

## Harris Fishing Heritage Project 2007

### Interview with Donald MacKay (DMK), Scalpay

(Translation of original Gaelic transcript)

**NB:**

**...denotes pauses in speech**

**[...] denotes text which has been edited out**

JMD: *This is Jo MacDonald speaking with Donald MacKay in Scalpay, on the 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2007. We are going to talk about the fishing. You know a lot about the fishing Donald?*

DMK: I started fishing for lobsters when I left school.

*Is it impolite for me to ask how old you are?*

I'm over 74.

*You don't look that! So you started fishing when you left school?*

Before I left school. We used to go out to the lobsters after school. The lobster was plentiful then.

*What boat were you on first?*

Well, we had a boat ourselves called the *Boy Fred* and that was where we started. And we had another one - it was a coble and my brother and myself used to go out with her around the corners here. Och, we did alright.

*Was the fishing in the family?*

O yes. My father sailed [deep sea] and I sailed for a while too but I came back to the fishing. It was in the blood and you had to come back.

*You started on the lobster?*

On the lobster, aye. They used to put them in tea-chests then. They would cut them and fill them and put heather or straw on them and pack them up and send them to Billingsgate.

*They were dry then?*

O the drier the better. As long as the air didn't get to them. [...] Sometimes they [the buyers] would say they were dead when they weren't at all but you would have to take their word for it.

*And how long would they last?*

They would take a good while going to Billingsgate. They would take days. But as long as they were dry and the air wasn't near them, they would last a good while...yes. They used to put the crab in peat-dross and they would be like that for days...as long as their backs didn't dry out you were ok. [...] They used to go to Baxters then and which other ones? O, a few would buy then...George Rush...that was another one in Billingsgate. [...]

*How were they sent to Billingsgate?*

They would go off on the *Lochmor* down to Kyle of Lochalsh. The small boats would go out to the *Lochmor* and put them aboard. That's how they went. But at that time most of the boats worked 40 creels. That kept them going. Quite often they would start on the lobster on the 20<sup>th</sup> August. That was the usual starting date and then they would work for part of the winter until the bad weather sent them in.

*When were the prices best for the lobster?*

O around Christmas. That was how the pond was good you see. We used to store them there up until the new year. We used to send them away then. O you used to double your money then. But the ones that were there before me...they had always been at the lobster. They didn't do anything but the lobster...and the herring sometimes. They used to go up to Lewis and all over. They would sleep on the boats. O they were famous for the lobster.

*How long were you on the Boy Fred?*

Then another boat came...the *Maria*...she came from the Clyde and then I came to the herring in her first year. We worked the drifts. [...]

*Was that your own boat?*

No, no. I was in her as a wee skivvy! [...] I was in that one for two seasons.

*What type of boat was she?*

O, one of the ringers that worked down on the Clyde. But latterly she was used here as a passenger-boat before the ferry came. That was her job then. We were at the herring with her and the big nets...we fished for cod out of Lochmaddy. At that time the cod was...you could half-fill the hold with cod. Things have changed today.

*How long was the Maria?*

O she was nearly fifty [ft]. O she was long. There were very few ringers at that time. [...]

*Did you just cast a net?*

O you just cast driftnets...you might have forty nets at the drift.

*That was for the herring?*

Yes. But this was closed...the herring fishing was closed down and you weren't allowed to put a net to sea at all. It was closed for two years but when it opened again the herring had come back.

*Was this the quota that was imposed?*

O no. It was closed then. It had grown so scarce then anyway and they closed it. There is a while since then...there must be at least twenty years. [...] You weren't allowed to put a net to sea at all. They opened it then and the herring was beautiful.

*Was it?*

O yes. I got forty nets from Ireland and we got a boat...she was called the *Hopeful*. She was for the drifts...and we took her out for a while. We got up to twenty crans every night. We only had six or seven nets...and the prices then were just brilliant.

*Who was on that one?*

Just whoever turned up. Anyone who wanted to go out. My son and myself were on her. [...] We had another one called the *Pine*. We got her from Strond. When I came back from sea I got her in Strond. I restored her myself. She already had an engine. We had her at the drifts and we got five crans of herring one night and we got £86 per box of herring...which I think was a world record.

*£86 for a box of herring?*

Yes. We got that [rate] for all the herring.

*That was marvellous!*

Marvellous! It was hard to believe. But people were so desperate then to get herring that they would pay anything.

*And how many boxes are in a cran?*

Four. Four baskets...that's a cran. We only had seven nets out. We got...I used to get twenty crans in seven nets. That was an excellent shot.

[...]

*And when were you at sea?*

I think I went to sea in '51.

*Where did you sail?*

O I went round the world a few times.

*What boat were you on?*

O I was on lots...nearly twenty I'm sure.

*Was it the Merchant Navy?*

Yes. I was on a troop ship out of Korea for a while [...] I was on the Ben Line then...that was in the Far East [...]

*What was the best place you ever saw?*

Well, the nicest place I ever saw was Vancouver Island. I nearly jumped ship there. [...] There was fishing there too. They had the same idea there as they had here, with the ringnet. They would close the net and the trout would be as plentiful as driven-snow there.

[...]

*How many years did you spend at sea?*

O...thirteen years. I married in Glasgow and then I worked between Ireland and Glasgow. [...] Then we built a new boat...Kenneth was skipper on her...the *Village Maid*...[...] She was built in Girvan and we were at the ringnet with her...and the scallops. But that was what helped Scalpay....the Highland Development Board. If it wasn't for that I don't know. It helped the whole of the Western Isles.

*Did they give grants?*

O yes. [...] You could get a grant from the Highland Development Board and you could get a loan from the Herring Industry Board.

*And with the two, you were able to buy your own boat?*

O yes. It was a great help here. Most of the fishermen here worked in Skye until the Highland Development Board came.

*And then they were able to buy boats themselves?*

Aye. They were all bought new.

*When did you buy the boat?*

1971.

*What was she called again?*

The *Village Maid*.

*What length was she?*

Just short of sixty [ft].

*Was she a ringnet?*

Ringnet...yes. Well, she was at the trawl too and the midwater. She was dual-purpose you know.

*What was the midwater?*

You trawled mid-water. You didn't reach the sea-bed at all. It was for the herring or the mackerel...you would see the spot on the echo sounder and you would alter the net according to that.

*And did the ringnet go deeper?*

O you reached the sea-bed. You just made a circle and the other one would lift the other end and the one net would go into the one boat then. The two crews would come into the one boat then.

*Did you need two boats for the midwater too?*

O yes, for towing. They always worked in pairs. The Development Board did a lot of good here even for the school itself...all that came home here to the fishing itself. Alasdair himself came home...and Ewen...and if it wasn't for these children Scalpay School would have closed long ago [...]

*You must have seen a big difference in the fishing in the time you were away sailing. Was there a big difference in these thirteen years?*

Well, you had more of a chance...at that time you just had the drift but with these boats you could have anything...trawl or scallops or...

*They were suitable for anything?*

Anything. There was good fishing at the time.

[...]

When you filled the boat with herring you headed for Ullapool...they 'd even speak to each other on the wireless.

*You could hear the other boats?*

They would sing songs. It was like a wedding. You would head off at midnight and there would always be two in the wheel-house...they would be speaking to each other and joking and singing songs. You didn't feel the time passing. You couldn't wait for Monday morning to arrive so you could get out again.

*How far out did you go?*

O they went up to Kinlochbervie and Barra Head...

*How far south did you go?*

O Barra Head and down to Mallaig and that way. They followed the herring. [...]

*How did you spend the day onboard?*

Well, you slept through the day and it was at night that you worked.

*And were you away all week?*

It depended where you worked. If you worked down in Uist or Barra you were away all week.

*Did you leave early on Monday morning?*

Well, it depended where you heard there was herring. If you were down by Lochmaddy and thereabouts you would have to leave early. I think when the herring went, Scalpay went with it. And it wasn't just Scalpay, but Uist and Eriskay too. The herring was always on their minds you see. Lewis was different...they mostly had the trawl there.

*They didn't use the ringnet?*

There might have been a couple but Scalpay and Eriskay were similar regarding fishing. Harris too...Plocropool and places like that.

*And you fished for the herring at night?*

Yes. I have seen it caught during the day too but usually you went out at night. [...]

*How did you locate the herring?*

You would see it on the sounder. Well, at first they used to use a lead weight attached to a wire and they would drop that, and tow it and you could feel the herring hitting into it. You could feel a tap, tap. You shouted to the skipper. You could feel it as it was so heavy you see. Some were better than others at feeling it, but if you did you knew there was something good below.

*And would you use the seagulls as a guide too?*

O aye, and the gannets. That was as good a sign as anything. I remember an old man down here...he had been at the herring all his life...and one day he told my son "Cast out behind the island here – there's herring there." We went out and cast and we didn't see a thing. But we saw one seagull and we cast there anyway and we got twenty crans the next day. Twenty crans. He knew there was herring. He must have been watching the seagulls. [...]

*That was good fishing...twenty crans.*

It was very interesting. And the clams too.

*You were at the clams too?*

We were at the clams latterly...we just sold the boat this week.

*What was that one called?*

The *Hopeful*.

*You had the Village Maid first and then the Hopeful?*

Yes.

*What size was the Hopeful?*

36...well she was 38[ft] overall. I enjoyed it because you used to haul them in every hour. We were never too keen on the trawl...the prawns. You used to haul these every hour and so you were looking out for something every hour. You didn't feel the time long. At the prawn you might get twenty stone and have to tail them all. It depends what you're used to. [...]

*How did the year work?*

You would get herring out on the banks in the summer...but the herring was usually in the lochs in the winter.

*When did the herring start then?*

They used to start the drift here in May [...] Things have changed today. [...] At that time there was nothing but the drift until the ringnet started and then the midwater. Then the purse came but we never had the purse here. I don't think it ever did this place any good.

*That was even bigger than the ringnet?*

That was like a football pitch.

*Did that work at a greater depth?*

O yes...it is very deep. They talk about 'tonnies' now. They don't look at crans or baskets. They don't look at daily bread today...they just want to make their fortune and get out. That's their attitude today.

*They wanted to make money quickly?*

Quickly. Well, there is a lot of expense today...oil and everything. [...] But that time we got £86 per box...an elderly man here had gone out with us and I went up and gave him the envelope. He took the envelope to his room and he wasn't coming back. In

the end I said to his wife. "I don't think Finlay is well. He isn't coming back." She went up and he had spread the money on the bed...and he said to her "I don't think that man is wise!" You know, with the amount of money he got. He said that he got more with those five crans than he sometimes used to get on the boats in a year...in a season anyway. [...]

*When was that? What year?*

O over twenty years ago. I don't remember the date.

*And that was the best price you ever got for it?*

O yes. O the price was steadily good. We sold it in Stornoway. [...] The herring was a good size too...it had a [good] back on it. [...] But I think I enjoyed the lobster fishing most of all. The lobster was interesting.

*Was the lobster as profitable as the herring?*

O there was good money in the lobster. You didn't have the expense you had with the other fishing. Especially when you stored it in the pond and doubled your money.

[...]

*What pastimes did you have onboard? You mentioned songs and things like that.*

Well, if a bad day came and you were away from home you might anchor in a bay. You would go from boat to boat then. There might be four or five boats tied up and you would go from boat to boat telling yarns. [...] O it was great fun.

*And there were also superstitions connected with the fishing?*

O yes. At one time here you wouldn't pass an old lady on the road at all. If you saw an old lady you would take a wide berth so that she wouldn't speak to you.

*And that was seen as bad luck?*

O yes. And ministers. They didn't believe in ministers going anywhere near boats here. I don't remember this but I heard them talking about it. There was one...in Skye I think...and she wasn't catching any herring so [...] they lit a cloth on a stick and they would go round the boat with it, tapping the edge. They would recite a verse too. They would tap the boat right round and then they would throw it out. That night they went out and filled the boat with herring.

*Were they getting rid of a spirit or something like that?*

They must have been. There was such a thing as the evil eye too you know.

*And was it just certain old ladies or all old ladies that you had to avoid?*

Some of them were noted!

*And how did they get that reputation? Did they have second sight or something like that?*

It must have been. That's what they maintained anyway.

*Were there colours that they wanted to avoid too?*

O yes. And if you mentioned 'trout' or 'deer' they would throw you over-board. O yes. Don't mention that on a herring boat...a deer or a trout.

*Were there any other animals?*

Well, they were noted anyway.

*Why?*

O I don't know.

*Kenneth was telling me about the matches too.*

The Swan Vestas? O yes. They couldn't stand them.

*The swan couldn't have been lucky either!*

O no. The white swan. There was lots of that sort of thing.

*And they didn't like croatal socks either?*

O no...no use.

*And green things?*

O they didn't want green clothes at all. I remember when I first came home with that boat, it was painted green and Finlay was up there on the hill [...] and I heard him shout "Take that colour off her!" Ha ha!

*Why green?*

O I don't know. It was something they got into their heads.

*There must have been songs and such like on the boats too?*

O yes. There are lots of songs here that weren't heard...and it was a shame too. [...] Lots of songs were composed here that I never heard anything about again. I used to hear my mother...Well I came home here on holiday once and I made a tape of the older folk and it was just out of this world. I went off to Glasgow and I went to a wedding and they asked me to take the tape with me and so I took the recorder and everything. I had a Morris Traveller at the time [...] I came back and there was no

sign of the tape-recorder. It had been broken into. I wrote to the *Daily Record* to ask them to send me the tape and keep the tape-recorder but I never heard anything.

*No. That was a great pity.*

O it was good too [...]

*Do you sing?*

O certainly not! None of us [the family] can sing.

*The Scalpay folk are generally very good singers.*

O yes. [...]

*When was the fishing at its peak in Scalpay?*

O that was it...in the seventies. Every night the boats would be full. A hundred crans...two hundred crans...you never saw anything as beautiful as a big ring of herring...the silver darlings. It was just...I'm sure you could hear them in Skye [the fishermen] if you were up at the south bank. O...

*These days have gone.*

Do you know...even if you were out there all day you won't hear anyone mention the wireless. They talk to each other on the phone. That has all gone. The mobile phone are handy in many ways but it isn't in other ways.

*But the VHF is still there?*

O it has to be on them. [...]

*Why do you think the fishing changed? What caused that?*

Well, the herring has grown so scarce. They aren't getting any herring here just now...not one. They get some on the west side of Lewis with the darrows...they could fill a basket. And there is very little lobster.

*I wonder why?*

Goodness knows. They blame this and that.

*What do you think yourself?*

That it was destroyed. That's for sure. [...]

*That must have affected the community... when the fishing changed?*

O yes. That is certain. You don't need as many in the boats today...two or three. There aren't enough people anyway. Latterly you couldn't get anyone to go out in your place. You were very tied.

[...]

I think there was a saving of the fishermen around here...especially the ones that worked at the ringnet. The Avochs and the Eriskay folk...if you could see the corners they went into with the boats. They didn't have a radar or anything. Going about there amongst the rocks. [...]

*Were people never lost here at the fishing?*

Not at the fishing. [...] They were experienced and they needed to be.

*They would have to know the skerries and such like?*

O yes. And they had eyes. Today the boats are full of lights and the wheel-house is full of computers and lights...but then...the lights in the boats had to be dim and you could see better. They had good vision. [...]

*How did you learn about the skerries?*

O local knowledge. There's nothing like it.

*Better than any radar.*

They have things today that they can use anywhere. You can even see the small rocks on the shore...they are there in front of you. [...] At one time you knew your course from light to light. I believe that if the equipment in the wheelhouse failed that they wouldn't remember the courses.

[...]

*They also read the Bible onboard didn't they?*

O yes...every night. Quite often if two or three boats were together some of them would go into the one boat...and they would praise-sing. You could hear the boats singing.

*That would be lovely to hear.*

O yes. And it was especially lovely in a small nook.

*What do you think the Scalpay fishing will be like in the future?*

Well, if the fishing continues as it is, there won't be anyone to go out with a boat. They can't even row today. They have to switch the outboard on even if they are only going to travel three lengths of the boat.

My father had a small punt beneath the house here and that was my play-pen! We spent all our time in it. They weren't worried about us. We would take the small boat and go out near the lighthouse...two, three or four of us and we had barely started school. [...]

*How many boats fish out of Scalpay today?*

Well, there are seven or eight small boats. The *Majestic* down there [at jetty below house] is the only one of that class left in Scalpay since our own one went. But you never know what might come in the future. We mustn't look on the dark side all the time.

*Well, that's true. But things have changed.*

O yes. A place without young people is going down anyway.

*You were talking about the skerries. What are the skerries round here called?*

We call that Sgeir a' Chatha over there...Sgeirean Raitheam...you can see that from the anchorage here...Sgeir MhicCuinn...they are named you see...Sgeir a' Bhraghaidh Mhòir...Bogha na Caillich and Bogha Bocaig and Bogha Lag na ??, Bogha Catrìona and Bogha ?? Caolais...I have the marks for all of these...all of these marks. Where we used to fish for the lythe...you worked on the land marks all the time then.

*Did that mean that you took note of the land?*

That was how you located the reefs...out from the shore.

*What are the reefs?*

Rocks under the sea. [...]

*The skerries and the reefs were named?*

They were all named.

*You heard all this from previous generations?*

We would leave here...it would almost be dark and we would be working here...we had marks on the Scalpay light...it might be pitch black and that was when they caught most...when they lit the Scalpay light. It might be midnight before we would come home.

*You knew where every reef and every rock was?*

You didn't have a sounder or anything but you could feel the darrow sticking.

*They used to look at the stars and the moon too didn't they?*

They did. They would look at the moon.

*But I suppose that applied more to the deep sea, to sailing. I don't suppose they would need to look at these things so much in by the shore?*

No, not by the shore.

It's puzzling where the cuddies and the saith went...all the fishing has gone. There is nothing.

*They also say that the sea is getting warmer?*

Yes, they say that, that it is warmer this year than it has been for some time. That doesn't help either.

[...]

*Which boats were there in Scalpay then?*

*White Rose, Golden Rule, the Britannia, the Agate, Try Again, Choice, Golden Eagle, Venture, Bright Reward, Jasper, Virgin, Industry...many. And there were lots of small boats too...*

*Did many of them have Gaelic names?*

Some of them [...] but they usually had women's' names...but they kept to the same name you see? Many didn't believe it was right to change a boat's name...that it was unlucky to change a boat's name...that if you got a boat, that you would keep the name you see. [...]

*Do most still do that?*

Och they don't look at anything like that today.

*Where did the boat you sold go?*

She is still in Mallaig. She is in the same condition as the day she was built. We used to put seven coats of varnish on that boat every year.

*To make her water-proof?*

Well, to maintain her... You would hardly be able to put one coat on her today with the kind of weather we have.

*There was lots of work in that?*

You put on the first coat [...] You sanded it down at first and put turps in it to make it very, very thin....and then you added to it until the last two coats were varnish alone. You sanded every coat until you came to the last two. That meant the inside and everything. [...]

*They were lovely with the varnish.*

O there were boats here then...you wouldn't see their like anywhere.

*How long would you be on land doing that?*

O you would take a good while. [...] Weeks...up to a month I suppose.

*What time of the year?*

O, in the summer. There were summers then. You got hot weather and you needed that.

*Where would you do that?*

O in at these piers here. It was ourselves that got these piers made. They 're handy for the boats. There was another pier beneath the school-house and they took the big boats there.

*What wood were they made from?*

These were mostly made from larch and oak. They kept these boats like yachts. They were easy to keep.

[...]

*Were you ever really scared at sea?*

No, I wouldn't say I was scared. It wouldn't do you any good to be scared.

*No! Were you never caught in a really bad gale?*

O manys a time. You are brought up with it here, you don't think anything of it. [...]

*And in a gale, do you just put the anchor down?*

Well, you would have to find a place to anchor first, where you would get some sort of shelter. We passed here manys a night with a boat full of herring, going to Ullapool. I was on one...the *Joanne*...and only six inches of her were above the water when she was full of herring. [...] You didn't think anything of it. But they were good boats...strong boats.

*Did you ever go on a rock?*

O manys a time! Ha ha! O, when they were at the ringnet here they would go on the rocks and they didn't think anything of it.

*But it is amazing that people weren't lost considering how many...*

Yes. Well, a boy was lost here but the boat was hit.

*O yes. That was sad...*

It was sad. Now, some were lost...they were related to us...but that was a long, long time ago. Brothers were lost. I think they went too close to the reef. They had to dodge at that time...he took her too close to the skerry and she went over. They were lost but it's a long, long time ago.

*Wasn't a hymn made?*

Yes. I heard your father sing it.

*That was very interesting. We could talk about the fishing all night. It's good to preserve these stories.*

It is.

See that pond down there...it was themselves that made it.

*Who was that?*

These boys that I told you about...they made it themselves and it was very well engineered. The sea surrounded the island and they would have to keep the water...they would have to work it out...when the sea would leave the pond...they would have to work out how much water they would have to leave in her. O they worked it out and very few lobsters died. The water circled all the time.

*Is this Àrd na Cille?*

Aye. [...] That's the pond [shows photo]. It is between two islands. The water comes into it and leaves it. So much water would have to be in it...if you had 200 dozen in it they would have to get so much oxygen you see. It was worked out you see.

*And the tide came into it?*

Yes. It was built...I think it was ten feet wide at the bottom...and it was built up until it was four feet above the high-water mark. The tide would cover it and there was a net on it.

*There was a net over it so the lobster wouldn't escape?*

O aye. If there was even a small hole on it, the lobster would find it in no time.

*What material were the nets made from?*

Galvanised...just the same stuff as is used for fencing but it would have to be galvanised. But the thing was...when you caught them you would have to watch the tide. You would have to go down and catch them to lift them out.

*When the tide was going out?*

O the tide would have to be as far out as it would go. They would perhaps lift them a week beforehand and put them in boxes out there so they would be ready to be sent away.

*How deep would the pond itself be?*

It would be seven or eight feet deep.

*How did you catch the lobsters?*

You just grabbed them by the back of the neck. And you had to watch that they wouldn't grab you!

*It must have been difficult to catch them then, if it was that deep.*

O you went under. If you saw one you would make a dive onto it. If there had been wetsuits then you 'd have been alright but we didn't have that then.

*That must have been a cold job?*

In the winter there would be a quiver on your heart!

*And just with oilskins?*

Oilskins, yes.

*You would take a while catching them like that?*

O you would take a while. There might be two of you.

*What would happen then? Did you have containers?*

O a basket and you would then put them in a box and leave them out on an anchor there.

*And they would survive for a while?*

O yes. They are talking about harvesting cod. I remember one time...being in her [the pond] and hearing a splash behind me. I got a fright...I thought someone had fallen in and I was puzzled about what it was. A while after that, the same thing happened and I said to myself "There's something here." And I started looking and there was a cod in the pond and it had grown this big. It had been feeding on the lobsters' feed...the cuddies. [...] The cod must have got in as a tiny thing and grown.

*You fed them cuddies?*

Cuddies, aye. We would go down with a spoon-net and fill a sack and then you would scatter them round the whole pond.

*They were dead?*

O yes. As soon as you would put the first one in you could see their claws moving. You could stay all day watching them.

*How often would you have to put a sack in to them?*

O, once a week anyway. Depending on the number. We put creels down sometimes to save having to catch them. [...] I once saw 16 lobsters in the one creel out at the Shiants. Aye, they had big long creels...I'm sure they were six feet long...and they had a sort of kitchen in them. There were two channels into the creel itself and another channel went into the kitchen and that was where the lobster went. It would look for an escape route...and it would go into the kitchen...and there was no way out of the kitchen. But I don't know if it was a good thing. Plenty maintained that it didn't do the lobster any good. At one time you would lift a creel and set it the next day and perhaps there would be a lobster in it and you would be quite happy...and then you would go and put the creel somewhere else. You would perhaps leave two or three behind...but if you set the parlour it would be there for the weekend or for a few days and then you might get five or six lobsters. You clean the cairn out and they used to say that the lobster wouldn't return so quickly.

[...]

*Are there any more sites around that the archaeologists could visit, apart from the ponds?*

No. Just the piers.

*When was this jetty down here built? Do you have any idea?*

There will be nearly twenty years I suppose.

*What is this called?*

O just 'the jetty'. This one is very handy. You can use this one during an ebb-tide. It is the one place in Scalpay that you can access during an ebb-tide. It is deeper. The other one is shallower. But this is a very useful place. If there was any problem with a boat, you could get into that one.

*What do they call the place?*

That's the south harbour. That island out there is called Raochalan. That's Black Hill opposite you there. This is the village. The north harbour is on the other side.

*Did they use that one more often?*

O...jetties were built there for the boats.

*Which were the oldest piers?*

O...there was a place on the far side which they called Rubh nam Bàtaichean [the Point of the Boats]...it was once a curing station for the herring. Now, the shed which is opposite you over there is called Lèabag an Eathair. They did the curing there at one time.

*Is that the shed across there with the rusty roof?*

Yes. They called it Lèabag an Eathair.

*That's a great age is it?*

O that's...I remember the boats landing there...when they were at the drift...but it is a very early memory.

*When would that have been? Was that in the forties or so?*

O yes. After the War. I remember the drifters coming to the far pier. You could almost walk over to the mouth of the harbour on the drifters. O, Scalpay was busy then. You could almost walk from there to the fishermen's' jetty on the boats...they were that plentiful.

*I believe that. They would be side by side.*

Aye. Scalpay has gone backwards instead of forwards. At that time they cured and kippered...and the kippers would go off around the world. See how many shops were here at one time...there were six or seven and now there's only one...and that one itself won't be there much longer. [since the interview, the shop has closed]

*Things have certainly changed.*

O things have changed. But that's it. Young people aren't getting married here.

[...]

*Well, thank you very much for that. That was really interesting.*

Don't put that on the wireless anyway or I'll have to run away!

*It's great. It could go on the wireless!*

DISK ENDS

