

Three Cullen men, William Findlay, 40 Seatown, Peter Findlay 121 Seatown and John Wood Mair, 30 Castle Street all met in 40 Seatown in July 1988 where they were interviewed by another much younger fisherman, known only as Willie

The following information was given prior to the start of the interview.

“William Findlay and his brother Peter (Pat), locally they’re baith kent as ‘Weelum Rambler’ and ‘Pattie Rambler’ due tae linkin them back tae the steam drifter thit they hid afore the war, (World War II) the ‘Rambler Rose’ that never came back tae Cullen efter the war. It was selt tae Norway, a accordin tae a ‘Fishin News’ report in 1983, I think, it is still goin in Norway. Aefter the war they hid the motor boat, ‘Rambler Rose’, built in by Irvins in Peterhead. An they sailed the gither as Weelum, skipper, an Pat as mate until Weelum retired fin the boat wis selt.

Weelum and Pat come fae a family a four, three boys and one girl. As was said Weelum sailed as skipper, with Pat as mate, the ither brother, John wis engineer. He died, I think, aboot the late fifties, early sixties. We’ll be talkin tae Weelum and Pat in Weelum’s hoose, 40 Seatown. We’ll also be talkin tae Johnnie Wood, he’s kent as Johnnie Wood the ‘Ocean Crest’ an he bides in as yi wid say in the ‘Reedy Raw’ in Cullen an we’ll be getting his story an a”

“Fan did yi start the sea noo Weelum?”

“Nineteen siventeen “

“Did yi aye hae it in yer mind tae ging tae Sea? Hiv yi ony stories back afore that?”

“It wis aye in ma mind tae ging tae sea bit ma father geed awa tae Portsoy an got me an apprentice wi McDonald the engineers, jist afore I left the school. I geed awa tae catch the train tae ging tae Portsoy bit the train gan tae Buckie cam in first an I geed on tae it an geed doon tae ma Auntie’s man an socht a berth on the ‘Loyal”

“Hoo lang wis yi on the ‘Loyal’, Weelum?”

“Twa ear. She wis lost in February 1920, the ear afore I stopped.”

“She wis lost an you cam oot o er the year afore?”

“The ear afore.”

“Fit like lads wir they tae ging wi? Fit wid yi say?”

“Finest men I iver geed wee, a hale crew of Slochy men”

“Aye, is that richt noo?”

“Aye I wis the only stranger thit wis in her.”

“Fit wis it, wis yi gan cook in it, that time?”

“I wis cook, aye, made a mess.”

“An yi wis in her twa ear, did yi say?”

“I wis twa ear in her.”

“Fit did yi dee aefter that noo Weelum?” “I geed in tae, fin the ‘Loyal’ wis lost, I geed awa in tae the ‘Valkyrie’ of Finichty, a drifter. Ma father bocht a drifter, the ‘Docile’ an that wis in 1919 an she wisna aff the service that time. The war wis deen in 1918 an she wisna aff the service till aboot February nineteen twenty. I geed awa in the ‘Valkyrie’ in the month o February 1920 and the ‘Loyal’ wis lost fin I wis awa.”

“Wis that richt?”

“Even fishin for nets fin I wis 18 year aul. I got sixpence fae ma father.”

“You’ve felt gye sad fin yi heard o the loss o the ‘Loyal”

“Did that. Some o the men wis in her it that time.”

“Now far did yi ging in the ‘Valkyrie’ fin she started like?”

“Ireland.”

“Ireland!”

“Far I niver geen since, richt doon tae, fit est ...?”

“Buncranna?” “No we wis it Buncranna for a start, (Killybegs). Geed roon the Killybegs wey, Burtonport, that wis it.”

“Yi fished there till fan?”

“It wis wi Jeems The Famous!! (The famous Portknockie man.)

“Hoo lang wis yi in it like, noo Weelum?”

“Oh jist the winter.”

“Oh jist the winter?”

“Jist the winter, then we startit in the ‘Docile’ in the simmer. Gye poor times. “

“Did yi tick ower the ‘Docile’ yersel?”

“Oh no, no. It wis ma father thit bocht her.”

“Oh yi wis niver skipper o the ‘Docile’?”

“I wis skipper o er it that time.”

“That’s fit I thocht. I thocht you took er ower as skipper. Yi’d her till?”

“Ma father startit her in 1920 an I geed skipper o her in 1921. Ma father didna like the skipperin.”

“Hoo aul wid you’ve been it that time noo Weelum?”

“In 1928, 25!”

“Aye, aye, Ye’d her till fan, fan did yi hae her up till?”

"1936. She geed awa for scrap in 1936. Bocht the 'Rambler Rose' it that time."

"Bocht her oot o Lossie?"

"No, Whitehills."

"She wis INS though wisn't she?"

"No she wis SN, North Shields. She belonged tae Irvin completely. She wis the only steel boat thit Irvin hid. Irvin eest tae hae a lot of drifters, an she wis the only steel boat thit they hid. It wis built in Middlesborough in 1910. I bocht half o her, fae Hendry Milne, Whitehills. Yi ken some o the Milne's, Bertie an a' the lads. Oh aye, aye. They hid the 'Bunrose'. Afore that."

"An she niver came back noo aefter the war, the 'Rambler' did she nae? Yi niver took her, the drifter, back?"

"Aye, I took her back here. I took her back tae Buckie."

"Aefter the war?"

"Aye."

"Aye bit yi niver fished wi her though?"

"No. No, no, we niver sailed in her. She geed awa oot o Buckie hairber an that hid been aboot the month o April on May, towin the 'Provost' tae Norway. 'Provost' o Portknockie, her biler wis wrang. An the 'Rambler' towed her tae Stravanger."

"An they wir baith selt there?"

"Baith selt there."

"Did yi see the bit in the 'Fishin News' aboot the 'Rambler' still gan?"

"Aye, twa ear ago, twa, three ear ago."

"Aye. Then yi got the motor 'Rambler' 104?"

"Aye. She wis the first ane thit cam up here, durin the war."

"Aye jist the back o the war?"

"Jist the back o the war. She wis a' ready tae ging tae Lowestoft in October."

"That wis her first fishin sooth?"

"That wis her first fishin sooth."

"I mine fin yi took her in tae. I mine her comin in tae Cullen."

"Brucie Lawrence wis we her an he got merrit on her birthday fin he wis in Lowestoft."

"Brucie?"

"Brucie."

"Aye, aye,"

"Merrit a quinie then?"

"Aye yi workit herrin maistly we her till?"

"Till 1956, wis't. John died in 1956."

"It wis 1956 thit John died?"

"Aye, he niver geed back tae the herrin."

"That wis kin o the herrin fishin feenished?"

"Bit I liked the herrin fishin."

"Aye. Then aefter that the seine-net, it turned intae prawns wisn't it?"

"That's richt, aye"

. Nae prawns. I niver geed tae prawns."

Nae prawns? Jist trawlin?"

"A' the seine nets."

"That's richt, I'm wrang, she wis turned ower tae prawns aefter you selt her, that's richt. Fan did yi retire noo Weelum?"

"1968"

"1968, it's a lang time."

"I geed 51 ear at the sea."

"Of coorse yi took the 'Rambler' on the service an a', didn't yi? The steam drifter?"

"Aye, the steam drifter. I wis on her a' the time o the war."

"Aye you took her awa."

"We wis attendin tae a' the merchant ships. Convoys at Methil, tickin aff the captains a the ships tae tick them ashore an tickin them aff, an the captains o the officers o the naval escorts, tickin them aff."

"Aye wis yi nae in the torpeda recovery, thing an a'? No that's ..., I'm thinkin wrang."

"No that wis in Ainster, torpeda recovery, the 'Aucaple', an the 'Bow Wave'. There wis anither ane or twa, Oh we wis a' attendin the merchant ships an the naval ships."

"So yi hid her a' the time the war as well then?"

"A' the time o the war."

"Till yi retired, then? Fit aboot you noo Clip. Fit time did yi start the sea?"

"First time I geed tae the sea I kent nithin abbot it. I wisna a ear aul."

"Yi wisna a ear aul?"

“No. The hale faimily, my faimily wis doon in Wick then, ken the eyne o the week fishin, Weelum an John they wint back on their sail – the ‘Camelia’ - wi ma father an I wint in the drifter, ken I traivellt first class wi the weemen, tae Finichty in the ‘Harvest Hope’, wi ma mither, a wisna a ear aul.”

“*Yer mither, did yi say?*”

“Maybe yi div Weelum, di yi mine about that?”

“‘Harvest Hope’ ‘Jockens’ BCK90, yes. Jock Anderson’s father, ‘Jockens’ BCK90. Grand crossin that.

“*So yer mither hid been doon at Wick, fishin?*”

“Oh aye. Hiv yi heard about the man thit bade in Prood Fit. ‘Tooter James’?”

“No.”

“He wis a bit o a crank. He entertained weemen. There wis fower Cullen weemen an they wir a wives a skippers, my mither wis ane o them, Pete’s mither, Fred Runcie’s wis ane, an John Hairper’s mither wis ane, an Alex Ross.”

“*Oh ‘Finees Alex?’*”

“No nae ‘Finees Alex, aye Jeemes Ross’s brither, yi widna mine in Jeemes Ross, they bade in that hoose thit Jim Dove hid in the Seatown.”

“*Yi mean, ‘Elderado?’*”

“Aye, ‘Elderado’, Alex Ross, he merrit Annie Goobran’. Aye he’d a share a the”

“*It wis the ‘Produla’, yi see fin I wis.....*”

“Ah well, well his mither. An he didna caw the wives be their names. Thir boat wis the ‘Prudent’ so she wis Mrs Prudent! My father’s boat wis the ‘Camelia’, she wis Mrs Camelia. John Hairper’s mither wis Mrs Radiance, that wis their boat, an fa wis the ither wife? There wis fower o them. I’ve said the ‘Prudent’, the ‘Camelia’, the ‘Radiance’, oh ‘Fragrance’, his mither the ‘Expediant’.

“*The ‘Expediant’, aye. I’ve heard about her, aye.*”

“Yi nicht mine on her.”

“*No, no, I widna mine on her bit I’ve heard ma father speakin*”

“They made her in tae a cargae boat. She wis a big sail boat. Aye. Her an the ‘Camelia’ wis bigger even. Aye, Johnny’s father bocht her. Changed her name tae the ‘Denburn’. No, no my father wisna on the ‘Denburn’, he wis in the ‘Camelia’ jist a fishin. Oh it wis David Mair fir yi cawd the ‘Denburn’, she wis cairryin cargae.”

“*Wis she a big boat, the ‘Camelia?’*”

“Aye, She hid a 75 horse power – low tension Gairner, y can figure that ane oot! She wis an awfa big boat. Two cylinder low tension Gairner. She wis built in Lossie.”

“*An far did you start the sea richt though Pat, wis it....?*”

“1927. The simmer fishin.”

“*1927. Wid that hae been on the ‘Docile?’*”

“The ‘Docile’, aye. That wis my start a....”

“*So actually you an Weelum his mair or less geen the gither a yer fishin life?*”

“Aye, well war time no, bit ither times aye, apairt fae the war.”

“*So you....*”

“Some cook I can tell yi. The ‘Rambler Rose’ wis back an I took a berth for the simmer in the ‘Rose Hall’ wi John West in the ‘Day Star’. John bocht the ‘Rose Hall’ fae Hopeman”

“*That wis a standard boat wisn’t it?*”

“Aye she wis a standard boat an John hidna a ticket at a’. An I wis skipper o her, then aefter that fishin John got a mate’s ticket. I think it’s a mate’s ticket thit John his yet.”

“*That wis time o the ‘Rambler?’*”

“Aye. A richt fine chap, John.”

“*Aye you’d geen in the ‘Rambler’ richt up till the war? Aye fin Weelum took the ‘Rambler’ awa tae the*”

“Aye that’s richt, fin the war startit.”

“*Aye you geed awa tae the*”

“Marantha”.

“*Oh yi wis on the ‘Marantha’ afore the war?*”

“Aye so wis John”.

“*Wis John in’t in a?*”

“Aye. John wis in’t twice. He did five ear as a seaman early on as a young loon an he cam oot o it an he jined again afore the war as a stoker bit he wis a chief engineman ken, later on. There’s a picter ben there o that first trawler thit John wis in, a picter o her. It wis a coorse day an she wis sweepin for mines in September second 1939, the day afore war wis declared. The ‘Sargone’ wis her name, an she cam throw the war, she geed awa back tae the fishin. An she geed adrift awa in the Arctic somewye, ‘Coalgate Dean’ an she wis weeks sweelin about the sea wi nae food or nithin. They said the crew wir aitin rats, I dinna ken. It’s true enough thit ane o the crew’s wife’s wis merriet. She wis picket up, a German trawler picket her up jist afore the war an towed her tae Germany. The ‘Sargone’ wis her name. A picter o her’s ben there. Then she came back an geed tae the fishin, then she geed a ashore in sooth a Ireland an wis lost wi a hans.”

“*She wis lost wi a hans, aye? John wis sweepin it that time, aye yer breether John?*”

“No, no John wis niver sweepin that time.” “So yi geed awa tae the war then Pat he, yi wid’ve aye.... Far did yi ging?”

"I did a six week's course afore the war. I wis a month in the RV 'Victory' an I wis a fortnicht in the 'Vernon' a boat, a destroyer. I wis on the 'Vernon', trainin. Ken a foreign, a the drill, this sort o thing. Then I wis in tae sweepers. I wis called up. I wis sweepin tae Granton then we left Granton jist afore Dunkirk bit we landit in Yarmoooth. Ken we wis sweepin fae there, then eventually tae Battle a Britain time tae Sheerness. HMS 'Willfire'" Well I wis a year they're an then I wis a filie up the Wallat, the 'Brindle Sea' an then I took ma skipper's ticket, aye in Grimsby."

"Aye the time o the war?"

"Aye, an then I geed doon tae Portsmouth six weeks, I took the men up an then, no wis Smutohaven afore that for a ear. An then I wis made up there aye ken"

"Aye chief?"

"Aye fin I took ma ticket. An then I geed in tae 'Asdex' doon the Scappa. Joinet the 'Scalbie' like."

"Oh wis yi wi Alex McKay."

Aye I wis wi Alex McKay.. the 'Sign o Capital'. I wis wi Charlie Gomer first, Charlie Comer o Aiberdeen. Then McKay took her ower. Convoys, escorts – that sort o thing. Seein the North Patrol an then we wis pittin up convoys it Methil in Belfast, yi ken, roon aboot. So I wis there till V.E. time. So I cam oot ower her an geed back tae Lowestoft an feenished up in the 'Yankee Bimps.'

"Oh aye."

"Aye Yankie minesweepers, ken, doon at Mill Bay in Devonport, an oh they wir rooted for Australia ken, bit we missed oor postin ken through repairs uncompleted, so we wis sent tae Swansea an wis there a while an then was demobbed, ken time wis up, ken log book numbers. That wis that, aye."

"So yi come hame. . Wis the 'Rambler' hame noo? Did you hae anither boat afore the 'Rambler' wis ready like?"

"I wis aboard the 'Rambler' a filie, ken, aye it Methil."

"No, no fit I mean Pat wis, fin yi cam hame fae the war, did yi go aboard anither boat afore the 'Rambler Rose', er the motor wis ready?"

"No, no."

"Or did yi jist ging aboard her?"

"Aye, aboard the 'Rambler'."

"An the twa o yi sailed the gither?"

"Till it wis back in fishin aye. Startit of, mine Wamfill got the The 'Rose' or somethin they cawd it."

"Oh aye that's right the 'Rose'. She wis a deralenty."

"The 'Carlton'. An that wis jist trouble, ken."

"Aye".

"The latter end we tied her up an got a job wi fool Jokes! Mine on her? The 'Darnaway'"

"Aye the drifter."

"Aye, hid her on hire fae Lossie. So, oh it took plenty herring, every black shot herrin everyday an Fa took her aefter that? Oh aye, the 'Rambler', ken?"

"Aye she wis ready for the"

"There wis ae man yi ken jist sharin the simmer."

"Oh aye, till the 'Rambler' wis ready."

Mind you I got the 'Darnaway' tae go sooth. An a covered mi share o 'Itsmer' bit he didna ken aboot boatbuildin it the time, it wis back ken, back tae square one again."

"She wis a bonnie boat the 'Rambler'."

"Oh aye, she wis that. A smart boat. Aye."

"So the twa a yi, of coorse aefter Weelum retired yi geed awa tae the"

"Och I wis a the wyes!"

"No yi geed awa in the cruisers?"

"I wis aboard the 'Explorer'."

"The 'Explorer' that's right."

"I micht interest yi wi a story the time I wis in the 'Loyal' at the west coast. We landed it a pier, if I can mine, it wis in Loch Brackadale. Is there a quay in Loch Bracadale?"

"Aye I think there is, Bracadale, aye."

"Aye it wis Brackadale, an I geed ashore wi ane on the crew cairryin an aul net up till a blackhoose tae get a bag o tatties. I mine we geed in tae the hoose, a great big room wi an earthen flier, smooth earthen flier, an a big fire in the middle o't an there wis nae lum, jist a hole in the reef far the smoke geed up throwe. An there wis anither room there wis a coo or twa coos kept in't. Bit my particular notice the hale room wis papered wi the newspaper o Scotsman."

"Is that right?"

"I niver read the first anes thit geed on, yi cwidna cos they wir blackened wi peat smoke, bit I think they must hiv pit them on maybe ivery week as they got them, cause aye, we could've read a lot o them"

"Is that richt?"

"Bit the coos wid've kept the place warm. An I jist aye winner if that black hoose is there yet, in Brackadale."

"Funny you shid say that noo Weelum. We wis in a museum place, aye in Mull, ken twa ear ago an there wis a black hoose, noo jist is you said aye noo. The faimily wis bidin in ai side an the coo an the animals wis in the ither side."

"There wis an elderly man an his wife, the faimilies hid likely been awa an workin."

"That wis in Brackendale fin yi wis in the 'Loyal' noo?"

“ Yes it wis the time the boats wis sooth, yi see, we didna get sooth. There wis twa sail-boats geed awa , the ‘Laurel’, an the ‘Loyal’. The ‘Laurel’ struck a rock an wis lost, she niver came hame. The crew got aff o her a’ richt.”

“Fit like wis it sailin in a Zulu? Ken fin it wis under sail?”

“Oh it wis gran. I wis fine, beside the steam or the motor.”

“Nae a soun.?”

“ Nae nithin bit the swish a the water an the creekin o the blocks.”

“A lot of werk getting tacket roon aboot noo, ken?”

“Bit it wis a lot o werk for the men in the weenter time. An the canvas yi see wis if the weenter an frost the canvas wis jist like boards thit couldna be hanled.”

“ Ai frozen?”

“ An if yi’d tae deck aboard a’ that his tae be hauled roon the ither side a the mast. Of coorse yi’d the capeson port, bit still it wis hivvy, hivvy werk. It wis murderous werk in the sailin boats, in the wenter time onywy.”

“Thon big block, is’t the tie-block they ca’ it, thon muckle I see it....?”

“Oh it note a’ the crew , yi see, tae shift fin they wir takkin a sail, tae shift the blocks, wi the boat rollin the blocks wis that hivvy an a that. Aboot echt haul a riggin , yi see. It wis three sheave blocks that hid been siven haul.”

“An yi shifted them?”

“ I’na ken, the blocks wis fower sheaves, if I can mine. Mine ane wis the top ane or the lower ane. It hid been the topper ane, the top that.”

“Fit the ca’ the tie-block, fit’s the tie block, I’ve heard them speakin”

“The tie-block that wis the top ane.”

“I’ve heard my father speakin about that like, yi ken. The like a runnin they say the fastest passage win’t it fae Yarmooth hame wis a Zulu wisn’t it?”

“Aye.”

“I’ve heard them sayin thit the fastest run fae Lowestoft hame tae Buckie wis a Zulu, wis that richt?”

Oh it widhiv been , oh it widhive been. Oh it wid ootstrip a steam easy, yi ken, wi a leading win. I’ve seen’t deen mony’s a time. Bit usually the drifter got in tae the hairber afore’s some wey or anither.”

“Aye jist, yi’d the take an ai thing I suppose.”

“Aye, bit they were grand boats it the sailin.”

“Quiet. Fit like wis the comfort below noo Weelum?”

“Oh nae much comfort, no. The simmer time the cabin wis .like an oven. It wisna a that cauld in the weenter time , they’d the biler , yi see, goin an the stove. The hatch hailt doon, bit the simmer time they wir awfa smelly, especially the first o the week, a the heerin gorie lvin in ower them ower the weekend, an I eest tae be dead seek on Monday fin they startit aye fin they sailed. Bit is the week geed on the clean water come in tills it wis a clean. “

“ Aye, fit aboot pumps an that noo, Weelum?”

“ Oh they’d a steam bilge.”

“Oh they’d a steam bilge”.

“Oh aye.”

“ I hidna actually thocht aboot that noo, the likes o us lads, we jist geed doon an we turn on a tap.”

“Oh the donkey-pump.”

“It wisna fit they cawd the Lobaiga Pump?”

“ A little wheelie aboot the size o that gan roon an roon, aye. It did for the hose, bit bilge pumps besides that – the same’s the drifter hid. Aye, jist the one pump though. The drifter wid’ve hane twa bilge pumps, ane fore-side the bilge ane on the ither side bit the sailboat hid only the one, their wis nae bilge heed in a sailboat.”

“Noo fin yi hailed the nets, did yi hail the nets ower the quarter in the ‘Loyal’ noo - the sailboats?”

“Yes If the weather wis good, yi cwidna dee it wi bad wither. Yi hid tae get the heed tell’t in bad wither. It wis awkward kine hailin by the heed.”

“Aye. The Zulu’s a mair or less hailt ower the starns?”

“If the wither wis richt, thy hailt ower the starns, sometimes the water wis splashin ower yi like that.”

“Aye!”

“Half-croons a turned green!”

“Aye, wi the smell o the nets?”

“An the sulphur ken, left a week it the side yer bed, it wis green.”

“Oh wi the gorie smell?”

“Aye, The silver turned blue.”

“Is that richt?”

“Aye they polished the breat pipes an the biler an fin yi geed oot on the Monday they wir a blue wi the smell. “

“Aye.”

“ An the bilers lookit bonny on a Setterday , yi ken, fin yi polished them. “

“A cleaned eh?”

“ An they wir a varnished, varnished wed roon them an the breat pipes an the donk pump wheel painted bright red an they lookit bonnie. The stove aye black leaded in a Setterday. That anes lvin doon there, fin I look it them I aye think some lads been prood a that, fin eed it a polished up.”

"Oh the ane thit's lyin in the san?"

"Aye bit that wisna a sailboat that wis a sailin ship, a cargae boat."

"Fa the 'Missionary?"

"Oh the 'Missionary', the 'Mission' yi see her biler yet."

"Oh is that her biler, aye the Zulu. There's twa bilers there, there's ane it the fit, there's ane aside the 'Jean Shearer' an there's anither ane"

"Well that's the 'Missionary'. They took the boat up aside their hoose tae brack her up I can mine in the boat fine, she wis a sma Zulu, she'd jist been about 54 or 55 feet I wid think bit she hid a biler in er an the biler is there yet, there's somethin yi dinna maybe ken, it disappears the san comes ower."

"That's the ane up aside Frankie's?"

"Aye that's richt. Well that's far they broke her up then, aside the hoose. "

"Jist front a Cullen yoner, aye?"

"They hid fire wed handy!"

"Aye, aye. Well I believe I've a photae a that noo, Pat., a Zulu lyin up there bein broken up."

"They cremated the boat aefter. Ye'd hae a photograph a the 'Jean Shearer' an a"

"Oh aye."

"Mine a boat's biler lay for a lang time in Buckie hairber."

"Aye that's richt. We eest tae play in't fin we wir bairns. Fit about you noo Johnny?"

"Somebody picket it up, I think. Camerons picket it up, Camerons or some o them. It wid've been there yet , yi see if they hidna tane't awa, biler."

"We can hae a yarnie noo, fit about you noo Johnnie, fan did you start the sea?"

"Noo afore yi ging ony further, Weelum wis speakin about the 'Loyal', Fit ear dee yi say she wis lost Weelum?"

"1920- February"

"I wid say it wis 1919. I wis on the 'Golden Darn', we come across the Firth, it wis a coorse nicht, a westerly ween, a strong breeze, a westerly ween, an fin we came in, half the crew geed awa tae walk hame tae Portknockie, an there wis Joe Cowie an me, I wis cookin in the 'Golden Darn' an a' fin she geed up the back the quay. Noo I wis jist a loon an I wis up on tae the tap watchin them an yi cwid see the men fin they fired off the rockets, yi see, they hid the tripod for firin the rocket doon on the quay because it wis the weenie they couldna go up on top o the parapits, yi see."

"Aye."

"An ivery rocket they wir firing, the strength o the westerly ween, it wis ae gan well tae winward o the boat, bit it aye drappet awa tae the loor an they cwidna get a rocket across her."

"No?"

"An they saw them a', they wir up on tae the tap o the wheelhoose. An a drifter cwidna get oot tae er. Oh they couldna get near them, they wir richt ower tae that bit far the rocks is an aye it wis a sad business a' the gither because they wir practically very near against the quay an they cwidna get at them yi see."

"Aye that's richt."

"An aye there wis ai man there a lang, lang time afore he wis, he wis in tae the fore-riggin, yi see, the fore-mast wis up an he wis in tae the fore riggin an he wis there till the mast geed ower. Ower the side. She hid the sail a' the time thit I wis in her an she jist new got in the motor it that time an it sailed oot the hairber."

"Oh she wisna comin in under sail?"

No. She hida short mast , yi see. I think the'd hane that 55Gairner thit she hid."

"Oh aye"

"Pariffin"

"I wis aye under the impression, Weelum, thit she wis comin in under sail."

"No. No no, bit she'd sail a the time thit I wis in er. Her number wis changed fin I wis in her. Fin I jined her she wis BF1488 an they changed her number tae BCK 263. Well the wey I thocht, I'm sure it wis 1919 I started in 1919 in the 'Glenesk', now my uncle hid the 'Glenesk' on hire fae the Robertson's of Aiberdeen, there wis a hale fleet a 'Glens' an the 'Glenesk' well we geed afilie in er an then they shifted aboard the 'Golden Darn'. She wis A559, an aefter we tied up it the weenter, now it wis durin that time I wis in the 'Golden Darn' thit the 'Loyal' geed ashore. Aefter the weenter we geed aboard the 'Lizzie and Ann'."

"Drifter?"

"Aye a drifter. She wis A277, she wis eventually selt tae Lossie. Then I geed wi, that wis three boats wi the same skipper like, it wis ma Uncle Wilkie."

"Well Jeemes Joseph I'm sure yi can easy ascertain the time she wis lost."

"Oh aye, aye, nae bather, aye jist aff the records."

"I still think February 1920."

"Aye aye, oh aye, I've the records it hame."

"February 1920! I canna see't because I jist ken it wis durin the weenter. I wis 13 in May an I got awa fae the school it Christmas."

"Bit I hiv the bit in the paper."

"Bit I micht be wrang, bit I wis in the 'Golden Darn' in the weenter a 1919 an I wis in the 'golden Darn' fin the 'Loyal' wis lost. My uncle an them wis a' up it Edinburgh it the inquest about the 'Loyal', yi see."

“An far di yi ging aefter that noo Johnny fin yi come oot ower the ‘Glen Esk’ an that, far did yi go, wis yi wi Heck a the time?”

”Aefter I wis awa fae ma uncle, Oh I wis in the ‘Sloshia’.”

“Oh aye, Portknockie?”

“An eh, she wis BF1056. That richt?”

“Fit aye?”

“The ‘Sloshia’.”

“Oh aye, an she belonged tae – well it wis Wood thit wis their name. An eh, yi mine in eh, I Jimmy thit wis....”

“No that wis afore my time”

“Well that wis fowk thit hid the ‘Sloshia’ an eh we were it the weenter an eh we shid hiv hane ten o a crew bit we’d only nine!. It wis a good job, sweemin ashore.”

“Aye?”

“The boats wis a gan awa hame for Christmas, yi see, New Year, an the like o a’ ither weenters, we’d niver nithin it weenters.”

“No I eest tae think it a shame.”

“An we geed tae Kyle an fullt her up a coal an we wis gan roon tae Ploughton tae tie her up, there wis a hale fleet o drifters in Ploughton (Plockton) on anchor for the New Year. It wis a coorse day an I’d niver been in Ploughton afore an we wis followin a motor boat in bit the ween wis that strong thit a the loch wis liftin wi the spray, yi see. This boat, it wis a Finichty motor boat, an she wisna drawin the water thit we wis drawin he geed ower the tap o the rope thit we stuck, it wis comin dark yi see an the coorse nicht. Her starn started tae ging awa doon, as the tide wis gan awa yi see, an they wir feart she wid slide aff the rock an pit oot ower her boatie. We’d tae slack her awa, we’d a hale kiel a raifie stuff tied in tae the rail an we slacked her awa doon clear the rocks an aefter we got her clear the rocks we lit her swing roon aboot. We’d abeen a mile tae gang in a sma boat afore the ween like an aefter we got an roon the pint we wis in amon drifters an they took a pickle lads here an a lad there. An in the mornin fin the tide wis awa she wis lyin wi her stem in the air an the gear a floated a’ ower the tap o the mast an the wheelhouse.”

“That wis the ‘Sloshia?’”

“Aye, She lay there till the simmer.”

“Wis she nae a widden boat?”

Oh no, she wis ane o yon bigger boats.”

“Fit wye wis she lyin Johnny? Wis she lyin awa in the air like that?”

“She wis lyin like that yi see.”

“Ken I hiv a photae in the hoose o a drifter, aye you’ve maybe seen’t in my book Weelum, bit it’s the funniest photae she’s lyin straight up like this on the top o a rock an her heeds...I dinna ken her name like.”

“Well she lay there till the simmer time afore they lifted her bit I’na ken fir happened aefter they lifted her. Now Weelum yi say 1920, oor George wis in her richt enough. There wis Ecky Dodd, Cullen an Jakey Pindy, Jock Tam! A the worthies. They wir worthies that lads.”

“Wis that lad ‘Pindy’ thit wis the chief?”

“Aye. They geed the weenter that time bit they wirna expectin tae get nithin yi ken, an I wis jist a youngster an fin I wis in the ‘Sloshia’, an Jottie eest tae come in tae the He wis a rare lad, di yi mine Jott, Ecky Dodd’s breather Jott?”

“No. Oh Portknockie?”

“Aye.”

“Well he eest tae come in tae the galley an he eest tae sing ‘To jail for debts shall no man go, carry on the glory o’. They kent they widna get nithin it the end o their time yi see. Ah well I got merriet in September 1933 an I geed awa tae Yarmouth an I wis echt weeks in Yarmouth an I’d a fourth share a gear an for my ane share an my gear share I hid £4.10.”

“Wis that for yer Yarmouth fishin?”

“For my Yarmouth fishin – eight weeks an I said tae ma wife, ‘No I’m nae gan back tae the herrin again’, an I geed awa tae the trawlin. An I wis trawlin steady till the war broke oot. Bit trawlin wis a job thit yi hid a lot a changes at, ships like, because if yi come in an hid a dud trip, the skipper got the sack, an that meant a the crew, except the twa lads thit belonged it. That wis the routine an in 1939 fin war broke oot fin I wis in the ‘Sunlight’ an we come in an landed

“She wis lost aff o Scrapster, wisn’t she, aye the ‘Sunlight’.”

“She wis lost,”

“Aye aefter the war like.”

“Aye, ah well, she wis a standard trawler, we cawed them, bit, however, we landed in an come awa hame an I wis second fisherman in the ‘sunlight’ an they phoned an said, ”Oh the boats been tane ower, we’re a’ signing on T124 an a’ You’d better come through an sign on.” So I geed through an signed on wi a’ the rest o the crowd an we geed tae Yarmouth. We wir based at Yarmouth an hid a bonnie big white ‘N’ sign on er starn an nae a gun aboard a nae description! An the patrol thit we hid tae tick up wis four mile Nor Eastern Europe, an we wir supposed tae be watchin oot for ‘E’ boats. Then of course, they decided it wis too risky an they wid pit the skipper in tae uniform, skipper only in uniform, it wis still T124. An we wis it that till February an then they decided we hid tae tick her up tae the Victoria Docks a London an tae get her renovatet tae tick a navy crew aboard. An we a’ geed awa hame an then

aefter twa three trips trawlin I geed awa in the 'Ben Arthur'. An we wis aa feenishin up in prominent areas, yi ken, an David says, 'This is getting ower This ga was' doon tae the noop,' an Simon Campbell an me an Davie, the skipper, wis in the wheelhouse.

"Wis that Simon that hid the 'Europa'?"

"Aye, an we wis newsin, yi ken, a bonnie day an we passed a' the capital ships outside a Hoy, a few o them outside there manoeuvring an we geed doon an Davie says, 'I think you should hud her awa east.' We wis gan doon north an he says, 'I think yi should hud he awa east.' An of coorse we held her awa an made a richt sharp turn an the first thit we kent wis that a plane hid come astarn an we didna ken an it wis a Gerry plane mind yi. Nor-west fae the noop an we his turnin the bomb geed richt atween the masts an landed in the ither side o' es. Of course it braks up lifts a the Plates an the lad stoppit, yi see. We saw the plane widna come back sae aefter we got her aff.... She wisna makkin water so Davie says, 'Oh we'll hae a twa three hauls an clear oot a here.'" I hid the first watch, it wis a bonnie meenlicht nicht."

"Are you a cook noo Pat?"

"I dinna dee one's han turn."

"Div yi nae?"

"No"

"It wis a bonnie meen licht nicht an we shot awa, it wis a bonnie meen licht nicht an fin we wis towin I saw mines nae far fae's. I called the skipper mannie, I says, 'Davie', I says, 'There's mines here.' Fin he come up an saw the mines, 'Noo dinna say nithin tae nane the rest o the boys, we'll heave up till daylight.' An he hove up an lay tae day-licht then we cleared oot an geed tae Scrapster an got orders tae ging through the Firth an we geed through the sooth channel, a convoy geed through the north channel an come the gither comin ower Duncansby Heed an Davie says, 'I think we'll hud her awa up along the land tae get clear a that convoy' An afore it cam dark we saw aeroplanes get twa ships in the convoy. Ane about Sanny Riddles an eh, oh I cwid write a book, I can tell yi,"

"Aefter the war yi hid the 'Ocean Crest'?"

"No I geed a year wi Jeemes in the 'Fidelity'."

"That's richt of coorse yer nae a Cullen man, yi see. Of coorse I forgot tae say yer nae a Cullen man Weelum."

"No, He's a Portknockie man."

"He's a Knocker."

"Aye that's richt, he merriet tae Cullen. Ivery nicht I'm ower it the hospital it Buckie."

"Fit's that noo Weelum?"

"Madge, ower in the hospital ivery nicht."

"Are yi?"

"Ivery nicht. I've seen Madge ivery nicht except three nichts since she geed in tae hospital in Aiberdeen."

"Is Madge in the hospital?"

"Aye,"

"Your Madge?"

"Aye. She's there as happy as could be."

"I niver kent that, no."

"Disna ken she's in the hospital. Disna ken she's in Buckie. I saw her ae nicht an she disna ken half the week she's there. I'm ower ivery nicht."

"I niver kent that noo Johnny. I kent thit Jeannie wis in hospital"

"Aye. Oh bit Madge his been in the hospital since November. A year past November. An sure Weelum, she's as pleasant as yi like fin yi see her ... aye laughin! Aye laughin!. Jeannies very content an a."

"Is that richt Weelum?"

"Weelum says ... comes in tae Madge in hes wye oot an she says, 'Far yi gan?' 'We're gan awa tae the boaties moored up yi see.' She says, 'Oh that's a richt than, watch yersels. Then she waves us oot, ken yi ken thit her mind wis far awa. She disna ken yi see."

"No I niver kent that."

"Of coorse, di yi mine that time Willie Bow got Davie Dunn for a cook?"

"Aye in thon little boatie."

"The 'Deliverer'"

"Oh no."

"I mine the Salvation Army boat, ken."

"Aye." "Blood and Fire on the funnel an that?"

"Aye that's richt.."

"Well they were ready for the simmer fishin yi ken a painted an cleaned an athin bit the cook hid tae pack it up ken it the last minute so Willie Bow met aul Davie Dun he says, 'Davie will yi come awa cook wi's?' 'Aye', Davie says. 'I'll ging, bit gee me five shillins.' 'Ah', Willie Bow says. 'I've nae money on me bit I'll go up tae the hoose'. So he come doon, he gave the five shillins tae Betsie, ken Davie's wife. That's richt . aye. So the followin mornin he wis doon tae the boat, ken, he stoppit an the bow's an athin light oot, yi see, an wir ready for them goin driver an firemen doon ablow ken revin steam ken bit he looks in tae the gailley the cabin, 'Far's Davie?' Naebody's seen 'im. So he gings up tae the hoose ken the hoosie across the road there, Davies sittin tae a bowl a tae, Betsie's makkin broth. So he say, 'Davie fir

wey are yi nae doon tae yer work?' Davie says, 'You offered me , you owed me five shillins afore we go bit yi gave the five shillins tae Betsie. So, he says, 'Yi can tack her cook wi yi.'

"He hidna gotten his ane entrance fee fae Bow yi see."

"Aye. He got the five shillins mind yi."

"Aye Davie wis a great lad for a that. I jist won'er far a' the aul lads, ken the aul lads in Cullen noo ken?"

"Mmmm, some great lads."

"Di yi mine a' the aul drifters in Cullen noo Weelum. Name ower a curn."

The only early drifters thits iver been in Cullen I could gee yi."

"Fire awa, jist ken, tells a curn. 'Deliverer'."

"Better gee yi some o the auler anes first. The 'Rose'. The 'Hislop' wis the aulest ane."

"The 'Hislop' wis the aulest drifter?"

"Aye, The 'Rose', the 'Diamond' , the 'Yare'."

"Kin yi mine fa belonged them a it the same time?"

"Oh the maist o them."

"Near enough."

"Well the 'Hislop' wis George Den."

"George Den?"

"She geed up the last century, the 'Hislop' Well about 1900, built at Bowlin. She wis a poor, poor drifter. Strongest ane thit ever wis in Cullen bit the poorest ane, they couldna shot a net in her."

"Is that richt?"

"Ivery time they geed tae shot – ivery shot ower the starnboard side it took the propeller, suppose they shot mare than ane she took the propeller. She wis a awfa clean aneth an she didna.... An I dinna think she drew say muckle water as a sailboat did. She wis like a puffer, an awfa strong drifterie the 'Hison'."

"'Hison'?"

"'Hison', aye. I mine on her. There wis the 'Diamond', the 'Yare', the 'Carmelia', Willie Bow hid her. Willie Den hid the 'Yare'. The Weelum Findlay, Jeemes Pum's father hid the 'Diamond', an then the 'Rose' wis Jock Dattle."

"Is that him that hid the 'Altaire', is that the same?"

"Same. Willie hid the 'Altaire' bit Joke skippered the 'Rose' as lang as he'd her. three drifters a filie, the hid the 'Ebeneezer'. They bocht the 'Ebeneezer' an they didna keep her nae time, an I think Adam Addison geed skipper o her. He wis merriet tae Leebie Dattle."

"Adam – wis that Adam thit hid the 'Glide'?"

"Adam's father."

"Oh, oh that's gaun back a bittie that."

"It wisna Adam that hid the 'Glide'."

"Aye his father."

"Oh no it wid've been him thit hid the 'Ebeneezer' aye. Aye ees father wis lost in the 'Glide'."

"I see, comin hame in thon big breeze it....?"

"Aye it wis him thit skippered the 'Ebeneezer'."

"Carpie?"

"Aye."

"The 'Carpedium'"

"The 'Carpedium' that wis Jimmy Lardie. Aye there wis mair on the share than him. We're jist sayin Jimmy Lardie, the 'Gartly' es breether, Dodie Lardie."

"Di yi ken hoo the 'Gartly' got her name noo Weelum?"

"No. Well – it's a country toon."

"Well I jist learned that fit wey the 'Gartly' got er name. Apparently fa wis it thit hid her again, wis it the Hartles?"

"Aye, Dodie Lardie."

"Their mither eest tae ging on the train wi fish an that's far she geed. She geed on the train tae Gartly wi a creel sellin fish. Fin they bocht this drifter I've heard thit fit wid we caw her,. Wis she ane o the numbers fae Yarmouth?"

"Yes , she ane o the numbers, aye."

"I've heard they took her hame an changed her name. That wifie says," Well a the money we've gotten nearly hid been oot o Gartly an we'll ca her 'Gartly', So I wis jist wonderin if yi wid ken that. I canna mine fa tell't me that."

"Then there wis the 'Resource' there wis anither Smith – Joke Dane hid her, bit he'd ane afore that, he'd a 'Breadowner' a widden ane afore that BF9. The 'Pitess'. An the 'Pitess' Joe Mowat hid her a filie. An there wis mair Smith boats, there wis the 'Vigilant', Jimmy Bow, Willie's father an the 'Dodgent' wis Bows father – that's a Smith boats. There wis the bigger ane, the 'Springbud', the 'Resolute' Aye the 'Springbud' and the 'Resolute' that's the- aye Jeannie's father, Jim Bow hid her. He hid the 'Ingie' for a filie."

"Aye Jeannie's father?"

"Aye he bocht her fae aul Catherenray (?) BCK31, an kept her a filie an aul Catherenray bocht her back fae them, an he bocht the 'Breeze Rose' then he hid the 'Fisher Lassie' the Zulu aefter that, a big Zulu."

"Aye my father wis sooth wi her."

Yer father went sooth in her?"

"Aye."

“She wis a bigger boat that the ‘Rose’.”

“*That’s richt, well my father wis sooth in her wi Jim Bow, in the ‘Fisher Lassie’.*”

“That’s richt, We’d the ‘Rambler’ that time.”

“Aye the motor ‘Rambler’?”

“Aye,”

“Ken es I mine that, seein you anes in Lowestoft that time an that wis, I mine commentin on how bonnie the new boat, ken looket amon a the.... That’s richt that wis the year though.”

“Noo there wis the widden boats. There wis the ‘Flower o May’. Fit about the ‘Carpodeum’, that’s anither ane. Got her, Jimmy Lardie, bit the ‘Flower o May’ that wis Jim Gardner, Tanie’s father, Jackson.”

“Jackson that’s richt.”

“The ‘Sunnyside’ wis Cecil, bides doon there, his father, Blanks,”

“Oh aye, Blanks they cawed it. An the ‘Lonsdale’.”

Aye that wis the Innes’s”

“Then widden anes, the ‘Herald’. There wis Jimmy Fairmer. ‘Flower o May’ – ‘Sunnyside’.”

“*Aye fa belonged her again, the ‘Herald’?*”

“Jimmy Fairmer, di yi mine on Jimmy Fairmer?”

“*Did he ging awa tae Aiberdeen, did he?*”

“No, he wis, died in Cullen ‘Crack’, ‘Crack’.”

“*Oh aye, aye aye.*”

“An the ‘Docile’.”

“*That wis yer ane een aye, ‘Altair’?*”

“The ‘Altair’. That wis the biggest boat that. Aye. There wis only the three BCK’s”

“*Wis the ‘Altair’, nae built oot aboot?*”

“No. No built in Herdies. Biggest boat, the langest boat thit they built. They hid a great puzzle launching her, tae get room tae turn. They jist managed it.”

“*Wis that in Finichy like Pat?*”

“Finichy.”

“BCK 180.”

“*An eh, fit mair widden anes wis there? There wisna a lot o widden boats in Cullen.*”

“The ‘Killiecan’”

“*The ‘Killiecan?’* “

“The ‘Lyndabow’”

“The ‘Lyndabow’”

“Johnny, yi shid mine that?”

“Oh aye. 872 an the ‘Killiecan’ wis 2122. Built aboot 1908 or 9. My goodfather Jeemes eest tae tell me there wis one bad thing aboot the ‘Hope’ she hid a steel kiel stone an he didna like it. He says it ruined the boat. Eence it bent, the bend niver come oot o her.”

“Aye aye, she wis built in Leith.”

“She wis built in Leith.”

“*Sma kind o boatie wis she. Wis she a sma kind a boatie?*”

“Oh no I wid’ve said she wis as big as ony the ither, as big as the ‘flower o May’ or ony o them. Average size o that boats is 86 feet, maybe. The ‘Eglise’ that wis a big boat. She wis a big boat, aye. They made an awfa bad job wi a the widden drifters they built in Cullen. They only built seven an there wisna a good ane among them.”

“*Is that richt Weelum? Built seven?* “

“Well the boats wis richt enough but the’d the great big cabin, big engine room, stock hole an they’d nae room tae hud herrin, mucket up wi seventy cran.”

“*Is that richt, aye they geed awa by the heed sign?*”

“They geed awa doon the heed. They’d only three lockers aside them an their fishroom. A the Cullen boats, the ‘Flower o May’, wis a bonnie boat, she’d a poor howl an a’. I wis aboard ane o them fin she wis launched. I wis gye young.”

“*Fit ane wis that?*”

“The ‘Hastle’.”

“*Oh the ‘Hastle’. Wis that nae the first ane?*”

“No she wis the second last ane.”

“Second last ane?”

“She wis BF80.”

Aye that’s richt.

She left Cullen hairber a file ken.

Aye,

I’na ken if she wis ony bigger or no. I dinna ken aboot her Johnny.

No she wis much the same.”

“No”

“She wis a poor boat.”

"I've heard that."

"She wis a steamer. She wis jist one banneck a roosht."

"Is that right, aye?"

"An took aff"

Speer it Weelum aboot the lad thit cam fae Aiberdeen or some wey tae drive her.

Her name first afore she came tae Cullen yi see wis the 'Pitullie' an there wis naebidy cwid get steam tae lift , they cwidna get steam at a'."

"The 'Excellcia'?"

"Couldna gang so they sailed her tae Cullen an changed her name tae 'Excellencia' An Alex Fairmer got a driver fae Aiberdeen an they cam tae Cullen speerin boys, fits gane wrang. "Oh the 'Excellencia' she's awfa stiff tae steam that ane", he says. . "She canna be worse than the last ane thit I wis in". "Fit ane wis that?" He answers, "The Pitullie!!" Bit fin he geed doon the stock hole, doon the stock hole in the engine room an he looket roon aboot he says, "this looks awfa familiar ". He got the next train awa hame.

"He didna ging awa in it though."

No, no He jist geed awa hame. Geed awa hame again.

There wis awa differences in them steamin, yi ken "

"Oh aye."

"Some o them wis jist nae bather tae steam, the next ane again"

"I always found in the 'Docile' the trouble hid been the richt engine."

"Aye."

"Cause she wis a great big boat an she'd a big fish-room,"

"Well I would say that I wis in ane o the fastest drifters, the Deveronside', di yi mine on her?"

"Aye."

"She hid a 16 inch

"Lichtin the coal an a'"

Lichtin the coal an a'"

"Plenty trouble!"

"Ken this yi could've read a bookie an steamed her."

"Fa wis drivin her....?"

"Well ..."

"Wis't John Gairdner?"

"No. Willie Bow. Cullen."

"My cousin, John Gairdner drove her for a lang time."

"I wid say thit thon wis ane o the bonniest steam engines, ken they'd plenty trouble, mine they hid thon...?"

" 'Deveron Side' The 'Bud an Rose' wis the same boat."

"Aye. They hid thon smoked steel across the cylinder heed .an a the ile wis deen wi boxies, aye brass boxies an the wey along the...."

"Jeemes George, I'll tell yi a story aboot the Deveron Side' during the war. The time I wis in Scappie Lake we wis escortin the licht hoose boats, ken.... In the island, aye she wis tae service the lights an we wis tae escort them, so we wint in tae Stornowa for the weekeyn an that boat came alongside an I invited Willie aboard, Willie Bow. He cam doon I gave him a good dram an he drank it, he says, 'Yi ken this Pat, that's the first whisky I've drunk for twenty year!"

"Is that right?"

"That's right, aye,"

"He wis a richt conscientious driver."

"Ah well he tell't me, 'The first time I've tasted whisky in twenty year.!"

"Thon's Poochie's breather."

"Aye that's richt, Poochie's breather. Ken es that engine, the fishin thit he hid aboard her, run like a watch, ken. He wis aye potterin ken an deen things, run like a watch."

"Plenty trouble."

"Aye an aye fin he geed oot ower there wis a Banff mannie came ken, a Banff mannie drove her an she wis jist a riddle ... aefter that ken she wis jist a.... He niver bathered. Bit speed, oh you could steam her as"

"Aye she wis a built-up boat as well."

"That's far you lads wis lucky, yi see, Weelum, mine yi hid yer ain driver?"

"Aye . Oor ain driver hand."

"Then John wis a.... Your John, he kept the 'Rambler' gan wi the Glenifer."

"I niver saw John come hame wi the crew tae Buckie yet, comin on Setterday he wis aye buses ahin the crew workin it thit engine. He kept her gan for siven ear though."

"That's richt , I mean the Glenifter wisna famed for being trouble-free engines."

"Oh no, they wir fule engines. John telt me tae niver pit her up tae 900 revs,"

"Unless yi got somebody like yersel thit wis conscientious."

"Niver hid a tow on her except once. Mine that aefter the canal, it wis a..... the 'Golden Lee' fae Gamrie, ken."

"I dinna mine."

“She stuck up onywe, aye, gan through, aye ken the canal an that man gave’s a tug. Jist a tow, jist asizie that. It’s amazin the wey thit they han’led that purser, purse boats.”

“Aye, oh aye.”

“An the men geed below in them jist for ah, they geed fireman for a filie, maybe tae get on.”

“Driver, aye,”

“Bit they kent fit tae dee wi them, the majority o them.”

“They wir good boats an ken.”

“I’ve a list, a short listie her a some Cullen aul boats noo. The ‘Rathdale’ BF57, J. Findlay wis my grandfather, built in 1875. The ‘General Gordon’ wis my ither grandfather BF1424, John Gairdner. The ‘General McDonald’ BF329. John Gairdner, my grandfather an a’ that wis anither ane o his. Then my father hid a share o ane cawd the ‘Firm’, him an Sandicie’s breather, Jimmie, him an Mary Docher’s father. They cam through the November gale in her, she struck the bottom o the Sherenham Shall on the November Gale an they knockit the rudder aff o her an she geed richt back tae Lowestoft on the bare poles.”

“Is that richt?”

“Aye they were lucky this time – the ‘Firm’. I mine seein her lyin being broken up in Finichty, I cwid aye read the name on here. “

“Fit year wis you born Weelum?”

“1903”

“1903. That ‘General Gordon’ that’s her photae tane gaun oot o Cullen hairber.”

“Then there’s ane thit Willie Bow his here, the ‘Nimrod’ you’ll mine on the ‘Nimrod, the motor ane?”

“Aye, aye the motor ane?”

“This is the Zulu BF371, I’na ken hoo aul she wis. Then there wis the ‘Lively Hope’, a steam drifter, BF1339. I can mine on her. She wis sunk in a collision in 1911. An then there wis the ‘Lively Hope’, sailboat, BF2. I can mine on her an a”

“Aye

“That ane, the ‘Rapture’ that’s the ane cawd the ‘Dry Minen’. My mither telt me this fit they cawd her, the ‘Dry Mitten’. I’na ken, I think my granda liket tae keep is mittens dry.”

“You’ll mine on a lot o changes in Cullen hairber noo Weelum, fin yi look back on Cullen hairber as fin yi wis a loon, ken?”

“I’ve seen’t packit a sail-boats an packit a drifters.”

“Noo it’s a’”

“Noo its little boaties.”

“Jist little boaties, aye.”

“I got a richt tellin off fae Ecky’s loon. Ken the ‘Spring Bud’ wis jist lyin off fae the hoose so I geed aboard an there’d been somebody doon that day reddin her up, yi see. For the weemen, ken the weemen eest tae scrub oot the boats, somebody hid been doon redding up, there wis a basket a jeely jars. I got them on tae the heed the gailley, drapt them doon the funnel. The followin mornin somebody came doon an kin’led the fire. The smoke wis comin oot the gailley doors, comin oot the portholes, comin oot the engine rooms an skylights. The smoke wis comin oot a the weys bit throwe the funnel!

“That’s the ‘Docile’ comin in tae Lowestoft “ (Looking at a photograph.)

“That’s richt, I think wis it me thit got that photae tae yi Weelum? Di yi nae mine on that? Me thit dug up that photae tae yi.”

“Wis’t?”

“Aye, I mine in you anes sayin tae me, doon the back a the toon, yi said, ‘I hid twa drifters, an aefter a’ my time. I hinna hane a photae a nane o them.’ An I got that photae tae yi in Yarmouth, aye, Lowestoft. I got the two of them in Lowestoft.”

“We’d sivent cran a day.”

“Aye, ‘Docile’ an...”

“Seventy four cran, aye, she wis easy puttin tae the heed. “

“Cause I mine the day I come doon wi that photae tae yi Weelum, yi wis as pleased as ken....”

“That’s the ‘Rambler Rose’ drifter, yi would have niver thocht that.”

“No, no.”

“Aye”.

“You wid niver have thocht that wis a drifter”

“Oh no that wis the ‘Rambler”

“An she looks an awfa size the wey she’s rigget.”

“That’s the same ane there yi see.”

“Aye”

“Bonnie photae”

“Oh she’s siven fet lang the...”

“She’s been lengthened.”

“Aye.”

“Ken this I think she’s a purser there, she’s nithin aboard her.”

“No she’s a cargae.”

“Aye bit wis she nae fishin afore that, I think she wis fishin an then changed tae a cargae boat.

“Oh maybe.”

“She wis cairryin buildin materials about Sterangar.”(?)

“Aye, aye. *Aye it’s great tae live tae your ages Weelum an see say muckle changes in the fishin.*”

“It is. That wis a bonnie drifter aside the ‘Rambler.’”

“*Wis she aye the ‘Docile’?*”

“Aye she wis a bonnie drifter.”

“Bit she grew awfa leakie the last ear.”

Fin yi think about it, Cullen hairber ruined ivery widden drifter.”

“*Is that richt, cabin an flou, aye?*”

“Yi see a boat in a saft sannie hairber, ivery time thit she gings agrun she maks a hole left a bit deeper. An sine she disna mak in nane deeper forrit.”

“No”

“Then she sinks in tae the shape a that, the boat goes in tae the shape a the dock.”

“Hiv yi niver seen that afore Johnny?”

“No”

“The widden drifters shid niver be litten agrun.”

“No”

“Well that’s how the Lowestoft men did, kept their boats afloat - the widden boats. “

“That’s richt.”

“Well yi see the kine o a drifter the wecht o their biler, the wecht o, ah...ah...”

“Bit they wirna strong boats, ken”

“Fa, the Englishmen, no, no.”

“Werena built wi the same amount o wid as they pit in tae the boats up here.”

“I wis ha’in a yarnie wi English freens that a the wey tae spen their holidays.”

“Aye aye – sailin?”

“They hiv a - fits yi ca’t a kin a ferm, a small holding, an that’s the wey they spen their holidays.”

“*That’s the richt wey, eh?*”

“Fin they hid their boatie, the ‘Mooswanna’.”

“*That’s a fine wey tae.... Nae fancy that noo Pat? Sailin?*”

“Ah well. There’s an awfa conglomeration of craft in the sooth coast, yi see, an we escorted 36 crash-landin barges fae Portsmouth tae New Main an aefter we’re tied up, yi see, an they’re a’ aff the engines I geed awa up an aside the...the ‘Treadmill’ thit I wis in, I’m stan’in atween the twa loonies an I hear somebody sayin, ‘Johnny’. Fin I lookit across the river it wis yer father.”

“Oh aye.”

“An he says, ‘Are yi gaun tae be in here the day? I’m saying, we wis speak in oor ain lingo. He says, ‘I think we’ve got two formals here’. Dodie Arthur an oor John were inseparable.”

“*That’s richt Weelum, My father wis that disappointed fin....*”

“I geed awa an saw him it nicht an he let me see the engine. Yer father eest tae come in tae oor hoose ivery mornin for John tae ging tae the school.”

“Aye.”

“I geed across tae see an he says, ‘I dinna ken the wey tae start the thing, maist o them doon here, he says. She’d a bonnie switchboard an he says, ‘I jist hailt doon this an aa she geed!’ Hault on this switch, he’d her a set, yi see, bit he didna ken fit wey tae...”

“Tae start it?”

“Aye or tae get power. He says, ‘I hailt doon the switch an awa she geed’”

“. I wis in contact wi yer father the time o the war though Willie. Aye in Lowestoft an that weys.”

“*Aye the fishins awfa different noo though for a that?*”

“Oh aye,”

“*The like a gross weys an athing, I mean....*”

“Och, nae comparison,”

“Its jist nae.... The funniest story thit I iver heard wis, mine on him, mine him Pat?”

“Yes.”

“Do you mine on him Weelum?”

“Aye I geed I the boat wi him. I could tell yi a good story about him.”

“Aye I think the funniest -- fin he wis up on the shed wi men’in fin they wir men’in, yi see, he’d come awa wi some stories, I mine him tellin his, mine the Highlan’ men eest tae ging in the drifters, mine the Highlan men?”

“Aye, that’s richt.”

“Aye I dinna mine on it bit he says they wir it Yarmouth I’na ken if it wis Yarmouth or must hiv been the Broch or somewey an somebody cam doon wi.... Says, ‘Boys that’s great news the day’, Of coorse the ‘Christmas’ hidna been deein an awfa lot, ken herrin bein scarce, hidna been deein nithin. Somebody come doon wi this news an said, ‘Dear me hear that news the day?’ ‘An so and so’s swam the Channel’. Ken? I canna mine fa it wis bit, ‘So and so’s swam

the Channel'. 'Well', he says, 'I jist looks up' and says tae the skipper mannie, 'Well that's nithin, if we dinna dee better than we're deein aye noo, oor Highlan' men 'ill hae tae sweep the boats.'"

"That wis the kin o them aye awfa ready witted, a' that families humour wis the same."

"Aye, ken if you've tae mine on somebody, I'll aye mine on him be that story."

"Aye."

"I kin mine the Highland men fin they came, ken in the evenins they eest tae sit, ken the Brae a Fit Ness (?)"

"Aye."

"Ran up there an watched them, an yi ken there wis a cloud a smoke geen abeen their heeds, ilk ane wi their pipe, ken their bogey roll."

"Aye."

"I seen the black cloud risin"

"Yi aye kent a Highlan' man by their kit bags. They'd a ane o that bags."

"Oh aye."

"The Shetland men they'd white canvas bags. Yi aye recognised them by that, aye."

"*Did you lads hae Highlan' men?*"

"Yes, aye, Some very good men. Yes."

"There wis an awfa kirm o them on Portknockie, yi see, there wis an awfa fleet o drifters an they'd a ' twa Highlan' men sooth. At least twa."

"Every drifter hid a couple a Highlan' men?"

"Aye we very aften got the same men "

"Aye they got the best, they wir treated awfa well, oh aye."

"*Fit happened noo, di yi, aye yi kent them or did they jist apply tae the Fish sellin Offices for a job or..? An fin they came here did they jist bide on the boats or. ?*"

"Aye they hid a shareman, the shareman got that ..."

"Aye my father a Sandy kent men an I mine my father eest tae get men through Sandy Loos, aye Sandy Smith Fr111, an they got a lot o men through Sandy."

"Di yi min on Willie Dane an ees dog?"

"*Aye Willie Dane across the road here? Oh aye I mine on Willie Dane.*"

"Aye. Mine on thon wee doggie aboot that size? 'Far's Flocet thit she's nae oot wi yi the day, Willie?'"

"Oh I left her ween an washet wi Jessie."

"An she wisna ween an washit – she wis fullin men'in"

"An Willie Dane, ken him?"

"Aye"

"Mine the 'Lizzie Rose?'"

"Aye."

"Bonniest boatie thit I iver saw come tae Cullen, jist a picter, bit there wis a hatchie ken, there wis helm, an there wis a hatchie it fower sides, an Willie's aulest loon, yi ken, fin they wir pitten her in doon tae the hairber he eest tae sit an work the engine, yi see, an ees feet cam abeen the hatch, an if Willie winted tae go ahead he got the loons heel gan the ither wye. If he wantit tae come astern, he'd come astern the ither wye,"

"He wis an awfa lad Willie Dane." "Willie brocht up Barrie there."

"*Barrie?*"

Oh him an Barrie wir great pals."

"*Oh aye, that's richt, well Barrie is my age, yi ken. Aye me an Barrie wis in the same class it the*"

"Aye. Barrie aboot your age."

"*Aye. Bit he's 6 months younger than me.*"

"Aye."

"Willie Dane, Barrie wis aye wi Willie Dane."

"Hoo lang hiv yi tae gang yet?"

"*Ah well that's I've six, five year. Five year, well I hope tae stop afore that.*"

"Aye."

"Bit five year tae go."

"Well yi needna think lang for't"

"*I suppose no. Fit div yi think noo aefter a life-time it the sea, an yi retire an yer boat awa.?*"

"Fit kin yi dee, that's the pint!"

"Well I wis doon-hearted for three year aefter I retired."

"*Wis yi?*"

"I come tee a'richt. The rap o it is the fishermen, the majority o them dinna hae a hobby an fin they come ashore, they're like a fish oot o water."

"Aye"

"Now I wid say Weelum says monie a time he enjoyed a' the time he wis it the sea, so did I, bit lookin back I ken fir wye folk lived ashore an fit we lived gaun tae the sea. Yi lost an awfa lot a time it hame wi yer family, see"

"Aye, aye."

“An so much so thit I widna recommend it tae nae young man, nae even it the present time. Now you tick a lad thits gaun tae the sea ayenoo, if the fishin wis gaun tae collapse as we’ve seen’t deen afore for reasons we didna understand maybe it the time – they hinna a trade a’ nae kind. The majority o them. Now admitted, it oor time yi served yer time as bakers an jiners an athing an they cwid a’y ging tae the sea. There wis a lot a them geed tae the sea, isn’t that richt Weelum?”

Jim Legge mine, Jim Legge an them hid a jinery business an Yarmouth time wis a slack time an they geed tae Yarmouth driving drifters. Jim Legge aye geed drivin the ‘Arthur and Bud’ an Arthur ‘Gramophone’ wis a baker an he aye geed the Yarmouth time an a’ yi see. A lot o that lads served his apprenticeship, yi see. They hid something tae turn till. Bit the likes o hid lads we hid tae ging tae sea or nithin. I liket the sea an I liket boats, especially the models a boats.”

“Boats wis a’ yer life, boats wis jist, as yi say, yi took a filie tae get ower, aye ken sellin the boat an stoppin ken, bit I suppose it comes tae abody an a ken. Bit are yi still interested in the fishin ken, di yi still read the ‘Fishin News’?”

“No I’m stoppet the fishin, fin I lost ma sicht, yi see, twa ear ago, I’d tae get ma sicht sorted. I thoct I wis on the waitin list for years an they’re niver comin an the last time I geed, he says, ‘I’ve put you on to the waitin list.’ I says, ‘Oh yi needna bather noo’. So I jist geed richt awa an got it deen privately, richt awa. Aefter I wis years gaun back an fore aboot ma sicht, an I could hardly see. I wis very nearly stane blin.”

“Bit yer still interested in the fishin Weelum, yer still interested tae hear aboot the fishin or speak aboot the fishin.”

“Oh aye. I’ve still an interest in it bit I dinna read the Fishin News, no, no. I dinna read muckle at a’ noo. Ah bit there’s anither pint, yi see, fin we wis gaun tae the fishin yi kent fit abody wis deen. Now yi dinna ken fit fowks deen.”

“Oh no no.”

“They dinna discuss ane anither’s fishin noo as they did then. I kent a difference. Ken fan the difference came in? Back an fore tae Aiberdeen, a hale fleet a’ seine-net men workin oot o Aiberdeen an they came hame on the train the gither or the bus an they wir discussin far they wir workin ah bit fin they startit tae get cars, yi see, yi lost track o ane anither. Yi didna ken fit an anither wis deen the same.. Oh no.”

“Oh its jist completely different.”

“Am friendly wi Peter Smith, the ‘Crystal River’, he’s merriet tae a niece o Jeannies an he des awfa weil.”

“Oh aye that’s richt.”

“An I niver ken nithin thit he des. I aye speer em if he’s hid a good trip or ony thin a that, bit I niver ask aboot money or nithin. If he tells ma hoo muckle boxes he hed, good an well. Bit I’m nae interested in the money, no.”

“The money side o’it no.”

“No. bit he des awfa weill, Peter Smith.”

“Oh aye, aye.”

“Bit yi see I dinna, I hear a lot aboot big fishers, now I dinna pit nae emphasize on big fishers as such, because its abnormal times thit yer fishin in. Yi could go oot an get a boat load o muck, tick it in, get a great price for’t. Peter’s been gaun tae Rockall for boat load’s a muck, squeebs.” Three times broke the record last year aefter ane o the trips wis roon £60,000, anither ane jist ablow sixty an the ither ane aboot fifty – five day trips every time. “

“In your time Weelum lookin back – your sayin I ken that £60,000 for ees trip, noo a drifter wid’ve tane ages tae ... that wid’ve been a lifetime.”

“Jeems George, he can gross mair in a week yet the majority o the seine-net boats grossed a year. Now Weelum even wi the ‘Rambler Rose’ there wis a good puckle years thit yi didna gross ten thoosan”

“Oh aye”

“For yer year.”

“Aye gaun back tae ken Gorleston that time, that race.”

“Oh no, fishin wisna good.”

“Now there’s a crowdie started tae work in the Norwegian coast it that time bit they hid tae stop it wisna for want a fish. The price didna start tae shoot up till”

“Aye we geed tae the Norwegian coast.”

“Now yi tick this purse-net an”

“The price didna start tae shoot up till the seventies.”

“Aye that’s richt, tane a really firm hud, yi ken.”

“The last year thit I was till the sea, 1969, if we hid onything fae £4 tae £500 for oor week that wis a big week, yi see. That’s nithin noo.”

“An they startit in 1970 tae ging up that wye.”

“Bit even the methods in fishin Weelum yi ken is so much different from fin yi stoppit.”

“Oh that’s richt.”

“Tick the electronics in the wheelhoose noo o a seine net boat.”

“Aye.”

“Bit I’ll tell yi I’na ken if we’re happier, if they’re ony happier, ken that you lads wis fin yi ging back tae the time fan a the drifters wi in Cullen hairber an everybody gan doon an glaid getting a job chippin their boaties.”

“Aye, I believe there’s mair worry among fishermen noo than iver there wis.”

“Oh aye.”

"I wid say that noo Weelum, ken , aye, than there wis it that time fin I kent yi wis awa tae ging tae Yarmouth an you wid probably come hame wi, as Johnny says, four poun for yer Yarmouth fishin."

"In that days yi see, if you go in ane o that boats noo, if you miss a week's fishin, that's a big worry."

"Oh aye you've got the expenses tae meet, yi ken."

"Aye, I mine gan doon the quay in Buckie an the skipper o the 'Unity' wis comin up."

"John Grant?"

"No nae John Grant. Skipper afore Weelum, is't Weelum Smith?"

"Smith, aye,"

"I says, 'Fit hiv yi in her ayenoo?' He says, 'We've 270 cran in her.' I says she's a good boat. "

Is that the 'Fragrant Rose'?"

"No the iron boatie, the 'Unity'"

"The 'Unity', aye, aye,"

"An he says, 'It wid tane yi a good file an a gye struggle tae get 270 cran in till a drifter.' I says, 'Aye,'" Nae mony saw 270 cran in a drifter. He wis jist sayin that wis two oors work, yi see."

"Aye.

"Twa oors work!"

"That wis trawlin?"

"Aye. We eest tae pit the 'Docile' on tae Herdie's slip for slippin an paintin her fae keel tae gunnels for siventeen pouns."

"Seventeen pounds?"

"Seventeen poun's. that included the slippin an a' an paintin he fae kiel an top railins nae the cabin or top masts or nithin. Kiel tae top railin's seventeen poun's. Less than twinty wid've deen athin else. "

"I wid say yer twa hunner tae pit her on tae the slip, aye jist tae pit her on tae the slip."

"I've got a receipt in the hoose, the sailboats the 'General Gordon' ma grandfather's boat, an the sailboat wis painted for about four poun! An that included a paint brush". That wis the dearest side o the boat. "

"The paint brush!"

"Wis it 1880 . wis it 1883 or something? I got it fae Bob Addison , that hid been ees father's time. 'General Gordon' – jist nae comparison." 'General Gordon' four, five poun tae paint their boat that."

"Bit fin yi look back in the fishin an a noo Weelum like, you spent maist o yer time it the herrin fishin, ken."

"Aye."

"An I wid think thit if Weelum his seen the wey they tick herrin noo aye, like o fin we're fishin for herrin noo, the wey, tane in the purse Pat."

"Aye."

"Aye , the like o ae ring sometimes you could hae well 300 ton which is mair than a fleet o drifters would've tane in a nicht, yi ken. Nae only that the wheel-hoose the things thit yi hive tae look for - the likes o you lads geed tae the sea an you hid a sounder, well the latter end you hid a sounder."

"Now we were the only Cullen boat thit geed tae the herrin aefter the war, "

"You wis the last Cullen boat?"

"There wisna anither ane geed tae the herrin fishin aefter the war. Last boat thit bark nets in Cullen. The last boat tae tar ropes in Cullen."

"You wis the last boat, aye?"

"Aye."

"The 'Rambler Rose'"

"Mhum".

"Aye , well that's interestin, it really is, aye."

"Aye."

"Well that's been a richt interesting aefternoon speakin tae yi, It really his Weelum."

"Aye there's a lot mair stories tae tell yi."

"There wis nane a yi iver ashore. Wis yi iver ashore noo Weelum a' yer time, ken, iver on the rocks or onythin"

"We eence geed agrun it Scarborough. Aye we wir washed up, bit she came aff nae bather, fin the tide came in."

"Bit that's yer only strand in yer hale lifetime?"

"That's the only strand all my life. We wis on oor wye tae Lowestoft an it wis a Setterday nicht an I says, 'I think we'll gin in tae Scarborough for the nicht', an it wis an awfa hazie nicht."

"Aye"

We made the lights bit we wis too late, there wis nae hairber licht on yi see. They dinna pit on a hairber licht in Scarborough if there's under 12 feet o water so we wisna lookin for a hairber licht an we jist saw the lights. Fin iver I saw them I thocht it wis a richt I wis writin the telegraph tae Burn Doon an she geed agrun."

"Wis that the entrance a Scarborough hairber like? North side?"

"Aye, North side the hairber."

"Scappie." "Aye."

"Aye bits a lang time Weelum, skipper, it's a lang life time aye oot o a that , jist"

"Niver seen a man got hurt a the time, niver no. I wis a week in the dry dock in south shields an took he hame an we hid the best Cullen boat that fishin. Mine we thocht we'd lost the fishin we were that late! Mine we shot wir nets 33

mile north, north east fae Scarborough an not a craft in sicht. Bit we got 120 cran an half wer nets, well we wid've lost the ither half o them, yi ken. "

That's right."

"Geed tae the bottom! We came hame wi the best fishin"

"Did yi iver land in Yarmouth that time? Did yi iver land in Yarmouth that shot?"

"I think we did,. I think we did, aye. Alan Bow's thit bocht them. Aye we landit in Yarmouth, I mind in that. If yi'd see the fleet, afore the war, aye aefter the first war, they wir jam-packed fin yi wir in Yarmouth. There wis ower a thoosan boats geed sooth."

"Aye, yi jist canna imagine that noo! That's the tape deen boys.