

Interview with Roy Rogers - The Gullies at Kingston Seymour

The Gullies at Kingston Seymour

Roy Rogers described how wildfowling on the foreshore at Kingston Seymour has been practiced by his family for generations. His grandfather was already shooting there before the First World War, followed later by his father and then Roy himself. A particular gully along the Wick River remains a traditional shooting location. According to Roy, the same gully has been used continuously by his family for decades. For him, the feature is more than just a geographical landmark; it represents a living link between generations of wildfowlers and the landscape they have shared.

“That gully could tell a story... we've shot the same gullies for 80, 90 years.”

Boats on the Flooded Moor

Roy also recalled stories from an older local wildfowler, Sam Staples, who had shot on the Nailsea Moor when it regularly flooded before the Second World War. At that time, the seasonal flooding allowed wildfowlers to travel across the fields by boat in pursuit of duck and geese. Staples had kept boats in specific fields across the moor so that he could reach the water when conditions allowed. Even late in life he was able to identify the exact fields where wigeon had traditionally fed—many of which still attract birds today. The account highlights how past wildfowling practices were shaped by the seasonal rhythms of wetlands and flooding landscapes.

Wildfowl Hanging in the Shop

Roy Rogers remembered Sam's shop on Alexander Road in Clevedon. As a child, Roy recalls seeing large numbers of mallard hanging in the shop. The birds had been shot locally and displayed for sale, indicating that wildfowl were once part of the local food economy and could be sold commercially through local retailers.

“Sam Staples... used to have a shop up at Alexander Road in Clevedon, and I remember as a kid seeing many mallard hung up there.”

This recollection reflects an older practice, common in Britain before stricter wildlife legislation and the end of most commercial wildfowl markets, where locally shot wildfowl were sold through butchers, fishmongers, or small shops. The image of birds hanging in the shop window also evokes a traditional way of displaying game that was once familiar in many rural and coastal communities.

Foreshore and inland

Roy Rogers described how earlier generations of wildfowlers in the club often shot both inland and on the foreshore, but that the foreshore was particularly associated with times when people needed to harvest birds for food. He explained that in the past members tended to shoot inland most of the time and would only go down to the foreshore “when you had a freezer,” implying that foreshore shooting was often associated with taking birds to

store and eat. Wildfowl therefore formed part of the practical food economy of the household, particularly when people had the capacity to preserve what they harvested. Roy contrasted this with more recent practice, where many members now go to the foreshore more frequently for the experience of being in the landscape and observing wildlife rather than primarily for food. Nevertheless, the reference to filling the freezer reflects an older tradition in which wildfowling provided a source of seasonal meat.

Securing sporting rights to preserve a local tradition

Roy recounted how the Clevedon club purchased the sporting rights to a section of foreshore and adjoining land about a decade earlier in order to ensure that future generations could continue to shoot there. He approached an elderly landowner, Mrs Blake, and explained that without securing those rights local families would lose access to the area. She agreed to sell the sporting rights so that the tradition could continue for the children and grandchildren of local wildfowling. The purchase was supported by the BASC Wildfowling Fund, which helped the club secure the ground permanently. The story reveals how clubs have sometimes had to actively safeguard access in order to maintain long-standing traditions.