

THE BILLY BOYS

Cyril Billy Boy

Cyril Billy Boy gave an account of his coracle tales, referring to his grandfather as also being a coracle man:



"My grandfather always fished down river and my father and me went down one night on a moonlit night. You can't catch much fish when the moon is over the river because the fish can see the net.

My grandfather never came back empty handed. He'd pick sticks from the marshes after the tides and floods for the fire or pick mushrooms on a moonlit night.

It's lonely down the river on a dark windy night and the waves throwing you about - and if you couldn't keep level with my grandfather, he'd give you a real mouthful or the oar in your back.

He was a hard man, but a really good fisherman, I think he knew every stone on the riverbed."

Cyril 'Billy Boy' Owens and Lewis 'Yankee' Thomas were in the same class at Pentrepoeth Primary School, in Carmarthen.

Occasionally they would be found fast asleep at their desks. Their teachers were sympathetic to the young coraclers and would leave them alone to sleep because they knew that they had been out three quarters of the night fishing with their fathers or grandfathers. They might not have got home until about five or six o'clock in the morning and only had an hour or two in their beds before getting up again to go to school.



Darren Billy Boy with his grandfather, Cyril Billy Boy, 1975