

OH 679 - Interview with Tony Sharley

TAPE 1, SIDE A - Fishing

And yes, my dad ... he was really ... he really was keen on fishing. Loved the river in that sense. So when I was about probably, I don't know, seven or eight years old, you know, I got my first fishing rod – of course I got one, my sister didn't, because girls didn't fish and boys did – and I can remember those first fishing trips where going out with friends of my dad's, you'd pull up on these big snags and they seemed really eerie, and you'd drop your line down around these snags in the river. And yes, you'd catch fish. And in those days you caught native fish, you caught callop and you caught cod and you caught catfish and you caught silver perch, and every fish that came in the boat was – unless it was too small – it was always an exciting thing to catch a fish. You know, today that excitement for me isn't there, because when every second or every third fish is a carp, it really - I'm really, you know, I really don't like the fishing for that reason. Mind you, I still do have the patience to go at times, but I know my own kids haven't really got the patience for it, they'd prefer to go sea fishing because there's always something to be caught.

But going back to those first experiences fishing, I can remember how clear the river was and I can remember, when you'd caught a fish, you could actually see the fish coming up. And when you were throwing a spinner out you could see it flashing in the water. Now, perhaps in hindsight – that was the late 1960s, when salinity levels were very high in the river and that's one of the reasons why the water was so clear, because the fine sort of clay particles had settled out because of the high salinity, which is what happens when salinity levels increase – nevertheless, it made the fishing really good and really exciting. But I also suspect that a lot of it, that water clarity, was also due to the fact that it was before European carp were introduced.