

Voices of Hickling

Interview Transcript: David Lambert

Interviewed by Ann Louise Kinmonth on 18th September 2017

ALK: *Just to start off could you just say your name, the year when you were born and where?*

DL: **My name is David Lambert, I was born in Chestnut Bungalow, Stubb Road, Hickling in 1944.**

“Thank you. So, lets start off with your early memories of, er, Hickling, er, your family (0.40)– things like that, things that you can remember.”

DL: **My father was Jack, he was a builder. Mum, Edie, or Edith and she was mainly a housewife, but she did do the odd jobs, i.e. fruit picking for General McHardy, and other jobs on, on the land. Er, brother Roy, he was, um, he was a builder until he left, until he left home and got married, and then he went to work for the mushroom farm in Martham. And then on to Catfield, er, and then he died when he was 52.**

Going back to the younger days, next door we had John Beales and he used to have this smokehouse, right near the back door, and funnily enough I can still smell the herring which he used to have, we used to put our heads through the door and have a good whiff, when I used to play with Patrick, his son. And they used to have a big old garage, shed cum warehouse down the bottom of the garden and Patrick and I used to get a lot of the broken crates and we used to dig trenches all over John’s garden, fill ‘em in so we had tunnels. And his garden was like a labyrinth, whether we thought that was like “The Great Escape” I don’t know but we used to spend a lot of time underground in John’s garden. He could never grow any vegetables because, er, everywhere, everywhere was tunnelled.

In the earlier times, just before firework night, I don’t know where it came from but they had a pony, trap, pony’s trap and we used to borrow that and we used to go round all the back roads of the Karnser and collect up all the old grass cuttings, what the farmers used to do when they were cleaning out the ditches, and we used to pile this on this cart and drag it all to the track, where we used to have a big bonfire in the middle of the track. How we got away with it I don’t know because obviously there wasn’t the traffic on the roads, but this pony’s trap used to take up all the road anyway. Er, but there used to be a couple of boys in the, in the reins – i.e. Huggie and Rex, or Mornie, whoever, and yes we used to collect a lot of the rubbish from the side of the roads and dump it all on the track.

ALK: *Describe where the track is exactly.*

DL: **Oh, sorry. The track is, um, up where all the council houses are, in the middle of the village. Um, why they call it the track, well it's because it just goes round and it's a track. Where the name came from I dunno but we always knew it as the track.**

ALK: *And now a lot of your friends who lived round there.*

DL: **Oh, yes – there's quite, quite a few.**

ALK: *Who are the ones who come to mind?*

DL: **Er, Michael Smith, alas he died when he was 21, um, Rex Mornie, um, Brian Chapman, and Derek Chapman, um, Clicko Goldby, Johnny Goldby. Um, oh Roger, Roger Nudd, Gerald Nudd and, um, his two brothers – oh I can't think of them, Michael and Austin. Um, going round, I think that's about it who lived on the track.**

ALK: *And your brother? Did you play with him or was the age gap ...?*

DL: **We had 11 years difference, so I was just a pain. LAUGHS**

ALK: *Do you look up to him?*

DL: **Oh, very much so, yes. Yeah, especially when he got his new motorbike and on the Sunday morning said "We'd better go and charge the battery up, can we go for a ride." And we used to go poodling off somewhere.**

ALK: *You'd sit on the back?*

DL: **With me sitting on the back, yes. There, that was his pride and joy, and I enjoyed going with him.**

ALK: *How old were you when your mum started to let you play out?"*

DL: **Oh, I must have been about 10,8, 8 to 10. And we used to go like, I think Huggy has said, we used to do marbles, roller skating, ice skating on the Broad, um, conkers – 'cos Chestnut Bungalow obviously leads its name to the big chestnut tree at the front so at school I was always a favourite because I could bring in bags of conkers. Because Edie, my mum, she used to create if anyobodycame onto the lawn to pick up conkers. Why I'll never know, but, er, she, she used to chase people off. She didn't like it, I think it was throwing sticks up at the, up at the branches trying to knock them down, she didn't like, but, er, she was a force to be reckoned with – my mum.**

ALK: *Yeah. And what was available in the house for your mum to run the house? Had she got, you know, washing up and this and that? What had she got?*

DL: **Well, the toilet was down the bottom of the garden and, er, we never had hot water. Er, the cold water in the bath, when father built the**

bathroom on, er, the cold water used to be connected to the two tanks outside with a hole through the wall with a brass tap on. That used to be the cold water and the hot water used to be the Burco boiler, and the other hot water used to be a little system over the top of the sink – but that was it. But I can vaguely remember before we had electricity – that we had an old Tilley Lamp on the ...

ALK: *When did you get the electric?*

DL: **I really can't, I can't recall.**

ALK: *And you never had an indoor lavatory in that house?*

DL: **No, no, that was across the yard. The first one was down the bottom, that wasn't flush, that used to have to be emptied – either myself or my brother, or my father – we used to have to dig the holes. Er, until they put a brick shed up near the back door and then we had a flush toilet. So, um, we really**

ALK: *So, were they council houses then?*

DL: **No. Apparently it used to be a pair of cottages, they made it into one bungalow and its now been extended. As I came past this morning you could see where they've extended the back. But, yeah, happy days.**

ALK: *And tell me about schooldays.*

DL: **Yes, Hickling, Hickling school. I think you've got a photograph of the class.**

ALK: *Yeah.*

DL: **Somewhere I have seen.**

ALK: *Who was in your class?*

DL: **Um, Megan, Megan Roberts, Mary Osborne, Valerie Bishop – strange, I'm getting all the females – er, Huggie, Rex, John Osborne – alas he died young as well, David Osborne, Michael Smith, David Nudd, Roger ..., Buster Beales. Although some of those are a year older than me although we were all still in the same**

ALK: *Ah! Is your birthday so that you started young?*

DL: **Yes. I was in the March.**

ALK: *How old were you when you went to school?*

DL: **I was about 4, four and a half.**

ALK: *You were young, yeah.*

DL: **Something like that.**

ALK: *And could you already read? Had your mum taught you to read?*

DL: Yeah. She did, she used to, she used to help me quite a bit with that, I must admit. Because apparently, so she told me, she was asked once to be a teacher – true or false I really don't know but, um, she was fairly strict on my upbringing with education anyway...

...not that it did a lot of good but, um, she did persevere with me quite a bit.

ALK: So, what do you remember at school? What are the stories that you got from the school? This is the primary one.

DL: Oh, when we, when we were at Hickling school, in the, I'm sure that was the springtime, Catfield farms used to herd cattle and they used to bring them all through the village, er, and take them to the marshes at Sea Palling, or just go and get to Sea Palling – and that used to be a highlight, watching all the, all the cattle being drove through, through the streets, going into people's gardens when the people weren't able to stop them. That, that was one of the main things I can remember from my early days at school. And we used to be playing in the Dell. Yeah, it was all willow trees, but that's all gone, that's all tarmacked over. Um. Yeah, that's

ALK: And then did you?

DL: I went on to Stalham to Stalham School then, yes. But, again, I was just over six months behind the rest of the boys. But, em, as we lived, I think it was more than 3 miles you were issued with a school bicycle and a pair of leggings and a cape. The cape came in very handy because down near Billy Hurst's (?) Mill on the marshes, or on the fields and meadows you used to grow lovely mushrooms, and we used to go down there, tie the neck of the cape up and fill the cape up with mushrooms, bring them back and give them to people. I can, I can always remember that.

ALK: Fantastic, and how old were you when you left Stalham School?

DL: 15, and went straight to work at

ALK: Did you have qualifications when you left?

DL: No.

ALK: None?

DL: No.

ALK: Where did you go?

DL: Sands at Ingham, I stayed there for

ALK: Why did you go there?

DL: Um, I wanted to be a welder for some reason. Father knew the foreman, Arthur Bacon, there. And, funnily enough, Huggy was working there anyway, and so I got the job. I got a job as an agricultural engineer. And I stayed there until,

Oh! Prior to that the field opposite Sands used to have Ingham Fair on and, um, we used to bike from Hickling and as we got to where Tatham's Farm is you could hear the music from the cakewalk (?) across the fields so we knew we were definitely getting nearer. ----- (?) prior to leaving school, so we used to bike up there and leave the bikes at the Swan and, er, and just walk into the fairground. That used to come every year.

ALK: When did that stop?

DL: Oooh, no. It must have been in the late 50s, late 50s, late 50s or early 60s even. I can vaguely remember. I know I was working at Sands because they brought some of the coconut shies over to be welded up.

ALK: And you did it?

DL: And we did it over there so it must have been, I started there in '59, at Sands – so it must have been in '59 and '64. Because in '64 I joined the army.

ALK: Mmm.

DL: So it must have been in between them when the fair finished.

ALK: How did you come to join the army?

DL: Um, I think I was fed up with just going to work six days a week and doing the same job, and wanted to see a bit of the world. So, I joined up in the March and by the November I was in, in the Far East for two and a half years.

ALK: What was that like?

DL: Excellent, absolutely first class. I'd recommend it to anybody.

ALK: A bit more detail.

DL: The training was a bit, er, rough. Um, but, um, once you got through the training down at Farnborough it was, um, it eased off quite a bit.

I got posted to Chatham and then from Chatham, as I said, November, I was flying out to Singapore and that was two and a half years before I came back.

ALK: In Singapore?

DL: Yeah. I did go to Thailand, Malaya and a stint in active service in Borneo.

ALK: *Yeah. What were you doing?*

DL: **Er, Royal Engineers.**

ALK: *They trained you?*

DL: **They did. Yeah, building bridges, again welding. Um, I done a couple of welding courses in the army and then I came out in '68.**

ALK: *With more skills than you went in."*

DL: **Definitely, oh yes. Mmm, and then I got married the following year.**

ALK: *You must have met her before you married.*

DL: **I met Yvonne about a month before we went to Singapore. Mmm.**

ALK: *Right.*

DL: **And we never spoke for two and a half years - that's the way to make a happy marriage isn't it?**

ALK: *I don't know, you tell me, you tell me."*

DL: **We wrote virtually every day.**

ALK: *Right.*

DL: **There wasn't many days gone by when we didn't write.**

ALK: *How did you meet?*

DL: **Er, at a dance at, um, Walcott**

ALK: *Uh, huh.*

DL: **Or Bacton. Sorry, Bacton dance.**

ALK: *OK.*

DL: **Yeah. It was about a month after I met her and then it was bye bye at the railway station – Norwich. She was at the airport two and a half years later, waiting to pick me up.**

ALK: *What was she doing for two and a half years?*

DL: **Er, she worked for Roys in Wroxham. And, er, ...**

ALK: *And she waited for you?*

DL: **And she waited for me. And we've now been married, it'll be 50 years come next year.**

ALK: *Mmm.*

DL: **So it does work.**

ALK: *Mmm.*

DL: But we had all the letters, er, in a case and we burnt them about 6 months ago, a whole case full of letters which we wrote, used to send the other ones back. I used to send her parcels back with cigarettes and things in and we used to

ALK: But you never paid for any of this?

DL: No. So we had a big, we had a big bonfire because we thought nobody else want to read what we put.

ALK: Well, personal.

DL: So we, we just stood and burnt it all.

ALK: Extraordinary.

DL: But we kept the first one and the last one – we did manage to retrieve them.

ALK: So, when did you set up your married life then?

DL: Er, in Stalham.

ALK: Yeah.

DL: When I got back out of the army I went back to Sands, funnily enough, and we were working in, there was a guy called Cyril Crane, who was building an estate in Stalham, Teresa Road, um, and I bought a bungalow from him, two and a half thousand pounds I think. Um, so, we had one of the first ones on his estate.

And then that's where we virtually started. And then we moved to Ingham, er, Brickyard Road and then I joined, left Sands and joined another company called Hardi, which were crop spraying manufacturers from Denmark and I was Area Sales Manager for the South East of England so I was asked to move nearer my area which was Essex, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Berks, Bucks, Oxon and Bedford. I was living a bit out of area, but we could only afford to go back as far as Suffolk. Anywhere else in my area was too expensive.

ALK: Yeah.

DL: But we managed that and I stayed there for 17 years until I got made redundant – and that's about my working life, I'm afraid.

ALK: How do you mean you're afraid? **BOTH LAUGH.** Sounds alright to me.

DL: Not very exciting.

ALK: Oh I don't know Singapore, Thailand.

DL: We've definitely seen bits and pieces.

ALK: And where, when did you move back? Where are you living now?

DL: We are living in Stow, near Stowmarket, Holy Green now.

ALK: Oh, you're still there.

DL: We're still there.

ALK: That's a long time.

DL: It is a long time – 30 years.

ALK: Yeah.

DL: 30 years this Christmas, but we are looking to move back this way if we can find the right property – downsizing, as they call it.

ALK: So your time in Hickling really was from when you were born

DL: When I was born until

ALK: until you were 18.

DL: 18, 19. I was 20.

ALK: Yes. So if we focus back a bit then and think about your relationship with Hickling village and the Broad, and ...

DL: Oh yeah. The skating on the Broad.

ALK: Yes. Those kinds of things.

DL: We used to have the old wooden, well, wooden parts of the skates with hob nail boots and you used to screw it in the heel of the boot and then put some straps round it and then put wedges of wood in so it kept them high up. They were very crude I must admit but they used to get us round the Broad.

ALK: Did you make them?

DL: Um, well, no, the skates were actually proper wooden skates....

ALK: Yes.

DL: but with the, obviously the metal bit at the bottom

ALK: Yeah.

DL: with the straps, the straps could never be kept tight. We used to just cut bits of wood and wedge them, try and hold them tight otherwise you'd be going, well you were anyway, all over the place.

I even took my motorbike across the Broad, as far as Jarvis Point.

ALK: When did you get your motorbike?

DL: Oh, when I was, I started off with a scooter as most of us did, a Vespa, and then graduated went up to a motorbike and then the next

graduation to that. I think everybody did the same, same type of thing, but, um

ALK: *So you had to do all that yourself, you couldn't expect your family... ?*

DL: **Oh yes. No, no, no, it was all done by working, um.**

Going back to when I was younger I used to work at Joe Chapman's farm on a Saturday and Sunday, washing the cow houses out, etcetera, and

ALK: *Can you describe again exactly where Chapman's Farm was?*

DL: **Yeah, yeah – Brightmere, Brightmere Farm. There used to be a football team there, Brightmere Albion, which I think we've got photographs of, and I can remember those. Uh, and there used to be a big turkey used to come and chase us about there when they were getting ready for their matches. But when you look at it now you think how could you play football on such a small field.**

ALK: *You played quite a bit of games around did you? You look like a man who probably played quite a lot of sport.*

DL: **I used to play for Hickling and then, um, Mornie, Brian Applegate and I went and played for Martham for a couple or three seasons – dunno why but, um, we did.**

ALK: *And did you overlap with Nukes?*

DL: **Oh yes. Oh yes, yes. Nukes, Billy Nicholls.**

ALK: *Yes.*

DL: **Well, Billy Nicholls used to work with me at Sands, when we was crop spraying, and we were together there for a couple of seasons.**

Now I think Nukes was there when we used to do the pea vines as well. There used to be a pea vinery, um, near the Swan at Ingham and, er, Sands used to have the contract using their cutters, and the loaders – and we used to repair them, and maintain 'em and I know Nukes was, Nukes was there then. I think he used to have a little Austin Ruby, we used to laugh at the size of the guy jumping into a little Austin Ruby, a little puddle jumper. I think most people around that time worked for Sands. Most of the people in Hickling I think probably worked for Sands on the peas, or doing some of the contract work they used to do.

ALK: *So, were they actually, um, cutting the pea vines and bringing them in, or were they repairing the stuff that was?*

DL: **Oh we, we, at Sands we used to repair all the viners and the unloaders, the cutters and the loaders ...**

ALK: *Yes."*

DL: and Nukes and Billy and I were the lorry drivers for

ALK: Nukes was a lorry driver and a humper.

DL: That's it, carting all the peas across to all the tractors.

ALK: So that was Chapman's Farm, growing the peas?

DL: No, no, that was. It was, it was farms all the way around Stalham, Ingham, er, like the Becks

ALK: What sort of year was that then? Was that when you were at Stalham School or just beyond?

DL: It was after we left school, yes.

ALK: It was when you were working at Sands. Yes, so you were about

DL: That must have been in the 60s.

ALK: Okay, 'cos they've gone haven't they?

DL: They've gone now, yes.

ALK: Do they do the peas now?

DL: No. Its so they do 'em with the big viners. There used to be another station at Upton, there used to be another station at Belaugh.

ALK: Why do you think that happened, that there came an end?

DL: No idea.

ALK: So you did the peas. What other farming things did you do?

DL: Well with, with Sands on the agricultural side, on the welding side, um, that was when they were doing the sea defences at Sea Palling and Happisburgh....

ALK: Yeah.

DL: and I think that was Lehane, Mackenzie and Shand. And I can remember being stuck there for a week or two, welding up the groynes. Um, other jobs I used to do a lot of bulldozing, hedges and banks out, taking out orchards ...

ALK: Ah. Just before you put them all back in again.

DL: Exactly, yes. And

ALK: So that's

DL: repair the ca, repair the bulldozers. And the

ALK: Where were they taking out?

DL: Perry, James Perry. He had a big orchard.

ALK: Poplar Farm.

DL: Poplar Farm. They used to have a pear orchard. In fact they used to have a nice cold store there where they used to have pears and I used to go down there with Jim, and, um, we used to help ourselves to a few pears. And we also used to help ourselves to his dad's cigarettes, 'cos we used to sit in the straw stack at the farm, and James used to go and get a box of Players, and we used to settle down and smoke to our heart's content – It don't bear thinking about now, really.

I remember James' mum used to have Great Danes, big black & white Great Danes – and I always remember them. 'Cos I used to go around with Ben Nobbs, he was the foreman, and he'd be driving tractors and cutters and I used to sit on the mudguard, day in, day out. Drivin' up and down. And he also used to drive a tractor, getting his sugar beet in.

ALK: And what tractors were they using then?

DL: They had little Fergusons. I think

ALK: Open, with a roll bar?

DL: No. No roll bar. ALK LAUGHS

You wouldn't be able to sit on the mudguard with a roll bar. So there was nothing there at all. That, er, that's if you braked hard you used to slide forward and catch hold of his arm before you went under the wheel. No it was hairy at times, but 'er. Huggy used to go down to Perry's as well. Yeah, we had some good times with Jim.

Er, used to have chicken houses there as well, and, er, yeah Gilbert Lambert (?), he worked there, um, Ben Nobbs, Baz Lines (?).

ALK: Was that Mirrie's brother?

DL: Yes. Yeah. Er, Teddy Holby, he used to look after the chickens. There was a lady who used to do the cows, the milking. We used to roll the milk churns up the top and the lorry used to come and pick 'em up from the bottom near the farm gate.

ALK: Yeah.

DL: And also going back to Joe Chapman's, when Alan Butler (?) used to come round with the cart and, er, with the churn on, with a ladle. Mother used go up for a, with a jug, and get the milk – as it came out of the churn. It was just

ALK: Were those, was that copper, or was that ----- (?)

DL: No that was aluminium

ALK: *Aluminium.*

DL: the churn.

ALK: *The earlier one that used to come round apparently had hooks with different copper sizes – so you could say which size you want.*

DL: **No, I think they were all aluminium ones....**

ALK: *Yeah.*

DL: **That Joe had**

ALK: *A bit later.*

DL: **Yeah, 'cos we used to bottle the milk up sometimes on a Saturday and Sunday.**

Used to let that go through the cooler, then bottle it all up. His machine used to put the silver tops on them.

ALK: *Right there? On the farm?"*

DL: **On the farm, yeah.**

ALK: *Like what they do now on the farm, they did it in between.*

DL: **There used to be like 3 inches of cream on them, it was proper milk. Not like the water, boiled water you get today. This was really good stuff. I think he had some Jerseys as well as ordinary, ordinary cattle. And that used to be good fun.**

ALK: *And what about things like rat control, or rabbit control? Did you?*

DL: **Oh, rabbit control. Oh yes, in the summertime we used to cycle round, um, some of the favourites was Bobby Allen's farm.**

ALK: *Where's that?*

DL: **On the way to, um, go past Hickling Hall and bear left, as if you're going towards Ingham, um, near Sidney Street. Then we used to like there because there'd be a lot of rabbits come out of the woods. Um, we used to try and catch when the binders were near enough finished. So we used to cycle round no end of places, with our sticks – don't think we ever caught any rabbits but it was good fun chasing 'em.**

ALK: *But you didn't see the rats coming out of the ricks and running and ...?*

DL: **They did when they used to in Jimmy Nicholson – Jimmy Nicholson? – yeah, Yeah, when they used to do the thrashing, especially at Perry's because obviously we were on the farm anyway and he used to roll up with his steam, steam engine and thrashing tackle and we, and they put the nets round the bottom. Used to get the mice and rats coming out of the stack, that used to be quite fun.**

ALK: *Thrashing then, in the stack?*

DL: **They wanted the corn and the wheat and the barley.**

ALK: *It hadn't been taken off? So. It came in....*

DL: **It came in in shoaves.(sic) We had to go shocking up, after binding 'cos you didn't have combines, or Perry's didn't have a combine. So it was all cut with a binder and you used to have to go up and put your shocks up and then you used to go round once they were dried, put 'em on the trailers and put it in the fields and make stacks. And then, in the meantime, the steam engine used to come along, we had the thrashing tackle on, and, er, used to**

ALK: *Go from farm to farm?*

DL: **Farm to farm, yeah.**

ALK: *Do you remember horses pulling the stuff in?*

DL: **Yes. 'Cos father, um, I think he used to have an allotment on Blue Billy, down the bottom, just as you go down Catfield Old Lane, on the left, Blue Billy allotments. And he used to borrow Churchill's horse. Um, I'm trying to think where Churchill lived now, and I can't. But he used to have a**

ALK: *When you say Churchill who do you mean?*

DL: **Mr Churchill, he used to have a pair of horses, I think he had two. I know he had one ----(?) and that was as you turned into Hill Common you come to where Edmonds' house is and you got the next house is, that's where it used to be the barn, on the edge of the road, that's where he used to keep the horse.**

I know father, I think I've got a photograph somewhere of me sittin' on the, on the horse.

ALK: *Big horse?*

DL: **Big horse, yes. He was a big horse.**

ALK: *It'll be a good photograph.*

DL: **It will. I'll look that one up.**

ALK: *Yeah. So, tell me when you were born again.*

DL: **1944**

ALK: *1944, so do you have any kind of memories around the war, and the ending of the war? Or, not really at all.*

DL: **Not really. The only thing I can – whether its in my memory or what someone has told me, there used to be a searchlight on the Rec.**

ALK: *Yeah.*

DL: **But another thing, going back to the middle of the school years, the junior school, um, Conflict of Wings – a film, Miriam (sic) Pavlow, John Gregson, Harry Fowler – and they used to be on the Rec. with their film van, and we used to go home and dig, dig the chicken run up to get worms and bring ‘em so they could go fishing at the Pleasure Boat. I always remember going, going, and mother said “What are you doing?” I said “I’m just digging the garden. She thought that strange I’d volunteer to dig the garden but I got a jam jar full of worms. She said “Where are you going with those?”. I said “Harry Fowler wan’t them.” “Who is Harry Fowler?” “He’s a film star.” So I took them and gave them to Harry Fowler, then they used to give us cakes and things what they had left over. That was good fun.**

ALK: *That was good, what about other sort of personalities about the place, like the Desboroughs and The Cadburys and Did they cross your path at all?*

DL: **No, not particularly. The only one, lady which did was Polly Ruben.**

She used to live the first house as you come into Stubb Road on the left past the Greyhound. She used to have a patch over one eye, and a lot of whiskers, and always threatened if I wasn’t good she’d go down the shop – mother would leave me with Polly Ruben and that did deter me from being, not being very good. So, I had to toe the line I didn’t really want to be left with Polly, I must admit she used to scare me.

ALK: *You remember her still.*

DL: **Oh yes I can.**

ALK: *Yes. And thinking a bit more about the Broad itself, and one of the things people talk about is that the Broads now are very, kind of, mucky and you can’t see into it. But years ago it was much clearer and there were water lilies growing*

DL: **Oh yeah.**

ALK: *Do you remember it when it was better?*

DL: **Yes, because again another little part time job I had was cleaning the boats out – W, W Beales, with David Platten. I used to go there, we’d clean the boats out, and sometimes used to have to take them out. And yeah, the Broads were a lot, lot better then, although saying that, when we used to swim near the Pleasure Boat or near the pier, we used to try and get under the pier ‘cos people would drop money through the slots in the pier – but there was just like black slime, the mud ----- (?) bottles. It wasn’t the healthiest place to swim. Although, like Pauline said, the Dipping Place, down near Tallowins – so I think everybody in Hickling learned to swim – there was a big drain there plus the Broad**

which started off with nothing and just slowly got deeper as you went out.

ALK: You remember that?

DL: I remember that quite well, yes.

ALK: You could swim?

DL: Yes, but again learned down the Dipping Place. And then we graduated to up near the Pleasure Boat.

ALK: And you'd go out on the boat at all, yourself?

DL: Not particularly, no.

ALK: Was Mr Beales the owner of the boatyard then?

DL: Yes, he did. He built the bungalow beside it.

ALK: Yeah.

DL: There's Saying we never went on the Broads, we did, because, um, when Benthams used to have blackcurrants, we used to go picking blackcurrants and when we got enough money we, we used to go to Whispering Reeds and hire a speedboat, er, for a couple of hours and that used to get us as far as Potter Heigham bridge and then we come back again. So that was the money from blackcurrant picking that used to cover us on the Broad.

ALK: If you think through the seasons of the year, you've told me a bit about the different kinds of things you did and you picking and the peas and things. Can you just take me through the year and tell me what you might have been doing, around that time when you were sort of 16, 17, 18 as you went through the year? I mean I understand your main job was with Sands.

DL: Yes.

ALK: But you seemed to do all this as well.

DL: Well I think a lot of this was young, in the younger

ALK: Younger, when you were at school?

DL: Yes.

ALK: Ok, take me through what you did then, when you were at school in the, in the holidays and so on."

DL: Um.

ALK: Through the, through the year.

DL: I think Huggy has cleared a lot of it up by saying we used to play Hare and Hounds.

ALK: *Yeah.*

DL: **And again in the harvest time we used to go around any farm which had got a binder or, some of them had combines, I think they did. Um, Hickling used to have a lovely fete every year and there used to be a big marquee up. That used to be something to look forward to.**

'Cos there was, Harry Chapman's fish and chip shop – his brother had two daughters, I think he come from Barton Turf, and they used to be good runners. They used ..., Denny Newman, he used to be a good runner as well, I always remember him running. Um, but yeah that used to be a really good time when they had the fete. Um, as I said, month I was born going into Hickling, um, next door but one to where I lived he used to do all, making baskets and skeps and what have you.

I used to play with Mary, er, dunno why I played with all these girls, but I really don't know. But I used to go round there and watch her father knocking away at making some, um, bushels and baskets and that was very interesting watching him. And then next door to me was Gibbs, he had all greenhouses and they used to grow a lot of tomatoes and different plants. And, as I said, next door the other side was John Beales, who did the fish.

And then there was the Village Hall, we used to have films on there on a Tuesday night, a guy in a great van come along with a screen on the roof. He used to set up and Audrey Mitchell used to, er, take the money and there used to be a fire and I used to go and light the fire. And I know one, one day I'd lit the fire early and it started to get really red hot and John Beales got a bit worried because he'd got a thatched cottage, which unfortunately now has been demolished. Should have been saved in my opinion but he told us to put the fire out in no uncertain terms.

But yes I remember sitting on the , sitting on the floor watching the, watching the films. This guy used to have the old, the old fashioned, two big reels at the back – that used to be great. Um. Other things?

ALK: *So I'm imagining you sitting in the Stack, sort of in the autumn and winter, smoking your cigarettes, and I'm imagining you in the summer, helping with the peas – but that was later.*

DL: **That was later, yes.**

ALK: *That help in ...*

DL: **The harvest.**

ALK: *The harvest definitely, and the fruit, fruit harvest.*

DL: **Yes.**

ALK: *And there was a sort of seasonal feel to the activities that you'd do after school.*

DL: **Well, yeah. You had your conkers, and then you had marbles – forget where they, where marbles fitted in. But Hares and Hounds used to be a favourite for us in the summertime, 'cos it was light.**

ALK: *Did you go to the beach?*

DL: **Um, very rarely. Mind you that was 3 miles away. We sometimes used to go but not that much. Not personally anyway. Um ...**

ALK: *Now we are coming along towards the sort of last bits, illnesses in your family, healthcare in the 40s, 50s, 60s.*

DL: **Jimmy. Jimmy Walsh. He was our doctor. He used to shuffle along. I'm sure he was Irish, he used to sound Irish but he used to mumble a lot. And, I can remember, where we lived there was a, the path goes down to the road and I was playing with a ball and it went down to the path and I went straight after it and then bounced off the doctor's car as it went past. Whoops! I did get wrong for that one. In fact I think I got tied to the table leg by my mother. LAUGHS.**

ALK: *Did you get a lot of punishment like that?*

DL: **Not really, no, but you just didn't cross my mother – she was very stern.**

ALK: *Yeah. Did you have early bedtimes and...?*

DL: **Quite a few. Yes, I must admit. But I did get wrong, very wrong off her, but, em, never got hurt but, er....**

ALK: *So, the doctor didn't make you better.*

DL: **No**

ALK: *You made the doctor's car worse. Right?*

DL: **Yeah, well, funnily enough, um, jumping again at work, at Sands – um, we used to have an incinerator down the bottom of the yard, just a 40 gallon drum with holes in and I was washing an oil can out, 'cos we used to have petrol pumps here and the old fashioned crank for oil – for cars and lorries etcetera, and I had gear oil in this can- which shouldn't have been there.**

Because it was just used for ordinary engine oil, which obviously isn't as thick, so I thought I'd better wash it out.

So I stuck petrol in, to wash it out, went down the yard and threw it on this 40 gallon drum, and then whoof, it went up. And the petrol went up all over my head, and my arms, and luckily enough Huggy, bless his heart, saved my life. 'Cos he was there, cleaning a tractor down, and he

took his beret off and stuck it over my head, then he washed me down and put the flames out. But I'd lost all the skin, that was hanging down, and all the back of my hands. And he said "I think we'd better get you in to the doctors", so he went into the office and Jill, Jill Turner, whose uncle kept the Pleasure Boat, Gwenny, um ...

ALK: *Amis*

DL: **Yeah. Alfie, Alfie and Gwen. Um, she just stood there screaming 'cos of all the skin hanging down. But they whipped me off to Jimmy Walsh and out come the 2 inch paintbrush with gentian violet, so he just And, never had a scar.**

ALK: *Fantastic. What were you, 18?*

DL: **Mmm, 17,18 yeah. Thank you Huggy.**

ALK: *Thank you Huggy.*

DL: **Very much so.**

ALK: *Good man, very good man. Yeah*

DL: **I owe him a lot.**

ALK: *Mmm, and what about that hand?*

DL: **DL LAUGHS. Dupuytren's Contracture**

ALK: *Okay. Is that in the family?*

DL: **Yes, yes, father had it, and again Jimmy Walsh, that was his other finger. Father's was. Jimmy Walsh says "That's because you hold hand" and so he said "Well the best thing to do, Jack, is to go home and sit on it." So, father used to come home and sit on his fingers to try and straighten them, but ... LAUGHS**

ALK: *So, who did those for you?*

DL: **Um, this one and that one was, oh, a guy from Norfolk and Norwich, and Mr Shoulen (?) did that one and Mr – that's it, Mr Shoulen did that one, Watson-Farrer did that one, and did that one and he said "Don't come back, 'cos there's nothing else we can do with those." He said "We've done 'em 8 times and so forget it. So, live with it. But them ones are still straight.**

ALK: *Yeah. Yes Good. Well, what else have you got that you want to tell me about, or have I drained you dry.*

DL: **I think ALK LAUGHS you've pulled more out of me than I can remember. I think, BOTH LAUGH I'll have a quick..... Schooldays. Again. Hunter's Lawn – every year we used to have to go dancing, on Hunter's Lawn, which again was just before you got from the track to Brightmere**

Farm on the right hand side, opposite Holly Cottage, where my uncle Johnston, ----(?) Johnston lived. Er, how on earth we come to dance on grass, that must be the worst surface you can dance on isn't it?

ALK: *What did you wear?*

DL: Just ordinary school gear, pair of short trousers, long socks

ALK: *What kind of dancing was it?*

DL: Oh, it was like doing the real silly sort of dancing which you were taught at school, yeah, I can remember that. Oh yes! Again, Huggy comes up a lot in these. Um, Chapel Pit – there was a bittern on the pit with I think he had a broken, broken wing, which we caught. And we took it to Eric Hoskins who was a wildlife, um, he was staying at Fred Drake's which again was next door to Sunflower Cottage where my, where my grandmother lived. We took it in there and he took it over.

Oh! Again going back, sorry, keep going backwards and forwards, coot shooting on the Broads. A lot of the boys that had guns, um, Billy Nicholls, Nukes etcetera, they used to stand round in ---- hut (?), near the back of Roland Green's studio on the field there, and when the rest were driving the coots up some of them used to come over the back and we used to bag ourselves a few. Of course Mrs Perrin, she used to try and lock all the ducks up, because she used to feed them obviously, across the road. When the coot shoot was on she used to try and get them all in her garden and have them fenced in so they couldn't, wouldn't get shot. Happy days

Down at the Pleasure Boat, um, I used to go down with Jill Turner's brother, Graham, and we used to, used to go round when the boats all pulled up and, um, I'm trying to think of his name – George Formby – he was there and we asked 2 shillings or two and six, asking for mooring fees please and we used to go and collect them, a couple of times a week. Again that was

ALK: *Was that for the Pleasure Boat?*

DL: That was for the Pleasure Boat.

ALK: *How much did they give you for doing that?*

DL: Probably a half a pint of beer which we weren't supposed to have anyway cos it used to be a side door, I think that's where most of us learnt to drink, just in that side, it was only just a little passage at the bar there and if we used to go in, they used to be able to see like Nukes and Billy and Gerald in there and they'd say "Give him a half." You'd get half a shandy or half a beer and that's where we first started drinking. Shame isn't it?

ALK: *Did you go more to the Pleasure Boat? More the Greyhound? Both?*

DL: **I think the Greyhound 'cos that was easier to walk to from where I lived.**

ALK: *Yeah. That's where your group*

DL: **That's where our group**

ALK: *There was a sort of thing where one group went to?*

DL: **I don't think so because we went from one to the other anyway, 'cos you used to get a lot of, a lot more boats come down to the Broad in those days than you do now.**

ALK: *What sort of boats?*

DL: **Um, just cruisers and the, and the yachts. There used to be a lot of people in there in the summertime 'cos you used to have regattas on, on the Broad as well. And as opposed to the Greyhound, the Greyhound it used to be just the locals as opposed to the foreign locals, if you know what I mean. They come round every year and they probably just walk round the, round the square as it were – and start at the Pleasure Boat and finish up at the Pleasure Boat, they'd stop at the Greyhound on the way through, but ...**

ALK: *Yeah.*

DL: **Happy days.**

ALK: *Well very good. Um, you'll find that's almost an hour you've been talking.*

DL: **Is it?**

ALK: *Yeah, I think so.*

DL: **Good lord.**

ALK: *So, it might be a good moment to turn it off and to thank you very much. And that's been a good session.*

DL: **All I can say is good luck to you.**

*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...*