

# The Faces Behind Our Food

## Interview with Ray Edmondson, Edmondsons Fresh Fish

Interviewer: Anna Clayton

Johnny Bean also present

Duration: 11 minutes.57 seconds

Date and time: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2016 7:30am

Location: Stone Jetty, Morecambe

Time (minutes.seconds)	Interview transcript
0.02	<p>Interviewer in <b>bold</b>, Ray in normal type Interjections in [square brackets], other sounds and notes in (these brackets)</p> <p>Yeah. <b>OK, I'll start asking. So, can you introduce yourself and just tell us a little about Edmondsons and how long you have been going.</b></p>
0.14	<p>Edmondsons, yeah, we've. I was made redundant from ICI so we started on. I've always been interested in fishing. I used to go out with a guy called urgh Dennis Alden for five years so, I started fishing on my own and. I got my little shop with me redundancy money from the ICI, I got my little shop on Yorkshire street and, 34 and a half years ago, and we're still trying to make a living now (sniff). There have been quite a few obstacles put in our (sniff) way over the years but urgh, we are struggling on.</p>
0.48	<p><b>OK, and what, what do you enjoy most about the work you do and what do you enjoy least?</b></p> <p>Urgh, when I was younger, a few years ago, I'd perhaps go out (clears throat) when the weather wasn't quite as good, and things like that. But now I am getting a little bit older I tend to pick the nicer days rather than the bad days. I still enjoy it. It's lovely when you pull a net full of shrimps in. But there seems to be more days when you don't pull a net full of shrimps in.</p>
1.20	<p><b>Because the weather is getting worse?</b></p> <p>Well, it's more the conditions in Morecambe, the channels are changing and things like that.</p> <p><b>So can you tell us a bit about why the channels are changing? What's, what's happened?</b></p> <p>Well, the sea defences have gone down, and they've extended the stone jetty and stopped the flow of water and there seems to be mud and silt, urgh, everywhere you look. But urgh...</p>
1.45	<p><b>And how does that impact on you? What have you had to change to adapt to that?</b></p> <p>It urgh, just seems to get (sniff) more disheartening year by year (clears throat). Once upon a time when I started fishing there'd be 25 and about 30 boats, and now there's me and another lad. And, he's, urgh, gets a little bit upset at times as well. There seems to be one obstruction after another. If it isn't the sea defences and mud it's the RNLI come along and put yellow cross hatchings on our slip way that we have used for years, and all of a sudden that's another thing we have to</p>

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	<p>contend with – as if there isn't enough already <b>[yeah]</b>. There are so many rules and regulations; tests for your boat and what you can and can't do, and forms to fill in. And things just aren't the same. And urgh, yeah I wouldn't want to. What should I say? Urgh, advise anybody to take this job up in a hurry because it's certainly not... It's a lot easier sat at the back of a desk. You'll make a better living sat at the back of a desk and a lot easier living than you will scratting out about here for a few shrimps. A bit disheartening really but that's how it goes.</p>
3.08	<p><b>So have you seen many changes in how many shrimp and fish you are catching? And the types of fish and shrimp that are available?</b>          Urgh, well there's, urgh, what should I say? There's good times and bad times there is with the shrimps. And that's another problem- that you, you can't just catch shrimps 12 months...if you could catch shrimp 12 months of the year, just catch enough, weather permitting, the job would be fine. But what you find with the shrimps is that they seem to come and go. You know, they and they can just appear overnight. Urgh</p>
3.48	<p><b>Do you know why that is? Or...I know nothing about shrimps..</b>          No its (clearing throat) it's just how they, they live in the sand (clears throat). And urgh, whether they move out of the bay in the middle of the winter, or whether they bury in the sand...Perhaps one of these scientists will probably know, urgh, better than me. But urgh (clears throat), they seem to just come and go. And you can have good times and bad times and. The thing nowadays is there seems to be more bad times than good times.</p>
4.17	<p><b>Um can you talk us through the average day- if you are going to go out and the weather's good? What, what does your day involve? Is it an early start? Do you finish...</b>          I just work with the tides. Once upon a time when I was a sailor and I was a bit younger, I was a bit keener and I'd get up early morning but now, if the tide, if I can go on the day time tide, I'll tend to go more in the daytime tide <b>[ok]</b>. (clears throat). <b>[um]</b> Make things a little bit easier for myself.</p>
4.45	<p><b>And have, have you noticed any changes with climate change? In terms of the weather or the catch, or you haven't seen any impacts?</b>          Weather... well, well you get good weather and bad weather don't you? I can remember when I was a kid, during the winter, there was always sledging. There was always snow here but now you never seem to see much snow in Morecambe.          [Johnny: I've seen those big ice shots from back in the...]          Oh back in my time <b>[yeah]</b>. It's frozen up. Frozen <b>[oh wow]</b>, frozen up, yeah.</p>
5.23	<p>The old wooden Nobbies, the old boat, when I used to fish the boats were wooden – they were called Nobbies – they were built in urgh, in Crossfields in Arnside. They were lovely sailing boats. And they had to nail little urgh, what should I say, fenders around the water line, round the water's edge. Umm like, so pieces of thin plywood or something like that- nail it around the water's edge, because the thickness of the ice that used to come drifting down passed them, it used to cut into the hull! Yeah.</p>

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<p>5.56</p>	<p><b>What are the other big changes you've noticed then in your fishing career?</b> (pause...laughs) There isn't as many fishermen now as there used to be. [so, where] There isn't. <b>All the fishermen - you said there used to be 30 boats. Where have they all gone now?</b> Many of them have died [OK]. Er, but a lot found work at various places, urgh, and found out that it was easier to make money just getting up at 8 o'clock in the morning and clocking in and clocking off. Yeah.</p>
<p>6.34</p>	<p><b>So what about your, your son? He also fishes?</b> No, no. He used to do. But urgh no. He won't, he won't be doing any fishing, no. [OK](splashing).</p>
<p>6.46</p>	<p><b>So what do you see the future of Morecambe's fishing industry being?</b> Urgh, well unless, unless somebody is urgh (sniff) mad enough to start up urgh (laughs), it's a bit, urgh, sad at the moment – to put it mildly. [yeah] Yeah.</p>
<p>7.06</p>	<p><b>But you've kept going. What makes you keep going?</b> Well I mean, I, I should have retired what, what is it now? 67, two years ago! [OK] (laugh). But, urgh, I'm still (laughs) I'm still going. If I don't go and catch a few shrimps well, urgh, I'm afraid Edmondsons on Yorkshire street will cease to, to be selling shrimps. It's as simple as that. And the way my back feels this morning, it might not be (laughs), it might not be much longer. (laughs) Er!</p>
<p>7.43</p>	<p><b>So the... you mentioned all the challenges you've faced. And we heard about ummm the, the barriers and the defences. What other key barriers have you faced that makes life difficult for you and the other fishermen in the area?</b> Well, you're stood in it now! [yep, the mud!] (laughs) [It's very sticky! Yep]. (laughs) <b>Is that the key one?</b> It's, it's pretty muddy here but there are places that are a little bit worse than this. You can't walk in them! [OK]. No. That's why they've sort of built this, urgh, make-shift road down for us to get up and down to our boats. Urgh, which is OK but, the mud just doesn't stop coming. Since these, urgh, as I say, defences have gone, gone up, urgh, it's just. Well, you can see for yourself. It's just, urgh. Its... There has always been silt, but, there's more now because of these. [yeah, you can see the change in level of the ground]. It can, it can, it can. The silt that it can drop down over night. I have seen it on these... At certain times of year when there's been a bit of rain down the rivers. And I've seen it on this road. Overnight, I've seen that much silt. Over night. So that shows how much it can drop. But yeah.</p>
<p>9.10</p>	<p>[Johnny: So would this have been dredged regularly before?] No, it's never been dredged. No, because the tide is always... it could flow along. But as soon as you build a big thing out like that, it's just. This was the channel! You know, you know the end of the stone jetty there, you can see the end of the... you know the actual – the proper stones, before you come to the stones that they've dumped? They started on the end of the jetty there-</p>

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	<p>there were 17 wagons, every morning, for just over a week, dumping these stones, before they saw a stone! Do you see what, do you understand what...[yeah] If you imagine. [ahh so they were just disappearing?] Into the channel. [OK]. There were 17 wagons with, parked all along up at Happy Mount park, at that end in the morning. As soon as it got to, was it 8 o'clock when they started? They'd all be loaded up, ready from next (inaudible), from the day before. And along they'd come, dumping off the end of there, for just over a week before they saw a stone. So it was, they'd, they'd. That row of rocks there, went right across [yeah]. You can see the height of it there [yeah]. And the depth of that water there, that's that and then it went...And this, where we are stood here now, we'd have been, in water. [OK]. And that's how much silt has gone down. But urgh, it's just another...thing to...</p>
10.43	<p><b>And, and, another question: with the Brexit vote, will that have any impact on the fishing industry do you think?</b></p> <p>It certainly won't make it any worse. If anything, it, it can only make it better. It can. I mean fishing, farming, wagons, any normal people; its going to make it better for them.[yep] But anybody with any money that (clears throat), what should I say? If you're a bigger company, you're probably better off, urgh, in the EU, because there was a lot of people making a lot of money. There was. You know, when you get these, urgh, MPs and that, and their families, they've worked out there for a few years and, all of a sudden they are millionaires. You know, and that's just one family. I mean, how many others are there? There's, they're all, you know. But urgh, na. Anyway, [that's enough] is that OK for you? [Yes, perfect. I'll stop it.]</p>