

Voices of Hickling

Interview Transcript: Anne Lomas

Interviewed by Jane Brooker on 15th December 2018 and 28th February 2019

JB: *Could I have your name, date of birth and where you were born, please?*

AL: **Anne Elizabeth Lomas. I was born in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital on the 17th August 1952.**

JB: *And you were obviously brought up in Hickling ...*

AL: **I was brought up in Hickling.**

JB: *And whereabouts in Hickling?*

AL: **I was brought up in which is now 2 Lilac Cottages until I was four, then we moved to 3 Fell Cottages until I was 20, then to Barnfield Close, where I live now.**

JB: *Could you tell me about your family, if you had any brothers and sisters...*

AL: **I'm an only child. My mum had seven brothers and my dad was a family of seven,**

JB: *And did they live in Hickling?*

AL: **They lived in Hickling. My mum lived in Hickling all her life apart from when she went into service during the war. And my dad was born in Potter Heigham, and then I think he had a brief period in Ingham, and then he lived in Hickling all his life.**

JB: *Did your mother and father work?*

AL: **Yes, my father was a farm labourer and my mother worked in service in different houses around and my dad then had a brief time at greenhouses until he was ill and had to give up work.**

JB: *Now, life in Hickling when you were growing up. Er. What friends did you have in Hickling?*

AL: **Well, I had friends who went to school. I had, there was obviously Rita Waters, Joycie Beales, Margaret Bishop, Linda Toll: we all played together on the allotments, um, we didn't go far because our parents didn't have cars, so we just played around the village.**

JB: *What job did you do?*

AL: **When I first left school at 15, I worked at, um, Falgate's, which is no longer there, but that was down Staithe Road and then when I was 16 I went to the chemist in Stalham and I worked there from when I was 16 until I was 22 and the I left there to get married the first time.**

JB: *Falgate's. What was Falgate's?*

AL: **It was a little thatched shop. Er, they sold papers, fishing tackle, maggots, everything. It was just like a little pollity (?) shop. Ice creams, food, done orders**

for the boats. It was quite a busy little shop. Where there's now a bungalow, so Falgate's is no longer there now...

JB: How did you meet your husband? And was he from Hickling?

AL: My first husband I met when I was working at the chemist. Er, he worked for Alexander Motors driving a lorry. And then we were married for three years and then we got divorced and then I met my second husband who actually painted my mum's house, but he was from Norwich then, so I then moved to Norwich for four years before I moved back this way.

AL: Then we lived in Catfield for twenty years and then I came back to Hickling in 2003.

JB: What did you do in the summer holidays and the weekends? And what did you do for, did you go out, away from the village in the evenings?

AL: No, we didn't, because there was no means of transport to get anywhere. So during the summer holidays we had to go fruit picking, down, oh, to different places down Eye Farm, Jimmy Lincorn's, up Blue Billy allotments. It was blackcurrant picking, then bean picking, then potato picking.

And, other holidays, we just played on allotments a lot, because my dad had loads of chicken sheds down there, so there was always allotments twice a day. And we all used meet down there, climb trees and just generally do all sorts that kids did in them days so we didn't go very.... Oh, Stalham Sale on a Tuesday, when we were on holidays, because that was a big sale - there were pigs, chickens, rabbits, everything. It was a day out to go to Stalham Sale...

And obviously we had Sunday School treats, because it was always Sunday School on a Sunday. So there were Sunday School treats to Yarmouth and then we had a party at Christmas with prize books for how many attendances we'd done. So that was really,... we just made our own entertainment. We had little houses and played and dolls and mud pies and all sorts... Just a general what children did in the 1950s.

JB: You say the allotments. Where were the allotments...

AL: The allotments were off Eastfield Road, between Eastfield Road and High Hill. They are no longer there, but there was two sets of allotments. They're fields now, but here the two lobe ways go through, on one side was all allotments and then the other side was all allotments. So that's where us children would play because people kept pigs there and chickens and it was generally the meeting place for all the children from up my way and High Hill. So, we had some good times down the allotments.

JB: Did you have a doctor's in the village, or...

AL: Yes, we did. Our doctor was Dr Walsh, and he came to the old Village Hall, which was down Stubb Road. Which is no longer there now. But he came, er, I think, three times a week and the other doctors, which is now Dr Sale's and the service at Ludham, they had a room in the old... where the Rest Homes now are.

So there was the doctors came, er, several times every week, anyway.

JB: The shops. Let's walk down the High Street. The shops. What shops were here when you were growing up?

AL: Well, there was Holly Stores, which Mrs Bolton had at first. Then the Woodhouses moved in. And then Hayes's, which was a general grocer shop.

Then there was Bessie Osborne, which, er, where the Treasure Box now is and she was the paper shop, and toys and sweets. Then the other side of the road there was Jack Martin's, who was the grocer and he done deliveries on a Thursday night, so people couldn't go out if they'd got their order book in, then he delivered.

Then the next one was Enoch Gibbs, which is - his shop was part of Barley Cottage - where you got paraffin. Then the other side of the road there was the Post Office, which was Oliver Turner, which is now two flats.

Opposite him there was Burdett's, another general grocers.

Then down to Stubb Road, there was Doris Osborne, which is now Lawson Cottage. And then Falgate's on Staithe Road.

Also down Stubb Road there was Harry Chapman's fish and chip shop and just before that was Valda's, the hair dressers and on the Pleasure Boat - sorry - the Greyhound corner was Joe Elliot's little shed where he mended shoes.

And that's the load of the - that's the shops.

JB: In your opinion, how has Hickling changed over the years, and do you consider it to be a good change, or not so good?

AL: Hickling has changed a lot over the years.

I don't think it's for the good because when I was a child we had all these shops and everybody knew everybody. There was a village community and everybody met at the shops. Everybody knew everybody, so if anybody was in trouble, somebody always helped them out.

And generally it was better for the older people, because now if they don't drive they are stuck because they have to get to Stalham or somewhere, whereas in those days they just walked down the shop and everything, 'cos the Post Office sold everything - slippers, hot water bottles, vests, pants.

Everything you could get in the village then, plus there was a van came round once a week on a Wednesday, Ivy Nicholls from Martham, so you could always get things off her, so I do think Hickling was better years ago.

JB: Did you use the Broad? Did you go swimming, sailing?

AL: No. Well, we didn't go sailing. Because we used to go down what they now call the Dipping Place...

JB: Where...

AL: Which is near Tallowin's farm. It's off Tallowin's farm, and we were allowed to go down then. And we called it the Dipping Place.

But, as to going on the Broads: no we didn't. We just played around and we rarely - very rarely - went down the Broad, unless you went for a walk with your mum and dad on a Sunday night... Otherwise we weren't allowed in case we fell in the water...

JB: Do you remember anything... Have you any other stories to tell about Hickling off the top of your head?

AL: Well, we always had good fetes. There was always the fetes. I remember my mum once winning some chickens on the bowls. It was on the playing field where now The Barn is, but it was a lot bigger then. And the fetes were huge: they used to have somebody, sort of a celebrity, come down and open them and we had the Repps Revels come in the old Village Hall, and there was things going on in the Church Rooms.

We had pantomimes and there was a lot more social things went on. Bingo every night on a Friday, and I had to go and stay with my cousin Joycie while Mum went, because Dad had a Chapel meeting - because Dad was a big Chapel person...

And I loved going up my Aunt Hetty's because she had a television and we didn't so I could watch all the soaps on there - Coronation Street, and things like that...

But there was(?) Darts clubs at the pubs, and crib, and all that sort of thing, so there was quite a lot went on in the village when I was younger.

And of course there was two Sunday Schools, one at the Methodist and one at the Church Rooms for the Church of England.

So there was things for the children to do.

JB: What about Christmas. What celebrations at Christmas did Hickling do?

AL: Well, they used to have - the Church Rooms always done like a Christmas, what we call Christmas Fairs. Now we sort of call them jumble sales on those days!

And they had a stage then. There was always a Father Christmas so the _____ (?) children, we had to queue up and go in and get our present.

And the shops didn't start - Jack Martin always done his shop sort of the first Sunday in December.

And there was, like, perhaps the Repps Revels would come or somebody would come and do a pantomime, so...

The Church and the Chapel had services and we always had our Christmas party at school. There was Christmas parties at school, carol service at school and, after Christmas, we had a Christmas party at the Chapel and also the Church had a Christmas party for the Sunday School.

JB: Have you got any views about the actual Broad itself, because apparently it's silting up and is there anything you think the Norfolk Wildlife Trust should do with that?

AL: Well, I suppose it all depends on how much money they've got. I think they need to keep the Broads because the Broads have been here for such a long time.

Well, I think a lot of the actual people in Hickling don't go down the Broads that much because they can't afford to have boats and things, just the ordinary people. But they do need to keep the Broads, so they should be able to do what they can for it. And also perhaps make it a bit more accessible to local people because they can't afford mooring fees, just the ordinary people in Hickling.

JB: What pubs were in the village when you lived here?

AL: I can remember three pubs. There was The Bull, The Greyhound and The Pleasure Boat. And - before my time - there was The White Horse, which is now a private house.

I can remember my Dad being very disgusted with my nanny Tillett because he used to go for a walk with my mum round the two mills and my Nanny's tricycle would always be parked outside The Bull... I think she was quite a girl, my granny! My Dad, being a big Chapel person was very disgusted with his mother at that time (laughs!!!)

JB: Is there anything you've got to say or tell us about the insides of the shops, and, particularly, the shopkeepers?

AL: Well, there's Mrs. Boulter – she had Holly Stores. She was as, I can remember her as a small lady. She sold I can remember sacks of potatoes in there and all sorts but I didn't actually go in that shop very much.

And then there was the paper shop, which is now the Treasure Box – Mrs Bessie Osborne owned that and she sold sweets, cigarettes, papers and toys at Christmas and Mrs Ethel Beales done a paper round in the village for quite a few years.

Next along the street was Jack Martin – he was a very free-hearted man, he would, if you went for a pound of apples you always probably got extra and the inside of the shop was quite large, all the lard was in big blocks he cut off, sugar, dried fruit, all was weighed out and there was a big case with loose biscuits in and ham and bacon was all cut fresh, also cheese with the cheese wires.

There was two swivel chairs each end of the counter, which us, as children, used to swing round on, 'till our mothers told us to stop. Mrs Shingles worked there for many years with Mrs Martin and Mr Martin and Mr Martin's sister Gwen would often pop into the shop to say hello to everybody but she lived in the back of the shop.

There was a big fruit display and Mr Martin never done his Christmas window until the first Sunday in December – and then it was all boxes of chocolates in one and a big display of fruit, nuts and everything in the other one.

And he done a delivery round on a Thursday, and all these things were then weighed on scales, with weights.

Enoch's was the next one and he would serve you paraffin still in his pyjamas. Which I could just remember but then he did close down.

The Post Office was across the road, where the Gallery flats now are and they were owned by Oliver Turner. He had the post office, and a drapery department as well, which he sold slippers, hot water bottles, rubber boots, vests, pants, everything. And his daughter, Joan, always came out on a Thursday from Sheringham to help him as it was pension day and it was very busy.

There was a metal grille in front of the Post Office counter and after you'd bought whatever you wanted he always finished with "anything further?" Mrs Golbey was the local village postwoman. Again, for many years.

Across the road was Mrs Burdett which was another shop that sold everything. My mum did not use that shop as much as it was mostly Jack Martin's she used.

Then down Stubb Road, at Lawson Cottage was Doris Osborne's, a little room with a counter, but still lots of stuff in it and she, I can remember having it refurbished once and it was only like a little room but she did have a lot of stuff in. And her husband, Mr Ralph Osborne, used to make baskets.

Then across the road was Valda's, the hairdressers, and then Harry Chapman's, which was a fish and chip shop. He also went round the village selling wet fish in a van.

Along Staithe Road was Heath Priory Stores, run by Mrs Falgate, which catered for the holidaymakers and fishermen. Mostly which post offers, er, sorry, which

newspapers, holiday gifts, groceries and maggots for fishing, as the guest house was next door and a lot of fishermen boarded there.

Jim and Bertha Pratt ran the garage on The Green, selling petrol and paraffin, Jim Pratt also ran a taxi service.

There was another garage near The Broad, run by Waldo Beales who also sold petrol.

On the Greyhound corner, where the Forge front garden now is, Joe Elliott had a shed where he mended shoes.

Albert Brooks came round with coal and Dr. Walsh had a surgery down Stubb Road, where the old Village Hall was and the Ludham doctor, Dr Wilson, had a surgery at The Rest Homes.

Nurse Bishop lived on Heath Road.

Stanners from Stalham came round 3 times a week with bread, Chettleborough's with meat, Harry Chapman and Percy Feathers with fresh fish and then we had everything we needed in the village.

Also Ivy Nicholls from Martham came round in a Bedford Van once a week selling groceries and paraffin from the van also. So, that's a summary of the shops.

JB: In your first recording you mentioned that I think it was a fete, a fete and I think you had celebrities...

AL: Yes we did.

AL: ...Come, come round. Who were these celebrities?

JB: Well, I can't actually remember because I was only a small child then, so I can't remember who, but I do remember my mum saying there was big fetes.

I can remember going because I can remember all the stalls there but I can't exactly name who the celebrities were.

AL: When you were growing up and you became sort of teenagers or 18 and 19 what was your social life there? Did you go out of the village, dancing?

AL: Well, we used to go, I worked in Stalham then, I had a friend, we used to go all out together and it was mainly just around here.

Um, Wayford Bridge was sort of the in place to go, and also to Fleggburgh, there was a holiday chalet park where we used to go, and the holiday chalet park at the back of Rivermead at Stalham.

JB: And how did you get there?

AL: Well, Brenda's boyfriend then had a car. Because there was no transport in Hickling so it was a case they used to come and pick us up. We all went in one another's cars, so that was, there wasn't a lot really went on in Hickling as far as the social life went – not when we were teenagers.

JB: Did you ever venture to Great Yarmouth?

AL: No, my mum wouldn't have allowed that. AL LAUGHS. That was too far.

JB: How did you meet your husband? Did he, was he a Hickling person?

AL: Er, my first husband I met in Stalham when I worked at the chemist. He was a lorry driver, also worked in Stalham but he actually lived in Ingham.

And then my second husband I actually met when he painted my mum's bungalows but he actually lived in Norwich. So neither of my husbands were Hickling people. And Ronnie painted mum's house and that's how I met him.

We moved to Norwich for a little while when we got married and then we moved back to Catfield for a while and then back to Hickling. So I think that's about, that is how we met – he painted mum's house.

JB: Have you got any other stories about Hickling that you can remember or like to tell us?

AL: Well, Hickling was a very busy village in the time, everybody did know everybody. Um, the village shop, everybody met in there and I think it was a happier village then than what it is today because nobody doesn't know everybody today. Um, which I think is a shame.

Me and my friend know a lot of people because we walk our dogs, we know a lot of people by sight but not necessarily their names. Where, when I was a child, you did know everybody and it was a small, smaller village with houses but we did have a lot more facilities here then. So I think that's about, you know, sums it up when I was, sort of, growing up.

JB: What were the doctors like? What was the healthcare like then?

AL: Well, we had Jimmy Walsh which was quite good. I think he came on a Wednesday out to the old Village Hall, and a Saturday morning.

He was a little Irishman and he used to, I always remember, he had pinstripe trousers on. He was a very short man but he was a very good doctor.

And I don't know much about the other doctor because we never went. But he had a room at the Rest Homes so actually we didn't have to even go out of the village for a doctors, because if you needed medication at always seems that it came back to where the doctors were and you just collected it from there.

So, um, then, unless we had to go into Stalham then the surgeries was there. You didn't appointments or anything, you just walked up there and just waited your turn and saw the doctor.

So I think Nurse Bishop was the midwife, um, and the District Nurse. She was round on her bicycle or car so everybody was quite well looked after.

Better then than I think they are today...

This transcription has been made to back up, not replace, the audio tapes that form the main record output of the VOH Changing Village project 2015 to 2020. The transcribers used their best efforts and checked back for proper names and places.

We ask for forgiveness for any errors...