

## **Transcript of interview with Archie Johnston of Cockenzie, East Lothian**

My name's Archie Buchanan Johnston and I've been a fisherman all my life. My father was a fisherman and my grandfather was a fisherman and on my mother's side, her father was a fisherman so I was the offspring of fishing people let's put it that way. Going back quite a while...we've always been fishermen let's put it that way.

Interviewer: in East Lothian...

Archie Johnstone: in Cockenzie

Archie Johnstone: I was brought up with a grandfather in the house from the time I was three years old so I learned quite a lot about Cockenzie, Port Seton and about fishing from my grandfather and my father.

During the war, the latter end of the second World War we had a fishing boat. My grandfather was in the boat and my father was in the boat and my brother was in the boat. All three of them were in the same boat fishing out of here to...in the Forth so they were fishing in the Forth then. We have quite a history of fishing.

I started at the fishing when I was fifteen. I started in 1952. That's when I started the fishing, 1952. That was with my father and my brother in the same boat. My grandfather just died then. He just died in September and I left the school in the February so yeah he never saw me at the fishing. My other grandfather, my mother's father he did see me at the fishing.

See when I started the sea we were based in Port Seton. On the Sunday night we went away out of Port Seton and we went right outside the Forth we didnae stay inside the Forth, we went outside the Forth and fished. Every night or every other night we came into Dunbar and the lorries from Port Seton came down to Dunbar and collected our fish and took the fish up to Newhaven market in Edinburgh. And we would work a week and then on a Friday, a Friday we all came back up to Port Seton so Port Seton was a hub at that time. Out of Port Seton there were maybe about 35 boats that were fishing. The Saturday morning the boats had tae get filled up with fuel and then the ice lorry, to keep the fish, because we were sending them back to Edinburgh, the ice lorry came down. So each boat, most of the boats either got a ton o ice or two ton o ice depending on the size of the boat. That was all to get filled into the lockers o the boat on a Saturday morning.

The harbour across the road there, that was Cockenzie Harbour. There's never been much fishing done out of Cockenzie Harbour since they opened the new harbour at Port Seton. So that was opened, the new harbour at Port Seton in 1881. Cockenzie is the oldest harbour. It was always used for exportin. They exported coal out o there and they exported salt. They exported salt to Iceland and coal to Iceland.

What happened was the fishermen, fished out o there and they kept the boats in there. When one of the families that owned the district, they decided they were going to use the harbour for exportin. They told the fishermen they would have to get out so they were put out. So the fishermen got together and they went to the Earl of Wemyss because Port Seton harbour was there but it wasnae really a harbour because it was too open. It was open to the wind. They had gathered money themselves to build a harbour but they hadn't enough

money but the Earl of Wemyss, he gave them £2,000 way back in 1881 to build the harbour. And it was newly built and they needed more pier space so they wanted to build another extension on in the middle so they went to him again for more money and he says "we'll do that". So he gave them the money for it and he said "it's not my harbour, it's your harbour. So that is how Port Seton harbour belonged to the fishermen. It was gifted to the fishermen.