

Voices of Hickling

Interview Transcript: Colin Shingles

In conversation with Ann Louise Kinmonth on 4th October 2019

ALK: *If you'd just say again your name and the year you were born.*

CS: **Colin Shingles, 19th June 1928**

ALK: *And what are your immediate memories of Hickling, what are your early memories of Hickling?*

CS: **Oh, I have to think a second. I don't know early memories.**

ALK: *Well, any memories that immediately come to mind when you thought I was coming and thought oh I'll tell her that.*

CS: **I didn't like school.**

ALK: *Why was that?*

CS: **Oh I didn't like school.**

ALK: *What was the matter with it?*

CS: **Oh I don't know there was anything the matter with but you know, I didn't like it**

ALK: *Did you go?*

CS: **Oh yeah, Well of course you had to didn't you, I had to go. I used to mess about at Church Farm with Mr Scores. He taught me a lot, the old boy did, for years I messed about with him, breaking the colts in and what not.**

ALK: *He broke in ponies did he or...*

CS: **No working horses.**

ALK: *Oh I see. Big horses.*

CS: **Well, he had two horses and a plough at 14**

ALK: *You never...*

CS: **When I was there yeah. (LAUGH)**

ALK: *How old were you when you left school?*

CS: **14**

ALK: *Right and you went to meet him?*

CS: **And I'd been with him before I left school. Weekends and whatnots with the old boy, he taught me a lot.**

I went and saw his grave, he was buried at Ormsby Church incidentally and I went and saw his grave last year.

ALK: *Yeah. Brought it back...*

So tell me about your family, who was in the family?

CS: **I don't really want to.**

ALK: *Not at all. Not just numbers or anything?*

CS: I had a brother, he went in the Guards before the war, Coldstream.

ALK: Yes he's older than you.

CS: Yes he's passed on now.

Um, yes, he joined up just before the war as the war was, they were talking about the war and he went in the Cold Stream Guards, 'cos he was a tall bloke.

ALK: How old were you then?

CS: I was born in 1928, so 12 13 weren't I?

ALK: Yeah, a bit older than Derek Gibbs was at the time.

CS: I suppose I'm older than Derek aren't I. What am I now I'm 91 aren't I?

ALK: Do you remember the war starting?

CS: Yep.

ALK: What was happening to you at that time?

CS: I don't know, not a lot. Not a lot. I was in Civil Defence during the war so at Broadholme, that's where we used to go at Broadhome.

Waldo Beales was looking after us who had the garage. I suppose, well we used to go with messages.

We'd go on duty probably twice a week, there, yeah. He'd bring us boys and cup of tea in the morning 7 o'clock and we'd go home. (LAUGH) She's laughing. I did a story of that but I'm not going to tell you. (LAUGH)

ALK: Why not?

CS: No, no, no no no.

That's where we used to be at Broadholme. Yeah, Civil Defence during the war and I worked on John's Farm.

ALK: John Tallowin?

CS: I started off as a blacksmith at Ted Wallace's Blacksmith, I was going to be a blacksmith, I used to help him before I left school as a blacksmith. Shoeing a wheels on a Saturday, take two of us to shoe a wheel.

ALK: How do you shoe a wheel?

CS: Well you have a pit like a round steel thing in the yard with a hole in it, and that take two of you to lift a wheel, one each side to get it in and out, and get the band on quick when it's hot.

ALK: Was this holding onto the axle?

CS: No, the wheel was off the cart and there was a steel in that yard with a big hole in the middle you dropped it in there and, yeah, heat the band up, steel band what goes around the wheel

And then two of us carried it out each side and get it on each side ready to stick it one with a hammer pretty quick.

And I used to go and help Fred Wallace to do when I was before I left school, and then I went, I started to go with him for a time after I left school but the old beggar wouldn't get up in morning. He'd look me out bedroom window and say go and start the fire go and boil 'im up. (LAUGH)

I got a bit fed up with that and, er, there was Jimmy Woodrow came up there with 2 horses one morning, he was manager on John's farm in them days he but he used to belong to a man named Chapman. He wasn't a farmer he was a butcher in Yarmouth but he owned that farm and Jimmy Woodrow was foreman, he used to drive about.

He come up there with two horses one morning. Fred put his head out the window and said start getting the shoes off boy.

And he said to me why don't you come and work with us boy.

That was the beginning of the war and I did, I left and I went with them. I was there all through the war. And I was there until farm was sold and John's people bought it.

Then I went on me own sort of all over the place and that was what happened.

ALK: *All over what place?*

CS: Well worked here there and everywhere.

ALK: *Journeyman?*

CS: Yeah and you know I used to do reed cutting and all sorts of. I can cut reed. Isn't much I can't do. In fact I learned thatch. Yeah. So I'd do all sorts.

ALK: *Who did you do thatch with?*

CS: Reed.

ALK: *Not what stuff, which thatcher?*

CS: No I went on me own, I go and help if people got a problem, go some reed they want doing.

I done this house here out the back many years ago.

Oh yeah and I was friendly with Norfolk Reed Thatchers because I used to cut a lot of reed for them, but they were funnily enough they were Norfolk reed beds but they lived in Rickmansworth, the bloke did, the manager and I used to cut a lot on reed 'cos I got a lot of reed on the place where I am.

Er, yeah, and I learned to do a bit of thatching.

I thatched the Barn at Stubb Farm. Done all that sort of thing. Oh yeah.

ALK: *So how did you come to get the farm?*

CS: Well, they put it up for rent.

ALK: *Them?*

CS: Well, the Council did.

ALK: *Very rare now, Council Farms*

CS: Well it belonged to the village, highest bid the buyer, sort of thing. Well my bid, they accepted my bid.

ALK: *You'd done well then.*

CS: Yeah and, er, I was working on another at Stubb Farm at the time which is next door to it. It belonged to a woman Mrs Youngman.

She lived there alone you know where Stubb Farm is. She lived there alone he, her husband cleared off with a land girl sort of like during the war, well at the end of the war or just before the end of the war. I was helping her.

This come up, I put a bid in and I got it.

ALK: *Were you young to get a farm?*

CS: I was 28.

ALK: *Young...*

CS: Yeah, I was 28.

ALK: *On your own?*

CS: Yeah.

ALK: *So what was it like on the farm?*

CS: Well, end to end it ain't that big and you got that much arable, but we bought a little since haven't we.
We bought some further down the road, another 8 acres down the road.

Yeah but there's a lot of marshes, a lot of reed beds, like I don't know how much there is down there, 60 or 70 acres I suppose.

Yeah. So that's how I come to be there.

ALK: Are you still farming it?

CS: Oh yeah. I got to pay the rent haven't I.
I said to the Missus "Don't forget to send the money to Mrs Batley this week."

ALK: So you pay rent to the council

CS: No Mrs Batley.
Yeah that's Hickling Broad Charges that is.

ALK: So what do you grow there? Did you do cattle or what do you do?

CS: No I don't. Since I had bad knees I went out of cattle.

ALK: Yeah but it would have been classic, wouldn't it, on the marsh field?

CS: Yeah we used to do cattle yeah. Oh yeah.
You see I farmed Stubb Farm as well before I got that.

ALK: And then that backs onto the Norfolk Wildlife Trust areas now, does it?

CS: Worse luck...

ALK: Is that right?

CS: Yeah.

ALK: Is that not convenient?

CS: Well, for me. I don't have no time for them.

ALK: Why's that?

CS: Well they no more conservationist than my behind... (LAUGH)

ALK: We could always take it out. We might. We'll see.

CS: I don't think they're no more conservationist than I am. I'm more of a conservationist than them.

ALK: Tell me about that.

CS: Well like ever body I like the wildlife I'm doing something for them.
Mind you I used to shoot, I don't now. I haven't for shot 3 years.
I rear pheasants and I reared them this year, but I shan't shoot them. I let my friends come and do it.
Yeah, um, yeah, so I suppose I'm half a game keeper.

ALK: Yes.

CS: If you know what I mean

Mrs S: Well you used to grow vegetables though didn't you?

CS: I used to grow vegetables yeah, fair bit, yeah, so there we are.

ALK: Fruit?

CS: Pardon

ALK: Fruit.

CS: I did have fruit, currant bushes yes many years ago.

You see I've been down here 63 years.

ALK: You must have seen a lot.

CS: Yeah, yeah.

ALK: What do you think are the biggest changes you've seen in farming?

CS: Well, machinery.

ALK: Tell me about that.

CS: Well I don't know to tell you about that, you need a lot of money now for that. (LAUGH)

Mrs S: What did you start with

CS: You see then the men on the farm. There used to be 11 of us on that farm of John's. Harvest time. What a difference.

ALK: And you had horses?

CS: And then there was horses, yeah. One horse stand of horse and tractor during the war, that's what they had. Dear, oh dear, oh dear. Yeah I worked on that one through the war I worked on John's farm aboard.

Then I went of me own going different places.

I hadn't that place down there then, that belonged to the village you see. You knew that did you?

ALK: I didn't.

CS: Yeah and the old boy who lived there retired and that was put up for let, and highest bid the buyer.

ALK: And you've still got it.

CS: Yeah I bid for it and got 'en.

There was two people who only wanted it for the sporting rights. Um Aubrey Smith - do that thing a bell - he used to live down the Smea. There was two of 'em, there was another one wanted it.

But I put a bid in for it and they let me have it and that's 63 years ago. So there we are. They done fair with me and I done fair with them.

ALK: And have you got any particular stories about things that happened on the farm?

Mrs S: That lady who was missing off of Sea Palling road

CS: Oh when I come home one night. Oh yeah. I used to ride a motor cycle years ago when I was young and I came home from Horsey one night. A late night, it was early morning it must have been about 1 o'clock.

We'd been boozing in the Horsey Nelson actually but I was making my way home to Hickling and there was a little bridge on the Broad on the Hickling Road. Little bridge and a big dyke and this chap stood on the bridge and he waved me down, this was about 1 o'clock in the morning and, huh, I pulled up and he said "I suppose you've seen my mother when you come through Palling?"

I said "No, I never saw anyone." I said "What's the matter, Pete?"

I knew him from, Peter Fisher, and, er, he said she went out for walk at 7 o'clock and she isn't back, this is about 1 o'clock in the morning, and I said where did she go and he said well some time she walk Palling way and sometimes she go the concrete runway across the Waxham horses.

And I said I'll take the Waxham way as I got the little bike with lights, I come back, no I couldn't find her, and the moon cleared from the cloud and there was a water tower stood about 100 yards down that field, when that cleared that looked and there she was standing dangling in that water tower.

He shouted come on in I've been looking for you everywhere you know you know better please.

Nothing happened. So he walked across, then he called me said she'd hung herself.

He was only a little bloke. He wasn't very strong. I had to hold her up while he cut the string. Carried her indoors, yeah.

I come and got the policeman from Hickling on my motorbike, oh dear. (laugh)

Yeah, poor Pete, well she'd hung herself, well she wasn't hung she was sagged in it, yeah it was only sort of thick parcel string

ALK: *But enough.*

CS: Yeah it was enough yeah. I helped carry her in, but the funny part about it but... (laugh) But she was going to keep warm: she'd got three or four coats on....

ALK: *And no reason?*

CS: No, no, but he should have done something before that because she had tried to do it before. And I knew that, but he didn't. He was lucky that I came along you know. So there.

Mrs S: What about Mrs Paliisser?

CS: Do you know about Mrs Palisser, don't you, never heard about Marie and her palace.

ALK: *I don't know what you're going to tell me so no.*

CS: She used to live just off the Palling Road that's still Hickling. Her had 40 acres of marshes and she was a botanist, she used to do a lot of work for Cambridge University. She was Greek actually and she used to live there with Mrs Clark. The two of them lived there and she had a big studio and I used to go and do jobs for her.

Then she had this thing, wanted this big pit dug - over and acre of ground - well we had a lot of men from Norwich and what not. She had 40 area of marshes off the Palling Road. And we got this all dug. Not in 5 minutes that was about 18months sort of like long and got it full of water and she used to go swimming in it.

And that's where she's buried, Miss Pallisser .

Yeah she used to come and see me a lot down the farm ,she was a clever old girl. She'd talk a lot, she was a botanist and she used to come and see me a lot and she had a Mrs Clark live with her . And Mrs Clark used to live, you know the straight road before you get to Hickling crossroads, there's a big house on your left with a big lawn in front.

ALK: *I don't think I'm in the right place. T ry again.*

CS: Well come from the bypass, come to Hickling. You come down two long straight bits of road don't you, well the second the road before you get to Hickling straight bit, there's a big house on the left.

Mrs S: They cut the trees down last year

CS: They trimmed to trees, they didn't cut them down. Well she lived there and her husband, they went all off, I don't know what happened there, but she went a lived with Miss Palliss.

During the war time they bought a Walls ice cream cart. You know 2 wheels and one out the back, cut the front out and Miss Palliss used to sit in the front and Mrs Clark. During the war time yeah.

She turned it over on the school corner and the old girl broke her arm: I remember that. But she was a clever old girl. She was a botanist and she used to come and see me a lot down the farm.

ALK: *Do you remember when the war came to an end?*

CS: No I don't think I do really.

I remember when it started, but come to an end, well we knew it was coming to an end. That sort of fizzled out didn't it, really.

ALK: *Derek said all the lights went on.*

CS: **Yeah I suppose they did, dear, dear, oh dear. Yeah she lived at Palling on the Palling Road. She used to go to Cambridge a lot, had something to do with the University. She was a botanist.**

She used to come down my allotment and find different plants and that, you know all them sort of things.

Yeah, she was funny an old girl, she was Greek.

ALK: *And what did you do went you weren't farming? What was your leisure activity?*

CS: **Well I used to shoot a lot. I had guns in two syndicates. Used to shoot a lot.**

ALK: *Birds, not clay?*

CS: **Pheasants. I've only shot clays once in my life.**

ALK: *How did that go?*

CS: **Well it was on John's farm. That was the old and the young. And we were the only older ones.**

I'd never shot a clay before. Yeah we had a go one Saturday, I remember, and the sound of ones

Mrs S: ***What about school - when you had that fire. The chimney got on fire***

ALK: *What are you talking about? School No*

Mrs S: **Who was the one at Whiteslea?**

CS: **Oh Ted Piggin used to be the Keeper, Ted Piggin was the Keeper**

ALK: *That's right. We talked to his daughter.*

CS: **Is she still with us?**

ALK: *Yes.*

CS: **Kathleen.**

ALK: *Yes Kathleen Deary.*

CS: **Lives at Pauling. She still live.**

I've often wondered whether Kathleen is still alive. Her husband ain't alive is he?

ALK: *No.*

CS: **'Cos he was a lot older than her.**

ALK: *Yes, she was a lovely woman*

CS: **I used to go and help Ted a lot when they were shooting. That was a shooting estate in them days. Not like it is now.**

It was wild life there then.

ALK: *When the Cadburys were about more, or...?*

CS: **Yeah, Christopher, yeah. I was friendly with Christopher.**

ALK: *Nice family.*

CS: **I've got his photograph down there. I used to go and pick him up from the station when he couldn't drive. At Norwich. For years got friendly with him.**

Oh dear, yes I used to go and help with them when they were shooting early mornings with the Keeper.

ALK: *Did you go on the Coot shoots?*

CS: **Yes, I took part in the coot shoot.**

ALK: *Can you describe a coot shoot for us? What's it like?*

CS: **Very exciting.**

ALK: *Yeah, go on.*

CS: **Well you sit in the punt, someone push you. Then you go down the broad that way; it's the outside ones got forward a bit and the keeper would be in the middle and you weren't allowed to shoot till he blew his whistle, and you'd come half way down the Broad putting the coot in front of you till they decided to come back and then that was all hell loose. (LAUGH)**

Yeah, and you had your cartridges loose on the front.

I think the last time that was a shoot, I think we got 600. That's nothing, they got 1400 at times.

ALK: *When would that have been?*

CS: **1933 was the record and 1400 in one day. Because...**

ALK: *Was that when they had the king down?*

CS: **No the king didn't come then. The king come after that, yeah.**

No it was George VI what used to come.

No that be 1933 was the record. I can't tell you exactly how many they got. Well I did know 'cos I had the certificate, I was given it to everyone who took part in it.

The old boy died and he said you better have this and I thought myself, didn't I, that ought to be in Whiteslea Lodge, so they've gotten in there. And what was that else I give them what's in Whiteslea Lodge

Oh a photograph of Jim Vincent, you've heard of Jim Vincent. I had a big one of him and I and that's in Whiteslea Lodge.

ALK: *You gave it to Tim Peake*

CS: **What, Yeah. I gave to to Tim boy yeah. Do you know Tim Peake. Oh**

Mrs S: Lives in Guernsey, he's um

CS: **Curtis' step son, he's Curtis' stepson. He comes to Whiteslea quite a bit, yeah.**

Mrs S: He comes here every year, don't he, to see us.

CS: **He always come to see us, yeah.**

Oh dear and, yeah, I spent a lot of time down there when they were shooting you see.

I used to go pushing early mornings. I used to push for Lord Bucks when he wasn't Lord Bucks then he was Aubrey to me: he was only Aubrey Bucks in them days and he got made a Lord. Yeah.

ALK: *Mirrie who looked after the children is one of the other people who spoke to us. Mirrie...*

CS: **Who?**

ALK: *Mirrie, who's died now. Yeah.*

CS: **Oh Mirrie Lambert, there's a photograph in the press today of her, what you do with that now? The Yarmouth Mercury. Someone give you. Someone give it you, there's a photograph of Mirrie in there.**

Oh, I know Mirrie for years.

ALK: *Great woman!*

CS: Yeah, I knew Mirrie year, she lived in the Almshouses in the finish up the end there. Oh, remember. Oh I knew Mirrie, yeah.

ALK: *I saw her a lot.*

CS: Course there was a big family of them, a big family. Her sister we still see occasionally, well I haven't seen her lately have I?

We've been the shop and we've seen her Mabel Lambert. Her sister.

Mrs S: Didn't they used to put the birds that they shot in the village for people.

CS: Yeah, the keeper bring the coots up and lay on the village green opposite Martins shop.

ALK: *Kathleen took them round on her bicycle on handlebars and gave them out.*

CS: Oh I know they used to leave them there during the day yeah.

Petters or Reedham used to be there with a big van when they come off the Broad. Take them. What they used to do with them I don't know.

ALK: *They've all gone now.*

CS: Petters of Reedham, is that still in existence, I don't know. Yeah, those were the days.

ALK: *So there are special things that have happened in Hickling, like floods and fires and things like that. Do you have any memories of those?*

CS: Town Street was burnt out when I was... I think it was 1934. Someone said that was 1931, but I don't believe that. I think it was '34

ALK: *Where were you then?*

CS: Well how old was I then? I would have been about 6. I can remember the fire, but I think that was 1934, I don't know.

ALK: *What do you remember about it?*

CS: Running up there.

ALK: *What did you see?*

CS: Boys would, wouldn't they?

ALK: *What did you see?*

CS: See the fire and houses that was them thatched houses on the right as you turned into The Street.

ALK: *Opposite side from the church.*

CS: Yeah, you can see them rebuilt houses can't you.

ALK: *My mum watched that from the cottage opposite. It's her first memory pretty well of Hickling.*

CS: Where was she living then?

ALK: *In, er, Church Cottage, with her grandmother.*

CS: Which you call Church Cottage?

ALK: *The one next to, in front of the church.*

CS: What, as you go in the Church gate?

ALK: *Yeah. On the left.*

CS: On the left oh yeah, and who. What's the name?

ALK: *My mum. Stella Philipps.*

CS: Philipps? I don't remember anyone living there with that name.

ALK: My grandmother was Crosse.

CS: Oh yes I know who you're talking about now. Yeah.

ALK: Do you belong to one of the churches?

CS: Me. Well I suppose I did. I don't know.

ALK: Well I'm sure I don't know.

CS: I suppose I did. I used to do a lot of work for them.

ALK: Which one, the Methodist or the Anglican one?

CS: Well the church. The church.

ALK: Yeah, where Mr Crosse was the vicar.

CS: I was the one of them used to go and mow the church yard. It was all mowed then by scythe.

There was an old boy who lived in the street Tom Tuck.

We used to heap the grass up, making the hay, poled it across to him.

Now do you know what I mean by poling?

ALK: Tell us.

CS: You would lay two straight poles down, about that far apart, stack the grass all on them in the hay and carry it across the street there, that's poling.

That's a long while ago, I thought about that. Yeah.

Fred Lamb, he was the, oh I don't know what you'd call him. He'd come and put the flags up and down. Churchwarden I suppose, yeah. 'Cos he was a little bit tired and he'd get us boys to go up and do it, 'cos we liked that didn't we.

I been up there no end of times, up top of the steeple. Steps are, steps are like that. (LAUGH)
Yeah. So...

Mrs S: Come back to Hook Farm. About 4 or 5 years ago you had about 35 different species of birds.

CS: Yeah, I know. I didn't do it - had a bloke come from Norwich...

Mrs S: RSPB

CS: RSPB come, but now you won't find 8.

ALK: Why not?

CS: God know where they gone. They're not in the country, we haven't got a bird wildlife here, anywhere. Well, now. What birds have you got in your garden?

See, well, there's no there isn't no wildlife and I don't know why.

Mrs S: You don't get the duck coming in now.

CS: We don't get the duck in we used to. I got a flight pond down there where I used to feed duck, but you don't get them now, well you go and get half a dozen, we used 70 at a time.

Not now. I got 30 pheasants what I reared. I saw a nice lot this morning there was a nice lot got up ahead of me this morning that I went a fed, that's all I do is go and feed the pheasants in the morning.

ALK: Where do you feed them?

CS: On the ground. Just scratch heaps.

ALK: Where in the farm? Whereabouts?

CS: Oh sorry, in the woods, all over the place. Put straw down first and put them on the straw like they soon scratch and whatnot.

I bought some in mind you, pheasant, I bought some poults in during the year, but I don't shoot now, but my friends do.

MrsS: He goes round on a quad bike.

CS: I have a quad bike.

ALK: *You must be off road: I've never seen you doing it.*

CS: No, I don't come on the road with it.

ALK: *Where exactly, what are the limits, I'm still not quite sure where the limits of the farm. I know you've got a lot marsh and things but I haven't got quite... Tell me where it is exactly.*

CS: Do you know where Stubb Farm is?

IALK: *Down Stubb.*

CS: Where you go to Whiteslea, by the Dogs home, you go passed there don't you.

Turn let that's Stubb Farm. I go through Stubb Farm yard, that's right the far end at the back of it. Yeah, so if you stand on the road and look down at Stubb Farm you'll see my board. Hook Farm, you'll see that white board.

ALK: *So if you go on up the potholey road to get to the raptors place. The place where you're meant to stand and look across. To look right across to, oh, almost to the sea.*

CS: Whereabouts are you now?

ALK: *I've got down to the cross where you turn right to the dogs and the, or you can turn left to you and there's another road straight on going towards the marshes.*

CS: Going down to the mill, yeah.

ALK: *Yes, exactly.*

CS: Down the mill there, yeah.

Well we had some nice fields. And I sold them

Mrs S: Well they got two things down there.

CS: I got two fields down there and I sold the marshes, 'cos she said I would have another heart attack if I didn't get rid of them. Well, I had much trouble with bloody twitchers, and I had two heart attacks so I should know.

ALK: *Oh dear. Sorry about that. Did you go to Norwich or...*

CS: What hospital, Yeah.

ALK: *They sorted you out.*

CS: Yeah.

Mrs S: He's got two stents and a pacemaker.

CS: I got two stents, and I got a pacemaker. Yeah.

ALK: *You're a miracle of modern medical science!*

CS: A little lump there, yeah.

These people who know when Wend, she's going to have one put in yeah

[Brief unclear section not transcribed - three people talking at once...]

ALK: *So you didn't do any sailing or anything like that - you stayed on the ground?*

CS: Sailing?

ALK: You.

CS: I never sailed, no.

Mrs S: You used to ice skate

CS: I used to skate a lot on the Broad with Tilly lights. We used to go there after the war.

ALK: Who did you skate with?

CS: I couldn't tell you now. All of us boys I suppose.

ALK: Everybody skated,

CS: You'd take Tilly lamps.

ALK: What were your skates made of? What were they like?

CS: Well, they were metal.

ALK: They weren't wooden?

CS: No: they used to be wooden.

ALK: Yeah I've got a good description.

CS: You screwed it in the heel.

ALK: That's it.

CS: That one, I did have some of them, but I could afford a little better pair of skates.

ALK: You were quite the pirouette...

CS: Oh yeah. I skated to Potter Higham,

I skated, us boys. Now when would that be, '39, about '39 just before the war broke out we had a - yes, because the soldiers were there. The soldiers were on Hill Common where you are, but on the end. Did you know where old Mate Nudd had a little bit? Well, the soldiers had their huts mainly during the war, yeah, that's when they first come. And then further down the road, come round passed Jack Edmonds, there used to be a big thing in 'cos they had a search light, and they used to run the search light there. I remember that used to stand there.

And then they were on the recreation ground, that's where the soldiers were during the war.

Yeah, must have been '39 when we had a sharp frost. We were skating it for ages and ages, night time.

Yeah I remember that. Now that never freeze over do it.

ALK: No not like that. I remember it freezing over, but not for ages.

Mrs S: Tell her about your farm when you grew vegetables. You had, they came in from Lincolnshire to help you out.

CS: That was Stubb Farm, that wasn't mine.

Mrs S: Oh, Stubb Farm

CS: That's when I run Stubb Farm, yeah, yeah. That was in those days, yeah.

ALK: John told us about how he brought in Brussel sprouts, they got the ladies in the village chopping the Brussel sprouts off the stems.

CS: What? Who had 'em...?

ALK: Oh no it wasn't. It was Bernie Ellis.

CS: I was going to say that was Bernie, it wasn't John.

ALK: *No, it was Bernie.*

CS: Yes I used to have several women working on Stubb Farm, doing different jobs.

Well you'd pick potatoes up then we didn't have a potato machine in them days. You'd spot them out and they had to pick them up.

Go back to them days, cor, dear oh dear.

Mrs S: What about when that man asked you who you worked for.

CS: Well who was that, when I said myself. Who was he now? And I said "a B site harder than you are". That's right. I remember that. I can't think who it was...

Mrs S: Wasn't he Health and Safety?

CS: Yes something like that yeah. Oh yes he caught me.

I used to have some suckling cows, Woodstock Farm as well. We were in it together and there was some meadows down before you get to Stubb Mill. it's 12 acres. It belong to Wildlife Trust. And I used to hire 'em and had some cows running on there you see.

And I went down with a load of sugar beet tops one morning and this car followed me and I thought "what's he doing?"

Got off the tractor, undone the gate, went in, cows followed me. Got off the tractor and shut the gate, then got on the tractor when that was moving. And this bloke stopped agin the gate and he watched me throw the tops off.

I then got off the trailer, got on the tractor, turned round and come out.

He said, "who do you work for?"

That was wet that morning - it was raining. I wasn't in very good health. I said "myself" I didn't say it like that, and so and so a lot harder than you are.

He was a Health and Safety man, Health and Safety. "Who do you work for?"

I said "my B self". Course, he couldn't do anything about it, I knew that.

If I'd had been employed by someone he'd had done something, but it was my own boss. Yeah I got rid of him.(LAUGH)

Mrs S: He went to John's.

CS: Er, he went to John's I think and someone was riding of a tow bar (LAUGH)

ALK: *Must have been a surprise to see someone like that out there.*

CS: Yeah, it was, yeah. But that didn't bother me no. So there we are.

ALK: *Do you know the Greenacres, Joan and Jack?*

CS: Yeah. Jack have passed on hasn't he. Yeah, Joan used to come and do work for us.

ALK: *I thought she might have done. Potatoes.*

CS: Joan: I went to her funeral actually.

ALK: *Yeah me too. I spoke at her funeral.*

CS: Oh did you. I remember going there. I don't know who you were but...

ALK: *She was a great friend of mine.*

CS: Joan used to do a lot of work for us.

There was Joan, she used to do it. And Mrs Polly, and who was the other one. Mrs Dove. No. Mrs Beales, Arthurs wife. Three of them used to come, I used to find them quite a lot of work.

ALK: *What would they do for you?*

CS: **Picking up spuds and different things, you know. They'd do some sugar beet for you if you wanted in them days.**

You didn't have a harvester in them days.

ALK: *You didn't do sugar beet?*

CS: **Sugar beet, yeah.**

ALK: *Did you grow sugar beet? You had enough room for that?*

CS: **Yeah, oh yeah. I don't now no. See I was farming Stubb Farm as well.**

ALK: *Who's got Stubb now?*

CS: **I couldn't tell you the name. I couldn't tell you the name.**

Mrs S: **They only been in about 6 months there.**

CS: **They haven't been in there long. He doesn't want to farm it. That's been let.**

ALK: *Yeah, yeah. I was thinking of the farmers and that.*

Mrs S: **He's let the land.**

CS: **He don't just want to know. Just so he's got somewhere to run his dogs, that's all he want. His two dogs.**

His wife go away, she got a business somewhere. She go away on a Monday morning, don't come home till Friday night.

So where they go I wouldn't know. They haven't been there long. So there we are.

ALK: *So how do you see Hickling's changed, for the better or the worse? Over the last 90 years?*

CS: **Well for a start, most people drive like hell through the villages now, and I don't like that. (LAUGH)**

That's one of my hates.

You go round the Broad which I do every time past the Staithe there. Well, then, them come round them bends. Cor! I go like that to them.

ALK: *Right something that's changed for the worse. Anything changed for the better?*

CS: **What, you mean on the farms?**

ALK: *Yeah, anything.*

CS: **Well you've obviously got machinery and that. You got different tractors not like the old Fordsons what you'd got to crank up. It's all lot different then.**

I miss me livestock. I do miss them, but I can't better after them, so.

ALK: *Was that cattle mainly?*

CS: **Yeah, that's what I meant. Yeah.**

ALK: *You must have had horses yourself, you obviously like horses.*

CS: **I used to use horses, yeah. I used to break horses in with the old boy when I, before I left school I used to go and help Scores Church Farm break the colts in.**

ALK: *How did you do that, how did you break them in?*

CS: **Well you had a log for a start. You would have a log with a humbler on, you know what I mean.**

That's the bit of wood across the back two hooks and chain, you got it laid there and you'd get this horse out in the yard put him on a single halter and tie him to the post. Then let him fight it, that

would be the first start, let him have an hour on that bridle, try and get away from it. Knock himself up a bit.

ALK: *He's tied up at the front?*

CS: Single halter on, You know what a single halter is. Tied up at the post.

ALK: *And then he's got this thing behind him?*

CS: No, that behind his head.

ALK: *Yeah but the thing with the chain and the...*

CS: Well, we haven't got as far as that.

ALK: *You misled me by telling me about that first...*

CS: You had reins on him one each side, one on each side. You'd get him to walk out and try and stop him. Then he'd stand and you'd hook him up. Then you were away. You'd have to run sometimes, yeah, go round the field, yeah. Dear, oh dear.

But before I left school I think I was more afraid of the old boy - old Scores up at Church Farm than I was the horse!

ALK: *Can you remember the name of the teacher was the head teacher there?*

CS: Well there was two of them. It was Turnbull when I first went and then, oh what's his name, I said that the other day didn't I?

There's a picture of him, he lived just in the house past the Greyhound in Stubb road, that big house on the left. Fred Drake.

ALK: *Yeah.*

CS: Fred Drake.

ALK: *Hollies.*

CS: Hollies: yeah, yeah.

There used to be a timber mill there, they used to saw their own trees up for wood. Carpenters. Brindred and Durrant we used to work for um them two.

There was Harry (?) Brindred and Jack Durrant used to work there. And when old Ted Marr, who owned it, retired they started there on their own as carpenters.

They used to saw all their own timber. Big oak trees, and when I was young I used to go and see 'em doing it.

ALK: *Did you shoe the horses, did you take the horses to the blacksmith?*

CS: Oh yeah, course I did.

ALK: *Can you describe that to me?*

CS: You see, I started off as a blacksmith, I went to the, I should have been a blacksmith as I used to go and help Fred Watts - had the blacksmith shop. There was two in Hickling: there was one opposite the Greyhound. There was one on the left Bob Pollard, and just round the corner where you go to The Green was Fred Watts.

And I used to go and help him shoe wheels before I left school, and I should have gone with him when I left school, but I got fed up with him 'cos he wouldn't get up in the mornings. He'd look out the window and say start the fire going, boy, you know.

ALK: *How long did you stay with him?*

CS: Well a month or two 'cos I used to go and help him before I left school.

ALK: *Have you got any stories from then, time when you were helping him out or you were going to the blacksmith with the horses?*

CS: No they'd bring horses up there, he'd put his head out the bedroom window and said "shan't be long boy. Get the so and so, get the fire going."

ALK: *Made a deep impression on you there.*

CS: So I got a bit fed up with that.

Then Jimmy Woodrow come up with the horses one morning. He was manager on John's farm. They used to belong to a man named Chapman in those days before John's father bought it and he used to run the farm because the owner didn't live there.

He had a butcher's shop in Yarmouth. And he come up there with two horses and I was sort of struggling and he said, "why don't you come and work with us boy?"

And that's what I did, and I worked there all through the war.

ALK: *What did you do with them?*

CS: What on the farm, worked on the farm, everything, everything, yeah.

And I stayed there until John's father bought it and then I fiddle a bit on my own and went all over the place.

ALK: *How far away did you go from Norfolk?*

CS: Well, not that far.

ALK: *No, you'd stick around...*

CS: Well, I always found work

ALK: *Local farms...*

CS: I could always find work, yeah.

ALK: *Did you turn up and knock on the door?*

CS: No, no.

ALK: *How did you get the work?*

CS: There'd be someone want you, they'd soon be after you. You see that was all cutting and stacking. They was always thrashing, they always wanted you on the stacks.

ALK: *Did you go to the Stalham, you know when Stalham Market?*

CS: Yeah. Used to go to Stalham Sale on a Tuesday.

ALK: *You did. You'd sell your stuff there?*

CS: Yeah, and used to go in the Maid's Head afterwards, just in the yard there.

ALK: *Good fun?*

CS: Yeah, yeah. Oh, yes .

Mrs S: You've always had Labradors.

CS: Huh?

Mrs S: You've always had Labradors.

CS: Yes I bought that one, didn't I? Yes I always had Labradors.

I'd lost one and I wanted, and there was one advertised in the press. It was a Norwich number. A golden lab. And I went - on a Friday night, I always remember - and saw him. And I bought the dog. Didn't I?

He told me that was trained and so and so and so and so and so and so. He hadn't done a damn thing with it, you see. And he came, he used to come up and do Stalham sale.

He'd go in that pub, the Maid's Head; and that was, oh, seven months afterwards.

Mrs S: Was it Derek, who was here this afternoon?

CS: No. It was Francis Drake who was, who upset things.

Mrs S: Yeah, but Derek saw the dog, didn't he?

CS: Oh, Derek saw the dog, yeah. And he said that was partly trained and been there had gone. They'd know all about it.

And when I bought it, the chap who's now been here this afternoon come and see me 'cos he used to come and help me harvest time, combining.

And he said what you got another dog and I said yes and he kept looking at it and I said what are you looking at and he said, well I saw one like that the other day, he said the bloke asked me why I could have it. Oh I said, where was that, he said that was in Seckers the showroom there. In Norwich. Electrical showroom. In Norwich.

I said he, so I went back with the dog, when I went after him, yeah.

Mrs S: She was gun shy wasn't she?

CS: She was gun shy. I knew they were shooting people. His son was a shooting man, too.

ALK: *Not shooting at people....*

CS: No. A shooting person, yeah.

ALK: *It's getting very exciting round here...*

CS: Yes, so I went back after him and said I'd keep it for a month. If not, I shall want my money back. In those days I'd paid about 70 quid for im, that's a long while ago. Yeah, so I had her for a month and she was alright. I got her to go.

ALK: *Ah, the magic.*

CS: And I've had Labradors ever since and I've never had any trouble with them. This one is a gun dog, you wouldn't believe it, 'cos I don't shoot now, so she's got fat, look.

Mrs S: You met him again, didn't you, in the Swan?

CS: Yeah I met him in the Swan, yeah, and Francis Drake, another friend of mine who farmed at Catfield, he say "have you got your dog in your car?"

I say "yes." "Bring her in". In the pub he meant, you see.

He said old Seckers in the pub where I got the dog from, see. So bring her in. So Francis went in here and said "Here you are Secker", he said "do you want any more dogs trained". He wouldn't stop, he cleared off out. (LAUGH) Oh dear, I've had some funny things in my time, haven't I?

ALK: *Now, Ann, is there any other questions I should ask, or are there any other stories or have you had enough?*

Mrs S: Well I think so I mean some of the things that you've said to people who've been looking at the wildlife, like the geese and that.

CS: Yeah. There were some of those I used to go and watch so they wouldn't happen. They've never been neighbourly .

Mrs S: No, I meant you'd be coming and you'd seen someone looking over the gate at the geese, and you'd stop and say something to them,

CS: Oh yes. I done that a lot. I would always do that.

There was a lot in the road, and it was getting sort of dusk as I come home and they had to move so I could make it through, I knew what they were looking for, what they were looking at. They were looking for them old cranes.

And I said "what you looking for?" "Oh, the cranes. Aren't they lovely", they said.

I said “they tell me they’re good eating” .

Well if you could have seen his face as I drove off! (LAUGH)

ALK: That might be a good place to stop.

*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...*