

Scarborough Sea Wall Heritage Trail – Scarborough Memory

Fishing Community - Mr Watson of Scarborough

Mr Watson had a long relationship with Scarborough and its fishing community. He didn't fish himself but for many years he worked on refuelling trawlers and other vessels in the port. He had undertaken this work since the 1980s when Scarborough Harbour was full of fishing boats of one kind or another. Trawlermen always came in on Fridays and they would then spend many hours in the pubs over the weekend. On Fridays, they would be in the pubs straight from the trawlers smelling heavily of fish. He remembers fishermen Herbert Mitchell, Swilly Billy, Dutch Frank (who had spent much of his career in the Navy) and Tommy Rawley. He also remembered Tommy Rawley's father who had a small rowing boat. He'd had a fall and "feared of steps".

He remembered corn carrying cargo boats also coming into Scarborough Harbour up until the 1980s. Mr Watson kept hens and when he refuelled the corn boats they always seemed to have corn which had spilled onto the floor/deck of the ship. He would take a broom and gather these up to feed to his hens.

He described the fishing community, known as the 'bottom enders', as being very close knit. There was a crane driver who went under the name of Dick on the fish pier and who contracted cancer. His wife had already been taken by cancer. They had a son who was between 9 and 12 years of age when Dick was suffering. He was very worried about what would become of his son when the cancer eventually took him. Dick was relieved to have one of his close neighbours offering to adopt, an offer that he was very happy and relieved to accept.