Sinon Blunnie

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:11:28
FISHING –

Sinon was born in January 1942. His family were involved in fishing. They would fish for salmon from February to July; August to September they would fish for herring and mackerel and then in October they would go to Poulnasherry and do the course fishing-bass and mullet. They would use flax and hemp nets for salmon. Nylon came later on. For salmon they would use 6.5 inch mesh earlier in the year and in June they'd used 5.25 inch mesh. 'Spring fish' would open the 1st February and then that changed to 15th march and then they took it away altogether. Five or six canoes with be fishing out of Kilrush and three or four from Scattery island. He says at one time there were 46 state weirs in the Shannon. He describes how the fish were caught in them and where they were located. He speaks of the Garraun, [sic} Weir near Querrin. Palana Scanlon built canoes. The canoes were usually three-man. He says you would just get the one year out of the flax and hemp nets. The flax would come from Northern Ireland. He recalls making nets himself. The first 20 yards of the net would be hemp. He says there was no salmon there in the 1950s but the ESB started a hatchery in Parteen in 1959. It was three years before they started to come back. Then the trawlers started netting them and that finished the river. He says there were oyster beds in Poulnasherry before his time. He recalls a sailing boat called 'Master Dan' belonging to Dan Ryan who had a flour mill. He would keep it in the marina. He remembers seeing the turf boat 'Maggie [May]' in Poulnasherry. His grandfather's name was Paddy Blunnie. The people living in Scattery often went to sea fishing.

0:11:29 – 0:12:21

SCATTERY ISLAND –

He speaks of Gerald Griffin, a river pilot from Scattery. He says Bobby McMahon and his sister Patty were the last inhabitants of the island. Bobby was killed by a car not long after coming to live on the mainland.

0:12:22 – 0:18:16
SEAWEED –

Sinon says there were 35/40 boats a year coming to Cappagh. He mentions what goods would come in and out on the boats. They collected seaweed for the seaweed factory at a place called Barr na Haille, near Brew's Bridge and at Poulnasherry. He describes how they cut it. He says the top price was Â£5.10 a tonne. He says they graded it in the factory. It was the blackweed they picked. In Quilty they picked the long ribbon weed. In the Square they had a weighbridge. He explains what they did with the seaweed in the factory. He mentions eating 'slabhcán'. He says that wouldn't grow around there but in the Atlantic. They would pick and sell periwinkles to Martin McInerney. They would get 12 shillings a hundred weight. They would start picking in September until April. Now he says they are picking all year and the stocks are reduced.

0:18:17 – 0:20:38
BOATS –

He speaks of the boats that Glin's had-'The Dingle' and 'The Lita' and Ryans had the 'St Senan'. Dan and Mike Moynihan were on the St Senan. They both got jobs in Foynes and they both drowned. He speaks of a boating tragedy off the coast when he was young-Clancy, Kit and O'Shea were their names.

0:20:39 – 0:28:02
FISHING –

Sinon went to the national school across from Moody's. When he left school at 12

he went herring fishing with his uncle Marto and Steven Walsh. They would go to Brew's Bridge and moor the nets across the bay at night and haul them in the morning. They would sell them on the street. November/December was the time for herring. Before that he says canoes from Kilrush and Scattery would go back as Querrin, drifting at night. They would go as far as Coorless and would call it 'down the Coore drifting'. He explains how this was done. He speaks briefly of seals. He says they came from all over for the salmon. John Coffey was a local buyer; Dowd's from Tralee; Burns from Cork. The biggest one they ever got was 22lb. He says the ESB are not stocking them now.

0:28:03 – 0:30:19
FAIRS –

Sinon speaks of the horse fairs-there were four; 25th March; 1st Thursday in June; 10th October and 23rd November. He speaks of the cart they had for the seaweed.

0:30:20 – 0:32:37
CANOES/NETS –

Sinon was brought up in O'Gorman St. He speaks of where the canoes were kept. He thinks Kilrush was the only place they had canoes. He mentions Gerry & TV Malone in fishing around Knock. Sinon had a canoe built by 'Cully' Marrinan. He bought it from a Scattery man called Davy Melican. He speaks of the size of nets for different fish. He says the dawn of the morning is the best time for herring to rise.

0:32:38 – 0:39:56
SCATTERY/HOG ISLAND –

Sinon thinks there were about 120 people living on Scattery at one time. Sinon and Micky Kelly would bring 15 hundred weight of coal a time into the lighthouse keeper, in a canoe. Bobby McMahon the lighthouse keeper would get 3 tonne a

year from the Irish Lights. They would bring cattle swimming out as far as Hog Island. Vim Reidy would keep cattle in there. He says there were the remains of a small house there.

0:39:57 – 0:42:38