

Michael Gavin

Newtown

18 May 2017

Ruth: now, I'm here with Michael Gavin, on the 18th of ammm May, 2017. Thanks Michael

\*Rustling\* Now. ok, do you want to, ammm, just for the record you're, you were doing both, fisherman and you were a reed cutter

Michael: ya

Ruth: ok, so you want to tell me how you started off doing, am, we'll start off with the reed cutting will we?

Michael: well I can't remember back when I started cutting reed now

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: Jesus, what, ah, t'would be thirty, forty years, I suppose

Ruth: ok

Michael: thirty year only (slightly unclear) ya

Ruth: ok, and how did you get involved in that?

Michael: well at the time we had no work like and, something to be passing away if you make a few pound \*laughs\*

Ruth: right, ok, and did, is there someone that showed you how to do it, or?

Michael: yaaaaa,

Ruth: how did you just get involved when you say that you had no work but?

Michael: ah, often went to the brother in law, he used to be at it,

Ruth: ok, right

Michael: he showed me how to do it (unclear)

Ruth: ok, and what did he do to show you,

Michael: just show you have to hold the reed, like,

Ruth: uh hum

Michael: and how to cut it, and...

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: a certain way of doing it and...

Ruth: and, was it far from here, no?

Michael: no, it's only down across one field there like

Ruth: ok, so it's not far at all.

Michael: no

Ruth: right, and how long did you do that for

Michael: well, like, couple of years like,

Ruth: ok

Michael: we'd say. On and off

Ruth: ya

Michael: I wouldn't be at it all the time

Ruth: right ok

Michael: I'd be working then I'd be away and

Ruth: and there's particular seasons as well for that isn't there?

Michael: there is

Ruth: ya

Michael: and the reed, from, Oct, November, December on like

Ruth: ok

Michael: March, April,

Ruth: ya? and does it finish in April does it?

Michael: ya, ya, the new stuff is coming up then like

Ruth: right ok, so that's kind of it

Michael: ya

Ruth: right, and what did ye, what was the reeds used for?

Michael: for thatching, thatching the houses like

Ruth: ok, just thatching, there was nothing else, it was just house

Michael: no just all thatching like

Ruth: right, very good ok

Michael: Bord Failte used to take a lot it and,

Ruth: Bord Failte?

Michael: ya

Ruth: and what was that, what was that for?

Michael: all the, what do ya call the homes? do you know Bunratty?

Ruth: uh hum

Michael: and all them, cottages out there

Ruth: ok

Michael: And all them

Ruth: heritage, kind of,

Michael: ya ya

Ruth: those things, very good

Michael: Galway, and places, and

Ruth: ok

Michael: they used to take a lot of it off us, that time

Ruth; ok, very good, and how much would ye be, giving away, or how much would ye be cutting?

Michael; all depends what they want,

Ruth: ya?

Michael: could be a couple of hundred shaves,

Ruth: ye keep cutting?

Michael: couple of thousand,

Ruth: ok, it doesn't matter? they didn't, they would take whatever?

Michael: ya

Ruth: ok. And with fishing, so Michael, how did you start off with that?

Michael: agh, my father, he was a fisherman all his life as well,

Ruth: ok

Michael: so I started, that, when I was what? 15, 16..i suppose

Ruth: you were very young

Michael: ha?

Ruth: very young, ya.

Michael: that time

Ruth: and how did your dad get involved in it?

2.38mins Michael: (unclear) can't tell you \*laughs\*

Ruth: ya?

Michael: he was at it all his life (unclear)

Ruth: was it, ya, it was just in the family?

Michael: in the family,

Ruth: ok, so how did you get in, with your dad then, did he just take you out fishing?

Michael: he'd go, I used to go with him like,

Ruth: ya

Michael: that and then, I used to go away with another man

Ruth: ok...

Michael: Peter's father, and Peter Byrnes

Ruth: Peter... oh go 'way, ok

Michael: his father, started off we did

Ruth: very good, ok, and what did they show you, what to do? or where did ye go?

Michael: just down here again (pointing), its only two minutes' walk

Ruth: right, just down to the Shannon,

Michael: ya

Ruth: down here, and what's this particular area called?

Michael: Newtown, be here now

Ruth: just all Newtown

Michael: all Newtown

Ruth: ya, ok

Michael: down here

Ruth: right

Michael: we'd fish then, way back, to Shannon Airport

\*tapping noise\* (I think it's a cigarette box)

Ruth: ok, and how far down would that be from here?

Michael: oh Jesus, its miles down, I wouldn't tell ya by water

Ruth: that's ok ya

Michael: tis a long ways down like

Ruth: Is it?

Michael: tis

Ruth: and how long would ye be gone for?

Michael: t'would take you a good hour on the boat now, with an engine to go down there

Ruth: ok

Michael: when we were gone out fishing we could be out, twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours, in the day like

Ruth: that's very long isn't it

Michael: if the fish were there, we'd stay out

Ruth: (unclear) right, ok, and what kind of fish were you catching?

Michael: all salmon

Ruth: all salmon

\*Michael coughing\*

Michael: excuse me now, the (unclear) fags

Ruth: you're totally fine... the fags... \*laughs\*

Michael: ate'n 'em

Ruth: ya, and when you were a kid, when you were going out when you were 15 or 16, were you only going out part time with them?

Michael: oh that's all

Ruth: ya, ok

Michael: part time with them like

Ruth: and, what did they make you do? when you used to go out, if you were to describe to someone what you'd end up doing,

Michael: well, I wouldn't do much only sitting down in the boat like, and, and I was taking the fish out of the net for them

Ruth: ok, do you want to describe that for...

Michael: well, you'd be sitting down, with the net and they would be all tangled up like

Ruth: would they, ok

Michael: and you could be, you could be half an hour taking out one, you might be lucky, you might be ten minutes

Ruth: right, ok,

Michael: so..

Ruth: and how, would there be loads of fish in there,

Michael: at that time now, there'd be a good few fish

Ruth: ok

Michael: you could get, 20, 30, 40 a day

Ruth: that's good isn't it?

4.36mins Michael: ya

Ruth: ya, and was it always like that, did ye always catch like..

Michael: ah we didn't, t'wasn't always like that, it got worst since like and

Ruth: ok...

Michael: as the years went on..

Ruth: ok

Michael: the trawlers I'd say ruined it as well

Ruth: did they?

Michael: ya

Ruth: and would there be many around here?

Michael: ...out in the mouth, no, they would be out in the mouth of the Shannon like

Ruth: right, out further

Michael: ya, the fish couldn't come up

Ruth: oh ya sure, ya

Michael: so

Ruth: and when do you think that started happening

Michael: oohhhh, that's there now a good few years and, that could be there, happening, 30 years ago I suppose

Ruth: ok, right ok. And do you think they are the reason for the...

Michael: oh they are a lot of the reason anyway

Ruth: right

Michael: the fish not coming up like

Ruth: for the depletion of the fish?

Michael: ya, ya

Ruth: ok. And when did you stop fishing? or do you still fish (unclear)?

Michael: oh I don't know, tis all over now

Ruth: tis done

Michael: eight years ago

Ruth: eight years ok. And what happened there?

Michael: they just wanted us off the river and that was it

Ruth: ok, did they give you any reason? and who is they, sorry, whose they, Michael?

Michael: well the Fishery Board and all that like

Ruth: ok

Michael: they said they wanted, ah, d'know, kinda stock up the river again, give it a chance

Ruth: ok

Michael: sure we knew when it went, t'would never come back like

Ruth: ok, and were you doing fishing full time

Michael: well I wasn't there full time

Ruth: ummm, you just part time?

Michael: id be working as well like

Ruth: ok, so you'd go out in the evenings would ya?

Michael: ya in the evening time,

Ruth: ok

Michael: when i'd come home from work like. Father could be out all day like and

Ruth: would he? and what was your father's name?

Michael: Mick as well, Mike

Ruth: Mike, ok. ok, ammm, so it was mainly salmon ye were catching

Michael: ya

Ruth: and would he go up and down to Shannon nearly everyday then?

Michael: oh he would every day

Ruth: ya, ok, and where were you supplying the fish too?

Michael: Cusack, Rene Cusack

Ruth: Cusacks, ok

Michael: mostly like

Ruth: ok, and how would the fish get out, to Rene Cusacks then?

Michael: he'd probably, or they'd come from here, or we'd take them into him

Ruth: ok, and would he come out in his van or?

Michael: ya, in the van like

Ruth: ya

Michael: mostly we took them in we'd say like, the mother would take them in like

Ruth: would she

Michael: ya

Ruth: ya ok

Michael: ya, she'd be looking after that part of it,

Ruth: so, your mum was involved as well

Michael: ya

Ruth: ok, and, was there, she just would take them in so at the end of every day?

Michael: ya, ya

Ruth: ok

Michael: when they were, whenever they would come in like

Ruth: and

Michael: when it came night time, she'd take them in the following morning

Ruth: ok

Michael: she'd have the bath, the bath full of them \*laughs\*

Ruth: the bath? would she?

Michael: inside in the bath

\*Ruth laughs\*

Ruth: ya, ya brilliant

Michael: inside in the bath

Ruth: ya, just full of water is it?

Michael: no, no, no water

Ruth: no?

Michael: you put them into the bath

Ruth: just lay them into the bath \*laughs\* that's brilliant, and am,

Michael: they wouldn't do it now like but \*laughs\*

Ruth: no, no not with hygiene I suppose and all that. Amm, Michael, do you know how much, that you'd get, for the fish, money wise, or, how was that, how did it work out that way

Michael: oh jaysus, what was it that time, some two shillings a pound that time or something, or

Ruth: was it

Michael: ya

Ruth: and was that good?

Michael: twas good that time I suppose, you had value in money then you see

Ruth: right ok, and what decade was that Michael?

Michael: hmmm?

Ruth: what decade was that? roughly?

Michael: ....19 what? let me think,...'70s

Ruth: right

Michael: '70s, '80s,

8.01mins Ruth: ok, that's not to bad sure its not. ok, so were there other women involved? were there many women that used to be involved in the fishing at the time?

Michael: our fishing like?

Ruth: ummm ya, was there women that used to go down fishing or get involved or?

Michael: oh there is, Ann O'Brien down the road here used to do it

Ruth: ok

Michael: Aidan O'Brien's wife

Ruth: right, ok and what did she do, did she actually go out fishing?

Michael: she went out fishing

Ruth: go 'way

Michael: she was the woman on the net

Ruth: ya,...and what was your job as you got older then when you were out fishing?

Michael: I was in the, in the paddles all the time we'd say

Ruth: that's...

Michael: Pulling the boat, we'd say, the oars

Ruth: that's a tough job isn't it

Michael: well it's tough, I was young then \*chuckles\*

Ruth: ya you didn't mind did ya?

Michael: didn't mind \*coughs\* plenty fresh air, few days

Ruth: ya, very good, and was there many on the boat with you

Michael: there's two of us together

Ruth: two, just two?

Michael ya

Ruth: so who.

Michael: sometimes three, someone would come with us for the day like

Ruth: ok

Michael: for the day like, the day out

Ruth: very good, and

Michael: bit of sunshine

Ruth: ya, did ye bring lunch with ye

Michael: oh ya, ya

Ruth: ya, what would ye take for lunch with ye

Michael: we'd have sandwiches and tea and

Ruth: ya?

Michael: a flask of tea, well we often make it in the island like

Ruth: on what island?

Michael: light a fire and we boil the kettle and

Ruth: what island is this now?

Michael: well, there's a couple of them there

Ruth: oh ya, do you want to call them out?

Michael: Battle Island, there, Grass Island, Kay (? spelling) Island, Sad (? spelling) Island, there, there was a pile of them there.

Ruth: and you'd stop at any one of them then?

Michael: any one at all we'd go in to

Ruth: ok

Michael: you might be waiting

Ruth: and what would you do

Michael: you might be waiting for the tide to rise like

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: and you might be there for an hour, do you know, you could be there for two hours...

Ruth: ok, ammm, right, ok, so you just chill out there for a while

Michael: chill out there

Ruth: ya, and would you have to pull the boat up onto the...

Michael: we just, pull in the rope and the, pull out the anchor like

Ruth: ok, and, how did you work the tides then? so, was, what time were the tides, come in...

Michael: every six hours they change

Ruth: every six hours

Michael: six going out, six hours coming in. High and Low water

Ruth: ok, ammm, right ok. That's tough going though isn't it, its a long enough day

Michael: ah tis, ah tis nice though, if you liked it, its lovely

Ruth: ya, and you did, id say, did ya?

Michael: oh I did, loved it

Ruth: very good, ok. And, how did you store the fish then on the boat

Michael: just leave them in that in the bottom of the boat

Ruth: ok, and they are fine, that would, ya

Michael: ya, on a warm day you might have to cover them now with,

Ruth: ok..

Michael: a canvas bag, do you know it would have to be wet, put it on top of them

Ruth: ok

Michael: just to keep them cool like

Ruth: very good, ya, ok, ammm... right, ok

\*shuffling of paper\*

Ruth: have you, like have you any strong memories about fishing, any funny stories of what happened?

Michael: I have a lot of them I suppose

Ruth: have you?

Michael: going home from Durty Nelly's \*laughs\*

Ruth: oh ya, go on ya ya

\*Michael laughing\*

Michael: we went up there a lot then, especially of a Monday, we'd be out the weekend drinking you see,

Ruth: right

Michael: we'd be sick then on a Monday, and, we'd head up the small river, we'd be, i'd be there now about half an hour from here ill be in Durty Nelly's,

Ruth: right

Michael: by boat,

Ruth: go 'way, ok

Michael: sure we often went up there, and, (unclear), we'd come out of it,

\*Ruth laughs\*

Michael: if we'd have a couple of fish, we could sell them to the yanks

Ruth: right

Michael: they wouldn't know the difference like, we'd make an extra couple of bob

Ruth: ya, ya definitely ya, that's brilliant

Michael: sure we'd drink the money then,

Ruth: \*laughs\*

Michael: come home then, come home then and tell the mother there was no fish there

Ruth: oh you did not, did ye?

Michael: but she'd know sure

Ruth: would she?

Michael: she'd know, ya, (unclear)

\*Ruth and Michael laugh\*

Ruth: what else is there? what else can you remember?

Michael: aye, that any like, aye i'd just ah, joking and blaguarding down the river and all that like

Ruth: would ye

Michael: a good aul laugh

Ruth; good, ok

Michael: there'd be a lot of boats out there, one time like

Ruth: a lot of boats? i'd say so

Michael: oh there would i's say..

Ruth: how many would be out there? back in the day?

Michael: one time, I suppose there would be 70

Ruth: 70??!! oh go'way

Michael: between drifting and shoring, I, we were drifting now like

Ruth: right ok

Michael: and the shoring then

Ruth: will you explain that to me

Michael: when your drifting you're going with the tide the whole time

Ruth: ok

Michael: we'd be going way down the river now

Ruth: ok

Michael: and we'd have a bigger net now altogether

Ruth: right

\*papers shuffling\*

Michael: the shoring then, they were kinda walking the mud, do you get me?

Ruth: ya

Michael: and one fella, going out on the boat, and they come in around in a circle

Ruth: right

Michael: and the net nearly wouldn't be 100 yards long I suppose

Ruth: ok, and was your net the same length?

Michael: oh no it would be longer than that

Ruth: how long would yours be

13.04mins Michael: well, usually 120 yards they tell you like \*laughs\* but,

Ruth: right

Michael: t'would be a bit longer than that

Ruth: ok, would it ya?

Michael: oh ya

Ruth: ya \*laughs\*

Michael: don't tell anyone that at all

Ruth: oh no no, that's fine. ammm, and where did you get the nets and the boats Michael?

Michael: ah, you'd send away for them

Ruth: where would you do that

Michael: up the north now or,

Ruth: is this the nets and the boats or just the nets

Michael: no, no dear, Peter Byrnes used to make the boats

Ruth: right, so the nets came from up north

Michael: ya, you send away for them like

Ruth: so how would you send away for it?

Michael: you just, ring them or write to them,

Ruth: right

Michael: and you'd have it in the post maybe in the week

Ruth: ok, and what was the name of that place then

Michael: oh, jaysus now you're asking me though \*laughs\*

Ruth: sorry \*laughs\*

Michael: era I don't know, I gave, I can't think of that

Ruth: ok, and it was Peter then that made the, the boats

Michael: ya, Peter used to make boats, but there was another man in town too, Blackie Doran,

Ruth: right

Michael: he used to make boats as well

Ruth: and was there a different between the boats or were they the same

Michael: no, they were all the same, gandalows

\*writing\*

\*Michael coughs\*

Ruth: and how big was the boat Michael

Michael: twenty-foot long. 20, 21, they were all around 20 I think

Ruth: ok. i's say they would be heavy enough though would you just pull them down?

Michael: down?

Ruth: ye would wheel then down I'd say would you, to the water?

Michael: oh, we'd take them down in the trailer

Ruth: take them down in the trailer

Michael: ya

Ruth: ok

Michael: tractor and trailer like

Ruth: right

Michael: ah they wouldn't be that heavy now like

Ruth: no?... and did you only ever fish down here?

Michael: that's all down here only, down the Shannon

Ruth: ok alright. And who was on your boat with you?

Michael: there was a fella that used to be from Mungret there long time Eamon Lowe was his name

\*phone ringing\*

Ruth: oh that's you..... Eamon Lowe

15.10mins \*phone conversation\*

15.23mins

Ruth: that's alright, ammm, Michael, what were the best spots on the river? had you any particular spots, or?

Michael: well, well there was one or two spots down there alright

Ruth: ya?

Michael: the back of the rock was one of them

Ruth: the back of the rock, ok

Michael: ya

Ruth: ok, so where exactly was that?

Michael: tis back the river about...phew...two mile back the river

Ruth: ok, as if your heading outwards I'd say is it

Michael: ya, heading towards...

Ruth: the mouth of the Shannon

Ruth: right

Michael: well you wouldn't be going to the mouth, you'd be going back to the Maigue

Ruth: back to the Maigue ok

Michael: do you know the Maigue going up

Ruth: yep

Michael: you do

Ruth: uh hum

Michael: you'd be going back toward that

Ruth: ok

Michael: and you had the gravel then, another one

Ruth: the gravel, and where was that

Michael: that's straight over there on the Clare side

Ruth: right. I should have brought a map with me and you could have pointed them out.

Michael: if I had the boat id take you down

\*laughing\*

Ruth: thanks Michael. ammm,

Michael: you might be full of mud when you go home \*laughing\*

Ruth: full of mud?

Michael: ya

Ruth: and why is that? running along the...

Michael: ah you'd have to go out along the mud like in the boat and

Ruth: and what like, is it deep or how is...

Michael: ah it wouldn't be that deep there now like

Ruth: no, just soft, is it?

Michael: but you just get dirty and that would be it

Ruth: ya, ok

Michael: I used to take no notice of it

Ruth: right, and Michael, how come these two places would be the best spots then, just plenty of fish there?

Michael: plenty of fish and a place you could anchor the net you see

Ruth; oh, anchor the net

Michael: you weren't supposed to do it like

Ruth: ok...and why weren't you suppose to do it, is it because you were drift?

Michael: it was against the law, you were drifting you see you were supposed to be with the tide, but you could pull in there and your net could be in the water for 4 or 5 hours,

Ruth: right

Michael: without coming out of it at all

Ruth: and you catch away then

Michael: ya

Ruth: and am....

Michael: sometimes you might, only get four or five there, and another time you might get 20 there

Ruth: right

Michael: all depends if there were there

Ruth: and was, was it a breeding place for the fish there?

Michael: no no, t'was, they just come in off the, the deep water we'll say

Ruth: right ok

Michael: I suppose, it could be a resting place for them

Ruth: maybe

Michael: with the flat mud

Ruth: ya, ok. And, am, Michael, where did you get your licence? had you a full licence or was it,

Michael: the father had a licence all his life

Ruth: right ok

Michael: and when he went then, t'was in the mother's name...

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: she had it in her name, but I was fishing it

Ruth: and what was your mums name?

Michael: Mary

Ruth: Mary. and you were like, on the licence then

Michael: ya, ya

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: I fished it for her

Ruth: you, very good ok. so that's how it got passed down. and do you hold the licence

Michael: no, no, that's gone as well

Ruth: it's gone, the whole thing is done

Michael: the whole thing is gone now

Ruth: and do you think you'll get them back or?

Michael: ah no, never come back I'd say

Ruth: ok

Michael: I wouldn't think so, tis gone eight years now like

Ruth: ok, ammm... have you any stories about the water bailiffs Michael?

Michael: I haven't, they often came on us alright

Ruth: ya? what would happen if that happened?

Michael: well if you were doing things out of the way they'd take the net and things off you...

Ruth: they, ok

Michael: ...and fish and all the whole lot like...

Ruth: so

Michael: and probably boat.

Ruth: oh, right ok. Did you own your boat?

Michael: ya, ya

Ruth: you did, ok. ammm, so how often would them come up and down or how did they work?

Michael: you mightn't see them for two or three weeks, and they could come two or three times a week

Ruth: oooh

Michael: you wouldn't know like

Ruth: right

Michael: they could

Ruth: and would they be in their own boat then up and down?

Michael: ya, ya

Ruth: right ok

Michael: they had the speed boat like

Ruth: so, they had a good power to be taking things

Michael: oh ya

18.42mins Ruth: ummm, ummm, ok, ammm, and how did that work Michael when there was so many of you fishing on the Shannon, did you pick spots or how did ye work that?

Michael: well, there's all different spots like

Ruth: right

Michael: but you'd have to wait for your turn

Ruth: ok

Michael: you might be three or four or five boats waiting in one place like

Ruth: right

Michael: and when your man, before you, he'd go so far, you can go 'way then,

Ruth: ok, and how far ahead of you would he have to be gone before...

Michael: about...what? about four or five hundred yards I suppose

Ruth: ok...so you wouldn't end up in each other's spaces

Michael: ya, ya, you wouldn't be in, as I said, thrown it down on top of him, blocking the fish away from him

Ruth: ya, ok, and, ammm, what days couldn't you fish Michael, or could you fish whenever?

Michael: Saturday and Sunday

Ruth: Saturday and Sunday were just the only days

Michael: ya

Ruth: was there a reason for that

Michael: we used to go out, six o'clock Monday morning

Ruth: ok that's very early isn't it

Michael: until twelve, twelve o'clock Friday night, and we'd be out all night like, but that were the times...

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: we'd be out Saturday and Sunday too but we didn't tell 'em \*laughs\*

Ruth: would ye? and what if the bailiff came down?

Michael: oh, sure if he did you were caught like

Ruth: ya

Michael: well you mightn't, you might get away

Ruth: would you get fined or how?

Michael: oh, you would, they'd take everything sure

Ruth: and would they fine you as well as that?

Michael: oh, fine you as well

Ruth: and what would the fine be?

Michael: I don't know, I was never caught

Ruth: oh good,

\*laughing\*

Ruth: very good, ok

Michael: I was able to run that time \*laughing\*

Ruth: oh ya good! ya \*laughing\*. Ok, so you had a long fishing thing, so you used to sneak out as well Saturday and Sunday

20.18mins Michael: ya

Ruth: ok

Michael: the odd time we, we would get an auld fish

Ruth: ya, for a bit of ya, lovely

Michael: the usual, we'd be in the pub talking and blagaurding and,

Ruth: ya...

Michael: "come on, we go 'way down'" \*laughing\*

Ruth: gone fishing... and was there many, ammm, accidents on the river, or anything or do you ever...

Michael: no, there was never anyone down there (?)

Ruth: you were all ok...

Michael: I was very surprised at that, I often thought there would

Ruth: really?

Michael: the most of us going out there were drinking like

Ruth: oh go 'way, ok

Michael: I'd say half of us couldn't swim, I can't swim myself

Ruth: right, me neither, ya

Michael: ha?

Ruth: me neither, ya

Michael: and I love the water

Ruth: ya?

\*Michael chuckles\*

Ruth: its mad, isn't it?

Michael: huh

Ruth: and how come you never learnt to swim?

Michael: I did before when I was small, years ago

Ruth: ummm

Michael: and I used to be a terror for getting cramps

Ruth: right

Michael: and that frightened me in the water

Ruth: ya ya ya ya, ok

Michael: you know you go into the water and get a cramp like

Ruth: ya and you got a cramp and then sure

Michael: and how you going to get out?

Ruth: ya! so that's why you didn't go swimming, ok...

Michael: so, I didn't bother then

Ruth: right, and did you go fishing, were you out fishing, at night time

Michael: oh ya ya

Ruth: ya

Michael: night and day

Ruth: and what was that like? how, did you bring flash lights with you then?

Michael: no, it wouldn't be that dark on the water

Ruth: no? wouldn't it?

Michael: no

Ruth: ok

Michael: you might get, a bad night now, could be dark, but it'd be for an hour

Ruth: right

Michael: do you know it would be kind of,

Ruth: ya?

Michael: dusk

Ruth: right

Michael: it wouldn't be actually dark

Ruth: ammm, ok... and how did you keep an eye then on the weather Michael, just weather reports in case...

Michael: are you'd have an idea by the forecast like

Ruth: would you? ya, ok. You wouldn't want to be going out when the weather is too bad

Michael: (unclear, maybe says we had rough days too)

Ruth: did ye?

Michael: oh we did

Ruth: oh do you want to describe one or two of them?

Michael: t'would be blowing gale force like

Ruth: ya? and you, you wouldn't be scared or anything?

Michael: well you wouldn't be scared like, but, you wouldn't be feck acting there like do you know that kind of a way

Ruth: ya, ya, ok

Michael: but that was the good time to, ever catch fish, the wind

Ruth: right?

Michael: it's drive them up you see

Ruth: ok. ok,

Michael: the calm weather wasn't much good, because there would be no life in them

Ruth: ok, they would just be sitting in the water?

22.22mins Michael: ya, they'd be no (unclear) but the wind would drive them on, they stick in the nets then

Ruth: right

Michael: you'd have waves and...

Ruth: ya?

Michael: other than that when you see the wind t'was grand, we'd go 'way then

Ruth: ok, that's interesting, isn't it?

Michael: tis ya

Ruth: ya. And were they big fish Michael? how big would you have caught?

Michael: I looked for a photograph there before you came in,

Ruth: right

Michael: my, my daughter took it, I don't know where she put it

Ruth: ok

Michael: the biggest I got was twenty-nine-and-a-half-pound weight

Ruth: right, is that good?

Michael: ya, well the usual fish is only six or seven like

Ruth: ooohhh, oh ok

\*Michael coughs\*

Ruth: that was salmon obviously was it?

Michael: all salmon, ya. Well the father got a bigger than that one day,

Ruth: did he?

Michael: I think he was thirty-two... thirty-four,

Ruth: a fine big fish so

Michael: and there was bigger than that caught,

Ruth: down here?

Michael: ya,

Ruth: do you know who caught it or what size it was

Michael: I don't know was, Aidan O'Brien's father, or something

Ruth: right

Michael: some (mutters) up to fifty or sixty pounds`

Ruth: go 'way, ok, that's big

Michael: that's a lot of years ago now I'd say

Ruth: ya...did the fish get smaller since or?

Michael: \*sniffing\* ah, `you'd, get the off one, fifteen, twenty maybe

Ruth: ya?

Michael: the very odd one now

Ruth: ok

Michael: but normal, from six up maybe, eleven or twelve, in between,

Ruth: ok, right, ok

Michael: they would be good fish like, nine, tenth pound weight

Ruth: nine, ten would be good fish...ok... and what made good nets Michael? what was the nets made of, or?

Michael: made of, nylon like,

Ruth: they were all nylon were they?

Michael: ya, all nylon

Ruth: ya...and you said they were roughly 120metres is it?

Michael: ya, ya

Ruth: ya

Michael: 120 yards I think

24.01mins Ruth: yards, ok. Ok,

Michael: ugh, do you want a cup of tea?

Ruth: I'm ok

Michael: are you sure?

Ruth: thanks Michael, ya thank you. ammm, ok I'm trying to think is there anything else I can ask you here. So, there is no one else really around here left fishing is there?

Michael: no, there's no one down here fishing no more now

Ruth: right, ok, and does anyone still go out fishing?

Michael: well it's all gone all around, Coonagh is gone, they are all gone like

Ruth: is it

Michael: ya

Ruth: ok. it's sad to see, isn't it?

Michael: ah t'is sad, you'd miss it

Ruth: ya and,

Michael: a day like today, and, even to get no fish, to be down there, it would be lovely

Ruth: just down on the river, and are ye allowed go down to the river?

Michael: oh ya, we can go out on the boat if we want to like but...

Ruth: ok, and how do you feel about the decline of fishing?

Michael: about, its gone like?

Ruth: ya, how do you feel about it?

Michael: ah, tis sad like

Ruth: ya?

Michael: I miss it a lot

Ruth: right, ok.

Michael: is it, I can't work now at the moment, the illness and all that like,

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: but you see like you go out on the boat like, do you know, to pass away the day

Ruth: ya, ya, and did you get compensation when you were told you couldn't fish anymore?

Michael: you did, I didn't get it, the mother got it like

Ruth: did she?

Michael: she did (muttering)

Ruth: ok, do you know what she got, or, how long ago this was?

Michael: about eight years ago t'was I think

Ruth: ok, so she got it then

Michael: I think she got, got, around, was it around eight, nine thousand something around that

Ruth: that's good, ya, well it's not really but I suppose...

Michael: well, it isn't for...

Ruth: ya, when you lose your, sorry,

Michael: if you'd a good season,

Ruth: that was stupid of me to say

Michael: you'd double that

Ruth: ya, ok

Michael: and that was compensation like for, we'll say all these, it wouldn't come close to it even

Ruth: ummm, no it wouldn't

Michael: what?

Ruth: the more I think about it ya, I suppose it wouldn't

Michael: fishing for forty fucking years like

Ruth: and did they just come down and tell you that's it, or how did that work? How did ye come about?

Michael: they just said they were stopping it for a couple of years like and

Ruth: right, and its eight years ago now

Michael: ya

Ruth: ok, right ok

Michael: and they were trying to do away with the reed as well like

Ruth: right, the reeds, ya, ok

Michael: I only done a couple of years of that now like

Ruth: right, you weren't big into the reed cutting?

Michael: I wasn't no

Ruth: ok

Michael: just id be doing nothing,

Ruth: and then, the reeds from ye know, was, was only going, fairly locally,

Michael: ya, ya

Ruth: ...it wasn't being exported or anything?

Michael: no, it wasn't exported, no

Ruth: ok

Michael: I'd say it would be Limerick, Galway, or some place, or `

Ruth: right, ya, ok that's grand, and

Michael: I've a photograph up there, (unclear) we have a load of it`

Ruth: oh Michael, that's very good, I must take a photo of that. Jeess ye have a fair load of it done ye?

Michael: well that was only a handy load now

Ruth: you call that a handy load is it?

Michael: ya

Ruth: right, and how much would be in this load?

Michael: it would be about, I don't know what was in that, that could be ten, twelve hundred shaves

Ruth: ok. Ten, twelve hundred what?

Michael: shaves

Ruth: shaves?

Michael: shaves, ya

Ruth: is that what you called it?

Michael: ya, shave of reed

Ruth: ok, very good, ammm...so you just used to carry that in on the boats

Michael: ya

Ruth: and bring it across?

Michael: ya

Ruth: and did somebody pick it up down here or did you have to take it somewhere?

Michael: no that was in Mungret now that one

Ruth: right

Michael: do you know Mungret?

Ruth: ya I do ya

Michael: you can go down to the Shannon over there as well

Ruth: (unclear)

Michael: there is kind of a quay there like

Ruth: ya?

Michael: you can come in, near to the road

Ruth: it's a bit of a drive, isn't it? down a passage?

Michael: maybe down in ten minutes

Ruth: ya, ok, and with the fish Michael, did ye just, you'd carry the fish then in sacks to of the boat was it?

27.20mins Michael: ya, ya

Ruth: and you just brought it back up here home?

Michael: back up home again

Ruth: right, ok. right, ok

Michael: years ago, I used to bring them down from the, the donkey and car,

Ruth: ok, oh very good, ya, you don't have any photos of that, do you or anything?

Michael: I don't,

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: so they

Ruth: and how long ago was that?

Michael: we didn't take half enough photographs when down there and we should have

Ruth: ya, it would be lovely wouldn't it

Michael: ha?

Ruth: be lovely

Michael: well that time you'd be hunted with a camera

Ruth: you'd be hunting what?

Michael: you'd be hunted if you'd a camera

Ruth: oh, right ok

Michael: the old people, you'd be asked where you're going with that

Ruth: right

\*Michael laughing\*

Ruth; ok. And what decade was that Michael?

Michael: ah, t'would be back, ah I suppose what, be in the sixties round then

Ruth: sixties

\*birds tweeting in the background\*

Michael: I, I can barely remember it

Ruth: can you, you were only a young lad?

Michael: I was about 10 or 12 I'd say

Ruth: right ok

Michael: I remember the grandfather and the ass and car

Ruth: ok

Michael: and they coming up with the bags of fish

Ruth: ya, very good, they would have a few bags of fish

Michael: ya

Ruth: you're actually very near from here. right, ok, is there anything else you'd like to add Michael?

Michael: there isn't much more I can tell you now I'd say

Ruth: really? ya...

Michael: no, not

Ruth: you'd no nicknames or anything did ye when ye were out on the boats or? ye didn't have any nicknames for each other?

Michael: oh, Jesus we had (laughs)

Ruth: ya?

Michael: we had a lot of nicknames. Cakes was one of them anyway,

Ruth: was it, who was Cakes?

Michael: Aidan O'Brien

Ruth: right, ok.

Michael: and all different names

Ruth: had you one?

Michael: ha?

Ruth: had you one?

Michael: I had, Gurt, they used to call me

Ruth: what was it?

Michael: Gurt

Ruth: Gurt? why was that?

Michael: I don't know

Ruth: ok, right, ok. ok, so you're finished up so for the last eight years

Michael: about eight years I think now

Ruth: right Michael ok

\*Michael sniffs\*

Ruth: so, there's nothing else you can think of, I think were fairly, safe here. In the off-season Michael what did you do? in your off season? what were you doing?

Michael: most of the time I'd work in the buildings

Ruth: right, ok

Michael: (unclear)

Ruth: ok,

Michael: as I said, t'would be mostly in the evenings or nights id be fishing

Ruth: right, oh you said that to me, you did say that ya

Michael: the father and the other men would be out, during the day like,

Ruth: right

Michael: and we'd go down and meet them then in the evening, we'd go way out for a couple of hours

Ruth: ya? when you say a couple of hours, you were down for like two or three hours was it?

Michael: maybe four or five hours

Ruth: right, ya

Michael: be down there

Ruth: right, and would you catch many yourself when you were down there then at that time?

Michael: all depends if they were around like

Ruth: ya, ya

Michael: you might get five or six or you might get twenty

Ruth: ok, just depends,

Michael: ya, it depends like

Ruth: ya, ok. Ok Michael thank you for that

Michael: no problem

Ruth: thanks very much. I'll turn these off.

END