

No, nae guaranteed paid. Could hiv gien a hale bloody summer without pay. I used tae go doon an cut the skipper's grass tae get half a croon tae get up in the bus fin I wis courtin'. That's a I hid for my pay half a croon, jist for a cut of the grass.

Had you any time off at all?

Aye at weekends.

What did you do at the weekends?

Courtin' an sweemin.

Where did you meet Annie?

In Buckie.

Did you court her long?

Aff an on for about two years.

When you were away from home how long were you away from home for?

Well after the summer fishin you got what you called the spring fishin ye shifted fae Scotland doon intae England, Lowestoft and Yarmouth and you were doon there for maybe six tae eight weeks fishing oot of Yarmouth or Lowestoft.

Did you get any money then?

Aye if you made ony.

How long did you have at home?

A lang time at hame. An fan ye came hame fae the autumn fishin ye maybe hid a month at home, aye two or three weeks at home an then away to the west coast for the winter fishin.

How long were you there?

Oh you were there a winter in the lochs. Catchin herring maybe three nets tae the sma boat, shot them an ging in the mornin an haul them an if there wis ony herrin ye shook them oot intae the sma boat an then ye gied awa tae the German klondyker an sell't them there. You were maybe in the loch for four five weeks.

Anybody injured in your boats?

Aye mysel. After I progressed from cook tae engineer. I was engineer on the Betty York in charge of two engines, an I wis going away to Arbroath to a swimming gala on Saturday, an I wis cleanin up a the engine room an that during the haul. I thocht I wid ae nithin tae dee but jump ashore ontae the bus tae the swimming gala but during that time I hid on a hairy Fair Isle gansey, thick shirt, a singlet, a pair 0 lang drawers, a pair of sea boot stockings an a pair of jersey trousers, ony wye I wis jist cleanin the last bit of the machine, it wis the shaft for driving the winch, fan the greasy shaft took a hud o the hairy jersey an pulled my round an round the shaft. Well I stuck half wye atween the shaft an the post an fin I came tee after doon in the engine room my shoulder was dislocated, couple of broken ribs an I didn't hae a stitch on. Every bit was in the shaft apart fae my sea boots.

Did you get any first aid for that?

Jist kept ye call. Jist kept ye happit up till ye got intae port. Put me intae an ambulance and put me tae Chalmers Hospital in Banff. First aid nae first aid in them days.

None at all?

First Aid.

Well you had no precaution against that? Safety was just a word wasn't it?

What kind were your lifeboats?

The Duke of York an them ye didn't hae a lifeboat. The drifter ye hid one but nae the motorboats.

Did you have rockets on your boat?

I couldna tell ye aboot that. I niver saw them.

Had you wireless?

Aye receiver nae for putten in, jist the auld fashioned BBC, thon ye'd sit at the table in the hoose, echoes ye eest to call them jist a battery set, there wis nae transmitters.

Had you to do all the engine room maintenance?

Aye.

What kind of work did you do in it?

In the wintertime fin ye came hame ye took the engine adrift an dee her a up, pit in new bottom ends, new valves, new pistons.

What did you do on a Sunday?

Fit did I dee on a Sunday. Courtin, sweemin.

Did you go to the Kirk?

Aye sometimes, very seldom.

Were you superstitious?

Somewyes.

What kind of superstitions did you have?

A. I didn't like 13 for a start, an certain things that were said. I've seen the boat turn back because fin we were hauling in the nets at the seine net in the Betty York the skipper's son an me wis the twa young blokes aboard an we wis hauling one wing and the deckie was hauling the other wing. Fin we hauled up jist as weel the win come up for there wis a lemon sole richt in the first mash 0' the wing as it came oot of the water. An the boy we me he says tae hell wi this we're off bad omen that, so we took the gear aboard an awa in.

Why was lemon sole the bad omen?

I dinna ken. The same wye wi ony superstitions, it's jist a bad omen, it's jist in the mind, it's nithin it's load of hooey.

How did you get your forecasts?

The BBC on the wireless.

Can you forecast the weather looking at the weather jist now?

No nay me. Auld lads can. The auld lads eest tae leave the harbour. They gied onything fae 80 to 100 mile and the skipper would say stop her and they would throw the leads for sounding the water, a big lang string we a lead, a 4lb. lead full of grease. Drap this doon the bottom and get a look and see if it wis sand, or steens or shells. The skipper kent exactly far he wis at. He wis never far agley. They gied richt tae the spot. Nowadays they've sonars and a their modern technicians. Auld lads hid nane of that in them days. Auld lads gied richt tae the bloody spot and they didna cast that lead maybe three four times richt tae the spot far he wis wantin it.

What did you do if you were out in bad weather?

Ye jist dodged the weather. You went slow through the wind all the time. Jist keep her heid up tae the wind.

Were the harbours crowded in them days?

The harbours were full. Ye see they hid a fleet for going to the sea of big boats, 45 to 55' at the maist. Auld Zulu sail boats. They were a hailed intae the harbour and that wis them tied up for the winter and a fleet of sma boats wis used in the wintertime.

How much coal did you use a day?

That depended on the steamin you were dee'in. Maybe say about 8 tae 10 ton a week.

Did you use that in a week?

Aye.

When you had long trips hid you enough coal to take you down there and back?

Oh aye ye bunkered about 23 ton.

How much did a ton of coal cost then?

Cheap. I canna mine the ton. You used to be when you were in the hoose able to go doon for a half cwt a coal for 2/6.

How did you get your lights in your boat?

Well in olden days when I started first it was a paraffin an then they started pittin electric lights intae the boats aff the batteries an a dynamo for chargin the batteries.

When you said paraffin did you keep the paraffin in a tank?

Aye the boat wis run on paraffin. The main engines gied on paraffin. He hid aboot two full 400 gallons paraffin in the twa tanks one on each side of the boat. That wis motorboats like.

Ye met Annie in Buckie where did you stay when you were married first?

Buckie. 22 Harbourhead next tae Fowlers. Then we bought 36 Main Street.

Your parents had a struggle bringing up you ones. Had you a struggle bringing up your family?

Oh aye. Wisna sic a big family as them. In olden days ye eest to get auld folk, like me, telling you aboot that kina days. You were lucky if you hid a toilet in the back garden. Your very first furniture wis orange boxes for your wardrobe.

Nae wardrobes?

Well for keepin your dishes in. Canna keep your bloody suit in an orange box. The auld fashioned boxes eest to hae three layers, eest to hae a lang, well we'll say this is the orange box in length, a shelf in there an a shelf in there. One, two, three shelves ye hid far ye kept ye're cups, saucers an plates.

When you were married James was the oldest, then Marlyne, then Myrtle. Now Myrtle there she was called after the boat you were on during the war?

Aye. I was due to go back to her when she was blown up wi all hands. Named after that boat. I wis due to go back along wi the Buckie lads there were in her tae jine her on the Monday an she wis blawn up on the Friday wi a hands.

When you went to Yarmouth how long did you go to Yarmouth for?

Sometime four weeks sometimes six weeks, eight weeks at the most. The weather broke an you hid to come hame. Couldna go doon there in bad weather it wis shall water.

So you sailed fae Buckie down to there?

Aye fished a the way doon, Scarborough or Grimsby or Hartlepool an then we gied to Yarmouth or Lowestoft.

How long did it take you to go down there?

About 40 hours. When I was fireman on a Portknockie boat, ca'd the Margaret Mair, the chief did the bunk, got drunk an we never saw him again, an we cam awa hame. I gied doon intae the engine room in Yarmouth an never came oot of it till Portknockie. Fired her an oiled her a the wye hame. Thirty forty hoors an I gied intae Portknockie harbour an I came roon the back tae shut doon the main injection cause fin the tide gied back the water went

oot o Portknockie harbour, an we eest to shut doon the inlet for the water for the condenser an also the airlock an opened her up. I gied roon there an I trippet on the wye roon at the back of the engine an I niver waket up till Sunday mornin, that wis fae Saturday denner time till Sunday mornin. Waket up peicked. Jist a young loon eighteen-year auld. An she ended up ga'in in fire there burned oot, the Margaret Mair an the skipper was killed wi a bomb wi his dother in his oxters, a German bomb.

What was the number of the Margaret Mair?

I canna mine. She wis a PE boat. She finished up getten burnt oot in Portknockie harbour.

Can you mine when the boats were built at the end of Great Western Road?

Aye.

Was there a yard there?

No jist a shed an they built them at the side.

Where was the shed at?

Oh jist richt doon fae your hoose.

There wis no houses across the road?

Nithing there that time. A the wye doon the coast wis the same. A the drifters an that. Only cost you about £400 for a drifter in them days. A this modern folk makes me laugh. Ye see it was a lot of money but fit the hell why could it be a lot of money if ye didna hae it. Ye couldna get it. There wis no dole in them days. Ye gied tae John Gordon that wis the parish relieve of the toon, he would gie ye bugger all. He micht gie ye a five bob if ye were lucky.

Had you to pay that back?

No no he paid you that. That was what you ca'd parish relieve. But there wis nae dole. When I was married I was six weeks in a I niver got a ha'penny aff signing the dole an in the inner end I was forced to go up tae John Gordon, he bed up High Street across fae the school. I gied in there, his office was doon the stair. I knockit an gied in. Aye aye. Tell't him fit I wanted. Well I says we hiv got nithin to live on an I says we've got nae dole. Every time I gied tae the dole on a Friday payday they always tell me the same thing they haven't got my papers through. Well he says I'll tell ye ye winna git nithin here. But we will give ye He lifted the phone an rung, I've a Mr. Penman up here, he's being signing here for six weeks an he his hisna got any dole, what's the hold up, ye hivna got his papers. Ah

well he says he's away down now paying. I gied doon an I got £2.10/-.

Ye hid a hard life really hadn't ye?

It was a hard life but a'body wis contented. It's nae as hard as it is noo. It's jist a bloody rat race noo. It's the same wi the fishin industry an they hivna got the sense tae see it. How can they pit ither things intae proportion when they canna pit their ane hoose in order. A the time the fishermen hiv been gaen tae sea there his been nae provision made or things kept aff them or things of that kine tae pay their income tax an noo some of them are hundreds and hundreds in debt that they are gettin their pay confiscated noo half o' it tae pay their tax. Same wi pension funds they are comin roon noo a bitty better, some are dein it noo paying intae a fund for a pension fund fin they retire otherwise there's nothing. Fin I gied tae the sea first I progressed fae a 30 Kelvin till a 60 Kelvin up.

Fit's a Kelvin?

Kelvin engines, a Glasgow firm. Then we went tae Gairners. An I finished up wi Dennis Reid wi a 200 Gairner wi ten kiles a side making a big livin in them days, but that wisna good enough they went in for bigger boats, 400 H.P. engines, 500 H.P. engines. Noo fit did that 500 H.P. engine dee that the 200 couldna dee. The only difference wis that they got oot there an hoor or twa hours faster than their neighbour an back in an hoor or two hours faster for the market than their neighbour. But during that time they were burnin twice the fuel three times the fuel so if you got a pay oot of a thousand pounds it would tak twa or three thousand pounds noo. It's jist ridiculous. A kile of rope used to cost onything fae £50 tae £75 for a kile of ordinary seine net rope, it's awa about £150 noo. A net used to cost £75. Nets they are using noo are costing a thousand pounds, twa thousand pounds. A purse net cost £10,000 an that a cheap ane.

See the nets that gied up an doon the road did you pit ye're nets up there tae dry?

Aye, but div you mean the nets that were on the poles in the beach?

On the pailings?

Aye that wis drying them. At the end of each fishin or if ye changed ye're nets fin the herrin got bigger ye started awa in the month of March the herrin wis sma so ye hid on sma mash nets. In alden days ye maybe shot that nets maybe half a mile lang, jist for the sake of speaking I canna go intae figures noo, the ebb tide they gied one wye an the flood tide they come back the opposite wye. An a'thing that wis sweemin got catch't,

herrin. An the sma anes gied through the mash an they carried on sweemin tae be catch't some ither day. But noo adays they wid take ye're false teeth oot of the water noo. Everything. They hiv got nets noo that they pit along the dorey an they ging roon in a circle aifter they see it on the radar an fish finders an things o that kine, an they jist pit awa the dorey an ging away roon in a circle, the size of a fitba park richt roon an richt back an pick up the dorey, tak the end aboard an heave awa. Heave the bottom in, close the bottom in tak the top in gently until the bottom closed an there's a little wee ring on the top an the net there is full. An there's nithing saved a'thing there. Even the bloody gold fish couldna git oot it. Now ye see fishermen hiv deen that themsel. Tae hell we you Jack I'm alright. They dinna think o the rest of them that's comin in. As lang as they get their new boats, new bungalows, new cars, disna matter a bugger for them comin ahin. Very ignorant lot.

How did you keep your beef fresh long ago?

Well we just took at aboard. The stuff we were ga'in tae be using at the end of the week, you got the stores aboard on Saturday, well maybe Sunday's and Monday's you kept that oot they rest you rubbed rough sa't intae the beef, put it doon in the box in the haul callin he jist took oot a bit every day as you not it. Jist washed the sa't oot o it.

Did it keep fresh?

Aye. That's anither thing that's been deen awa wi. There's nae sic a thing as rough sa't now. I've niver seen nane. There's sweet sa't, sweet rough sa't but nae the real rough sa't. Ye eest to go to the school wi a lump of cod in your pooch wi a lump of black stuff, hard fish. Used tae get a thousand women in Smithies in Aberdeen that's a they did split fish an clean them an pickled them an dried them.

You went to school wi fish in your pockets?

Aye that wis your kitchie. Your playtime piece or your sweeties. We used to keep the peas oot of the broth an ate them on the wye tae the school. That wis your sweeties. Nae sweeties in them days. Nae money tae buy them. Ye get mare noo fin ye leave the school than fit we got tae live on.

How did you survive?

Jist got my father eest to go down in the summer time, this time of year, month of June. He gied doon tae Macduff harbour an buy a box o whittings for 2/-or 2/6/, take them home, clean them, gut them an split them an wash them put them in a tub wi rough sa't mixed up wi call water until the haddock or fit ever fish he wis pittin in used to float on the surface,

then ye pourt the hale lot intae the tub. Then ye let them be in the tub for six twelve hours, then ye wid tak them oot pit them in a bath or a basket an the quines in the summer time, my brothers an sisters wid tak them doon the beach an spread them oot on the beach an take them hame every nicht bone hard an pit them through the auld fashioned mangle wi the big rollers an that flattened a the bones an ye got mare intae the iron bath, an that gied up the stair intae the garret an that wis your kitchie for a winter. You used to get a box o haddocks the next week an did the very same thing. So you didna starve there. You wid go to the butchers in Banff an buy a hale coo's heid for 5/, sheep's heid for 3d or sixpence an a pig's skin bone take hame. My father eest tae skin't, break it up wi the axe, pit it in the biler, bile the hale bloody lot in the biler, in the auld fashioned biler in the kitchen ye eest tae bile ye're clathes in, stirred it up an took it oot an took a the beef aff the bones, put away the bones an put the beef back intae the biler again, then poort the hale lot intae basins an that wis your potted heed, real potted heed big chunks of beef nae shite like you get noo adays. In the next week, well nae the next week, but we'll say that onywy, we gied doon tae the butchers again an buy a tripe. Maybe get a tripe for 5/-, tak it hame spread it oot on the grass scrape it a, take it in, pit it intae the bath then the quines or the loons wid ging in an tramp it in the bath. Ye kept scrubbin an trampin until it was pure white, take it oot cut it up an pit it in the biler an that wis your tripe an onions. It wis the quines job this week to go for the milk. Ye used to travel aboot 2 miles oot an two miles back for a big white enamel pail o skimmed milk fae the farm 5/-. Great big pail 5/-. An the loons job wis to go up the Hill of Dounes, that's the hill atween Banff and Macduff, up there an gather the whin bushes that were burn't two bags for the day and take them hame an that wis your fire if ye didna hae as much as burn the coal.

An the only punishment ever I got fae my mother was for telling a lie. I didna get for there wis a sweemin gala on in Macduff in Banff, an that wis about a mile an half ye hid tae travel fae oor hoose tae Banff Harbour. An I wis only a young going to the school an I not a shilling an I sell't ane of my readin books tae this bloke for a shillin an I hid tae get my punishment afore I got my shillin. I got the shilling an I gied ower tae the gala an I only went intae one thing cause I only hid one shillin. I went intae the diving, biding ablow the water an this boys I kent they were the cracks in Banff ye see sweemin, Kempie an Cormack, they were the kingpins supposed to be. In I gied along side Charlie Cormack, jist a young loon ga'n tae the school, well I says I'm gettin this by nae matter fit

happens. So I says I'll jist bide wi them, he's the best it's here. Fin he gings up I'll carryon. So that's fit happened, we a dived in aff the pier aboot twelve of us, sweemin ablow the water. I wisna started until Charlie Cormack gied awa up. He was the last. I kept sweemin an sweemin till I couldna get ane further for the middle jetty, so I came up the steps an they were shoutin oot the first prize wis Charlie Cormack. An ae wifie at the tap of the steps she shouts oot Hey no no mannie there's ane comin up here. The thing wis ye didna get ye're first prize until they hid a ball that wis the Wednesday, they hid a ball a dance in the Territorial Hall on Friday night, well I was too young for that but my auntie, she used to be a school teacher, an her twa sisters they were at the dance. So I forgot all about it an I went awa tae the school on Monday, cam hame an my mither says tae me far were you last Wednesday. I says school far did ye think I wis.

My mither was 18 stone an fin she hat ye she hat ye. An she says that's a lie. I hid forgotten a aboot it. She says here's a voucher for 21/-, which is a lot of money in them days. An ye hid to go ower tae Banff tae collect 21/-of stores, sugar an tea an onything you wanted oot o Lipton's. An I got a pillowslip an I didna get the bus I hid tae carry the buggers back. An she says that's a punishment an it's nae for duking the school it's for telling lies. Telling lies. In them days, nae only me but a my pals, if we met an auld woman or an auld man carrying a parcel or hurling a barra we widna let them by pass an push the barra, we eest tae tak it fae them an did it for them even suppose it was a mile tae walk. Took nithin for it. We eest to go doon maybe one o'clock two o'clock in the mornin fin the boats were comin fae the lines an hurl the auld fishermen's four lines an sculls in the barras maybe aboot a quarter a mile to oor hoose. We jist did it so we could get a rummage in their tin or piece box far ye keep a the auld pies or biscuits that used to come in. So jist for the sake of eatin their pies that they couldna ate at the sea.

How did you manage to bring up your family on the pay you were gettin?

Well everybody helped everybody. The wife's mither was, nae my ane mither cause she couldna, but auld Bellkie hersel aye Tosh's mither she was a godsend. Everything gied through the hoose. It wisna a case of this is yours and this is mine.

What happened when you were on the drifters?

There were plenty of rats on the drifters.

Have you any stories on them?

Well there wis ane but it wisna in the fishin it wiz in Ipswich. I was in Ipswich and I wis chief of a minesweeper in Ipswich. She was full of rats. I complained and complained and they widna dee onything about it. Used to throw a doze of grub, a handful of loaf or cheese on the table and afore you got up the trap ontae the deck tae look doon the table was full of rats eaten. I mine I gied back fae leave in a bonny grey suit. I took it aff an bunked mysel. I hid a room tae mysel and I hung it up an I heard this crunchin, crunchin a nicht. I kent it was the rats. An I gave twa three knocks and it gied awa again. An fin I rose in the mornin I started speakin aboot the rats and I says tae the boys I heard ane last night crunchin. I gied away tae put on my bonny troosers and there wis a hale bloody leg eaten oot of her. I've seen them among the oil and they used tae dip their tail among the oil and take their tail across their moo and suck it. I've seen them fin I was gaen to the school up in Willie Walkers, the carters in Hall Street. I've seen them carrying an egg. The hen gied aboard the horses heed intae the stall far he kept his corn oil. The hen gied in there and laid their eggs. I've seen a rat sittin quietly and watchin. He got his four paws roon the egg and rolled on his side and the ither rat pulled him awa by his tail. Fit the rats in the boats wis caused wi they were all lined in the cabins and the side of the boats. Fit I mean by lining in. This is the side of the boat ye see, well the wooden strappin see. Rats used this as runways. They did awa wi that. Modern boats dinna have that now. They hiv nae rats. Nae wi tae hide.

Did you ever have any holidays?

Holidays! Tae hell wi holidays.

Did you ever have a holiday? Where did you and Annie spend your honeymoon?

Aberdeen. My aunties. Holidays!

When the kids came along did you have any entertainment?

No jist ye're ane entertainment like fin you were young an the entertainment ye hid wis playing tricks on ither folk.

What kind of tricks?

Well you eest tae get a purn 0' black threed an a little steenie or a lump of glass and tak it intae the top of the windae and the steen in the middle of the pane and you eest tae stan awa back fae the purn. You used tae tap, tap till the wifie came oot. She couldna see nithing and gied back in and ye kept tap, tappin till she got fed up. She hidna got the sense tae gie it back tae ye. I used tae gang by the windows in the dark and used tae hit the windae wi your han and drap a bottle. Crash! See her

coming running oot. You wid hide up a close. Then ye eest tae get paper and poke them intae the spoots. Crack a match. You wid hear the paper roaring up the spoot. They wid come bombin oot the hoose. That wis your trick.

Had you any spare time when you were not at the sea?

It wis a spare time.

What did you do in it apart fae rummelin spoots?

There wis nithing tae dee. My gang, they are a deed now or near about it, twis us that made the first Macduff swimming pool at Tarlair. We made the first pool. A dozen of us. Far the Macduff pool is at. If the tide gied back there wis nae bloody water awa doon tae the fit of rocks for water. So we put steens a the wye across and we got diffets and full't up a the holes and fin the tide came in it full't up and drained away slowly. Twa three year after that fin the Town Council saw prospects they put a cement pier across and made the swimming pool. We made the sweemin pool, nae them. We started it. It used to be a great thing at one time till they commercialised it.

Had you any superstitions when you were at the sea?

No.

You hid nae superstitions at all?

Maybe a little bittie. A'body is a bittie. Bit it didn't bather me that much. A lot of folk. Oh dear me. That boy I tell't ye about wi the lemon sole. Ae Monday morning we were going aff an he catch't his father's shoe on his iley. Stand by he said tae ging back. The young lad kept gaen tae ging back. Superstitions, it's a lot of dirt. It's all in the mind. Disna mean nithin. Fin I wis married we eest tae ging tae Buckpool Harbour and then there was a bicht fae the pier. I gings doon and the big pier gied along. And there used to be 6, 7 0' us. On Sunday there used to be 30. 40 there on Sunday morning. That wis a lovely harbour. It was a God's sent harbour wi pure white sand till the Town Council made a bloody green peicked it up. That wis it. I dinna ken fit they got it wisna bloody much maybe a thousand, two thousand pounds tae allow the distillery tae dump their burnt ale doon the sewers in Buckpool Harbour aside Fowler's the baker. Put it doon there and gaen oot of the sewer and it finished up say a year and a half twa year till a'thing on the beach was burned and the sand was black. Ye couldna sweem in the harbour and the stink was awfa. An mony a time I wis at Doran's, fin he was headmaster at Buckie Catholic School, complaining. Used tae pit ye're plugs intae ye're sink tae keep the smell coming back up. It was that bad. There used to be a forest of tangles aff the rocks intae the sea aboot quarter a mile of pure

forest and every tangle stalk was as thick as your body and within six months there wisna a bloody tangle left. It was a burned. If the Town Council had a choked drain they used to stick the tail of the tanker hose doon an that burned it clear. Buckpool Harbour, if they hid used their brains fin they were tell't, if he hidna well he gets the blame anyway Mercer, it could have been made intae a lovely sweemin pool, heated sweemin pool wi a pier outside tae guard it. Nithin tae touch it. But that bloody Strathlene you could drink a the water that is in it.

Fits it noo. It's nithin. But Buckpool Harbour. You could have had a lovely sweemin pool inside the harbour, heated pool and the pier would have stopped it fae the sea fae gettin in. But no jist noo a lump of shite. Jist mark my words, I winna see it, but mark my words, it winna be lang afore it fa's doon.

Do you think so?

Aye, bloody sure of it. In aulden days Buckpool harbour, Portgordon harbour and fin a that harbour wis built, so that fin the waves hits the pier the air passes through. That's fit ye ca a dry stane dyke. Jist built like wedges, wedged up stick wedges but they're strong. But now the waves hits the cement dyke you canna compress water. Water winna compress. You could fill a tank of water you could fill a kettle of water and seal the lid on that put a pump on tae it that's the end of it. Ye winna dee nithin till't. To raise up the water you hiv to gie it pressure, maybe a fit or so, pit mare pressure ontae the tank. But wi cement walls, that's the way Buckie harbour cost so much money. Look at the back of the harbour wi holes. Fin it hits it, it hits it and hits it till it breaks oot a bit then it eats and breaks and breaks. There's nae air comin through. Oh they've full't in Buckpool Harbour.