

Winston

She was named Winston (all boats are “She”) in memory of my Hero Harry Garnett. He was a lobster fisherman at Harwich, and in my youth he allowed me to go with him on some of his fishing trips. His skill was amazing, with 24 hoop nets, (they didn’t use pots in those days in Harwich), I have seen him catch 100 lbs live weight of lobsters in one tide.

He received the princely price of 2/6d per pound!

At the helm of his beloved “Winston”



As well as “Grace” his lobster boat, named after his wife, he had two other boats, one a small carvel built boat used for fishing parties, I don’t think she had a name, and the much larger “Winston” a carvel built 28ft harbour and general purpose vessel, used for many things, such as harbour delivery work, trawling and fishing parties. When I first went

in her she had a Kelvin petrol/paraffin engine of some great age. The day came when Harry invested in a new Kelvin diesel of which he was very proud.

He was the father of 5 daughters, three of them are still alive, and we see them from time to time.

Harry at the helm of "Winston" carrying a fishing party. On the right is my Dad.



He would often tow his lobster boat to sea, anchor the anglers, and go lobstering.

I was very fortunate to know him and he taught me much of the seamanship I know, I owe him a debt, hence the name "Winston"

On board “Winston” taking tourists to see the Royal Yacht “Britannia”
At Parkeston Quay ca 1960



[More on Harry's Life](#)

A Day's fishing with Harry

I was privileged to have been friends with Harry, he was a fisherman in Harwich. He came from a fishing family, and to be honest, those who were born to it, lasted in the trade for a lifetime whereas those that 'took it up' very often failed.

I would ask him the time that he intended to set off, very often in Summer it would be about 0430. It has to be said that he was often late, but never mind. I would cycle down to the Ice house steps. The Ice house was between the Train ferry terminal and the Gas Works.

I think there had possibly been an Ice house there in the distant past, but there is no sign of it now, but the name stuck. I would then walk along the slippery weed encrusted wall just above the water, and round the corner. He would come along in the 'Grace' his lobster boat, and I would jump onboard.

Grace was an 18 foot long clinker built and copper fastened boat, built for him just after WW2, at Harry Kings of Pin Mill. Built of larch with a 7 horsepower Brit two cylinder petrol engine. It was slow revving and very quiet, ideal for lobstering when stemming the tide hauling the hoops it could run very slowly. This type of boat was built both on the Orwell and at Canns in Harwich in quite high numbers at that time. The government offered substantial grants to help with the cost, as a way of rebuilding the fishing fleet.

We would set off out of the harbour, and often headed towards the West Rocks, about 7 miles out, where lobsters could be found. In those days the gear used were not pots but hoop nets, an iron hoop about 2ft 6ins wide with a shallow net underneath and a line across the hoop for bait, usually fish heads. These were effective in the shallow waters off Harwich. Harry would often fish this area, but at other times, maybe only once or twice a year he would fish other places like the Roughs and the Fort Massac wreck. Never over-fishing to maintain the stocks. He carried 24 hoops that he would lay across the tide, and when they were all dropped, he would go round and start hauling the first one. The hoops had long lines with corks on, he would motor up tide, grab the line, and then push hard over on the tiller, which if there was a lobster on the bait

would pin it to the bottom of the net. He would then drop the hoop back into the water and move along the line. I have seen him catch 50lbs of lobsters in one tide, if things went well.

Sometimes some of the younger fishermen would follow him, hoping to take advantage of his knowledge. He would cast out a couple of hoops giving the impression that he had started fishing, and once the follower started shooting his nets, Harry would swiftly pick up his hoops and move off to another place where he hoped there would be something to catch.

He had to fish the low tide, dropping the hoops about one and a half hours before low water, and had to be hauling them up by about the same time after low water or the gear would disappear beneath the waves! In between hauls, he would be busy tying the lobsters' claws, if this wasn't done they would fight and cut each other's claws off! He used light line to tie them, but now the fishermen use rubber bands. He would then lay wet sacks over them to subdue them and keep them from drying out and dying.

I was often puzzled. Especially on misty mornings, how he knew where he was. There were no navigational aids available to fishermen in those days. When he had stopped on one particularly misty day, and started dropping the hoops, I asked him how he knew that this was the place. He said 'I can just see the sun shining on the Naze cliff, and over there I can see rimplings'. Rimplings are ripples on the surface of the sea caused by the up-welling of water where the tide runs over shoal water.

In his youth before the Second World war, His family went lobstering in similar boats, but they had no engines, and would therefore row out to the West Rocks, work a tide of lobstering, and row home. It was a very hard life.