

*"What age did you leave school?"*

14

*"What did you do then?"*

I didna go tae the fishing tae a'tween 15 & 16, when I went away from hame. There wiz Peter Reid at Eddie Gordon's, Eddie Gordon's curing yard the first time and we went fae there tae Wick the first fishing, we didna go down South, no, no, we went the second fishing, we went tae Gorleston the first fishing that's the ither side o Yarmouth. The first time that we were doon Sooth it wiz Gorleston and then, the next summer, we went tae Wick we didna go tae Lerwick till we were older. We went tae Wick fin we were about 16, wi' a local man Martin West, in a fishing. After Wick, we went tae Lerwick the following year, worked in Lerwick a' summer, then went tae Yarmouth.

*"Did you pack the barrels?"*

No, no, I wiz a gutter, We hid tae be in the curing yard at 6 o'clock ready tae start work, wi' yir hands a' tied up for the type o' work that we did, and we hid tae be ready tae start at 6 in the morning. We worked fae 6 tae 9 and we hid a break for breakfast and back at 10 -we got an hoor at breakfast time -and the boats were in and we ca'ed withering, delivering actually and we started, there wiz three in a crew, two gutters and a packer -fin they hid too much, we helped the packer tae pack them up and clean them. It wiz a hard life ye ken, ye were expected tae dae things that wid kill them noo.

*"Can you remember your first wage?"*

Ye got thruppence the hoor for fulling up the barrels, Took off the goorie, fit we ca'ed the goorie, took oot the box and poured it off, filled up the barrel, fin it went doon a bit, ye see, filled them up, that's fit they ca'ed them, filling up.

*" They wid hae tae lie a few days aefter they were first packed?"*

Aye, they lay a few days. We hid a hard life bit we niver got time tae think about it and a'body wiz very cheery, ye wid hae gotten a better concert in a curing yard then ye wid hae got on that box. Somebody started tae sing ye see, a'body jined in and the coopers a' jined in, ye wid hae gotten bonnier singing there, then ye got on that box, especially in Shetland fin it wiz across the bay on a bonny night.

*" When you went away, did you go by train?"*

We were richt country cousins, the first time we went tae Aberdeen. We went tae Aberdeen, ye see, we got wir lunch or oor dinner fitiver ye like tae call it, in the market or the old market in Aberdeen and then we went on either the St. Magnus or the St. Sunava tae the crossing. Sometimes, it cuild be a very stormy crossing and sometimes

it wiz fine, bit I didna like the crossing, I wiz affy sick, I'm nae a good sailor.

*"Were there many people sea-sick?"*

Oh, aye, a lot o' the lassies were seasick, bit I'll tell ye, it wisna actually that ye wid hae been sick, bit Highland lassies, they hid twa crossings ye see, they hid tae cross fae the islands tae the mainland afore that and they used tae be sick and then that made a'budy sick.

*"Did you have to take your trunk with you?"*

My trunk's oot the back door, ye can see it. Full o' sticks. That wiz made fin I wiz in my early teens and that went wi' me tae a' the fishings, a the places I've been. Ye hid tae hae yer trunk wi' a' the things in it that ye needed. Fin we went tae Lerwick tae the huts, there wiz six in the hut, it wiz very, very seldom that ye got a hut for jist three, it wiz usually six and it wiz two bunk beds ye see. Ye took yer ain bedding, we took a' wir ane towels and a' thing o' that kind, somebody took the pots and pans, somebody took the dishes and folk took rugs and a bit linoleum tae mak it decent, they took that oot in the boat. We took the maist o' the things that we needed in wir trunks and we hid tae hae plenty changes o' clothes for fin we got affa soaket ye see. We needed a lot o' clothes that time. It wiz a hard life bit we a' survived, we're here tae tell the tale.

*"Did you take it in turns to do the cooking?"*

If there were six in a hut, there were two did the cooking, one for actual cooking and one tae gan for the messages that wiz required, two responsible for the cleaning, two responsible for the washing and we agreed wonderfully well, maistly, there wiz the few ye ken, that broke the rules, bit very, very few.

*"What were the washing facilities like?"*

Well, they provided a wash-hoose and a boiler we cuild pit on.