

## Voices of Hickling

### Interview Transcript: INKY BAKER

*In conversation with Ann Louise Kinmonth on 25th February 2019*

**ALK:** *Well it's really kind of you to give up your time to help us with the Voices of Hickling. Can I call you Ian, or shall I call you Inky?*

**IB:** **Well, a lot of people don't know me as Ian, you see. They only know me as Inky.**

**ALK:** *Inky it is then. Like Doddo.*

**IB:** **Yeah.**

**ALK:** *Yeah, that's it. Ok for the tape tell me your full name, where you were born and when, your date of birth.*

**IB:** **I was born 1935. June 1935. Er, opposite the church, you know, at Hickling. The cottages are now, are no longer there. They were burnt, we were burnt out from our home when I was 1 year old.**

**And then we moved to Catfield for a while and then we moved into the council houses down the New Road at Sutton when they were built in 1938. And the reason I know so much about Hickling is because I spent a lot of my childhood in Hickling with my grandmother, Mrs Myhill, who lived in Cloverlea and my grandfather before.**

**When I was born they lived in Green Farm. Er, he was known as Billy Bo Myhill and he had the land that surrounded Green Farm and where Barnfield Close is now built on. But I can just remember Billy Bo, but my grandmother, we spent a lot of time with her when my younger children – my younger brother and sister were born, we then went and lived with my grandmother so I went to Hickling school, er, round about 4 years old I think, um.**

**And there was 3 teachers at the school, there was Helen Myhill, which was my aunt, Mrs Gold and Mrs Vincent, were the teachers. And, er, I remember I think we used to have a wooden, wooden, place sort of up on steps where we used to go and have our dinner in. If you had dinners that was separate from the school 'cos you went in the gate.**

**Yeah I mean, er, I spent, a lot of my time I spent watching old people. I spent a lot of time in the Blacksmith's, Bob Pollard and Luke Pollard, watching them shoeing the horses and there was an old chap I used to sit beside, by the name of Henry Whittaker and, er, he'd be sit, sitting in Pollard's back of the shop all day, drawing pictures in the soil with his walking stick, in the ----(?) floor and I, as a little boy, would sit there hours watching him drawing these pictures in the, in the soil.**

**And then, of course, there was the other, Watts, blacksmith a little further up. As a boy, we didn't go in there much because he was a sort of loud voice and he used to frighten us a bit if we went in there. *IB LAUGHS.***

**And, er, another chap used to frighten me a good bit was – my grandmother used to send me Saturday mornings to get vegetables, near the church, which is now, I think, a car park, the grass bit. Um, a chap by the name of Applegate, Honks Applegate they called him, he had that as a gardener, garden, and my grandmother used to send me**

up there to get veg from him and I used to be frightened, used to go through the hedge into this garden and he, bit sort of big scary sort of man, *IB LAUGHS*.

On a Saturday morning she used to send me to Markham's, the butchers, down beside the Greyhound, go over there and get her meat, and things like that. Errands.

I spent a lot of time in, er, the Carner's (?) the carpenter, opposite the Greyhound, watching him make an old cart wheel and that to do with the farm, you know. I spent a lot of time sort of watching him.

Then, down the Pleasure Boat, there was another old chap lived on, in a boat, on dry land there, Ben Lacey. I spent a lot of time sittin' with him outside, you know. He'd have a fire outside and he always had two or three dogs and things like that. He'd sit there and sort of listen to his tales and, of course, the opposite side of the road was Waldo Beales's garage, sort of the two petrol pumps there and that sort of thing. I spent a lot of time.

And then there when, during the war, I was about here during the war and the soldiers were there and they used to give us a ride round the village in their Jeep, you know. But I think they were actually goin' round chattin' the local girls up. I think that was their aim at the time but they used to give us, give us a lift round the village, you know, in the thing

And, of course, after as I got older Percy Smith formed a cricket club. Er, Percy Smith, Dan Spencer and a chap, Mr Carter, lived down the Stubb then. He had a son, Michael Carter, and, er, they formed this cricket club up. We played up where the playing field is now and we had a concrete wicket with matting over it. And we played in what they called the Beck League which was all the teams in the Flegg. We was only schoolboys or I still went to school when I played and we'd be playing against grown men.

Um, there'd be me, Peter and Derek Blaxell played, Michael Carter, Timmy Wilde, er, two chaps from Potter Heigham – David Moore and Jack Allnut (?) played and Mr Perry, the old bank manager, he, course he played county cricket in his time I think. But he was getting' on a bit, he played and we, you know, used to play all the teams in the Flegg like Rollesby, Martham, Halvergate, Acle, Upton. We all formed, that was all a league called the Beck League. Rollesby, they all, all those teams, they all had a team, we used to play each other and that was formed by Percy Smith who was then landlord of the Bull, you know, at the top there, where Hickling House now is.

Then we, then I went on to play football for Brightmere Albion, er, for two or three years before, you know, before I became 18.

Yeah, a lot of things, there used to be another old chap who used to come through the village called, er, Ed Harvey, he came from Catfield and he used to come through the village with a load of dogs. You could always buy a dog off him. And if he, if he wanted to go to the toilet he didn't bother - he just stood in the middle of the road and unzipped his trousers and done it, didn't worry about anyone. And if you wanted a cat neutered or anything like that, he'd do that for you. *IB LAUGHS*. That sort of thing, yeah. Yeah, we had good days really. Yeah, yeah.

Another thing, when I was pretty young we used to go to Hickling school, there used to be a boy, Eddy Stimson, lived down the Stubb there, near Tallowin's, and every, every morning he'd go into Enoch Gibbs' shop and buy an Oxo, which were about a penny each then, and he'd eat that raw as we were going from Enoch's to the school, he'd eat this raw Oxo. *IB LAUGHS*. I mean that was nothing new for us boys to go onto one of Joe Chapman's fields and get a swede and peel it and eat it. We often used to do that. But during the war, you know, when you sort of got hungry you did peel a swede and eat it raw and also used to take the middle out of a kale stalk, used to take the outside and in the middle, 'cos the bit in the middle was lovely – soft and sweet – we used to eat them and all.

Yeah, lot of things we used to get , that sort of thing, yeah.

Of course I've always been, sort of go back to Hickling, I mean I played darts down the Pleasure Boat and now play bowls there. So I've always been more connected to Hickling than anywhere else really.

ALK: *Well, those are terrific early memories. If we go right back to the beginning you were saying that we lived in the cottage that was burnt down. Who exactly was there with you?*

IB: **Well there was my mum and dad. She was a Myhill you see, my mother was.**

ALK: *Was that the Myhills from Mill Cottages, that lot? Which Myhills are there two families of Myhills? They were the ones who worked for the Forbes or the other family?*

IB: **No they weren't no relation. My grandmother, er, was a Howard, because somehow the children, her children, went as Howard-Myhill. I think, er, Helen's husband, Jimmy Myhill - Pimpshy they called him ....**

ALK: *What?*

IB: **Pimpshy they called him. His nickname was Pimpshy.**

ALK: *What does that mean?*

IB: **I dunno how he came to be known by that name but it, his proper name, I think, was Jimmy Myhill and he was, he was husband to Helen, the schoolteacher – lived up High Hill, in the council houses up there.**

**And I spent a lot of time with him, riding on the tractor when he worked for Lionel Borrett at Hickling Hall. When I was younger, you know, when the tractors first came out. You know I used to ride, Saturday mornings used to be riding on a tractor with him. Everywhere, up and down the field and that.**

**Then Lionel Borrett had the Hall then, yeah. And, of course, there was Stiles' Farm, near the church, there was several smaller farms. But I think they all belonged to the estate at the time, they all estate farms, yeah.**

ALK: *And your dad, what did he do?*

IB: **He, well he started off as a, working for Gladden at Sutton Hall. He originated from Ingham, Ingham, and he worked in the, you know, the hatchery. They had a hatchery just over here near the Hall and that's how we got our nicknames, you see. 'Cos I got my name, Inky, Inky Baker. Surname was Baker and working with the incubators, so Inky Baker.**

ALK: *From the chickens?*

IB: **Yeah.**

ALK: *And everybody's called you that ever since?*

IB: **Ever since, yeah. A lot of people don't know my name is Ian, you know, they call me Inky all my life, yeah. Yeah, and he, well, then of course, my grandmother to, I mean I didn't know she had a milk run (?). She had an older brother, Lou Myhill, who got drowned – before the war, I think he was in the Navy.**

**And then, of course, there was the, Roland Myhill – I think they called him Bronco – he got killed in Singapore during the war. And then there was Eric, the youngest one, who they called Jackie Myhill. He, he was in the army during the war.**

**Er, then there was an older daughter Doreen, Doreen Myhill. Dora they called her. Married to Reggie Moore, Reggie Moore.**

**Goin' back to Reggie Moore, when I, that'd be 1957 or 1958, when I worked for the Waters' family over here, Bray Farm, and he had marshes down Eastfield. He had a herd of cows, you know, down there – there was a mill there then. And I went with my uncle Reggie Moore, who worked for Heyhoe at Norwich and he used to blow things,**

you know, dynamite things up. And I went with him the mornin' we blew that up. He put dynamite sort of all round it, sort of that high up and that all just come down like that.

ALK: *Why was he blowing it up?*

IB: **Obsolete I suppose. I mean that was more or less in line with Billy Nudd's mill, you see. That was this end of the wall, sort of on the left as you go through there, on the wall over on the left. And, er, a lot of the bricks were saved, you know, and used again – they were red brick you see – and a lot were put in the holes on the walls, you know down the wall, er, and, er, in them days Roy -Watts (?) had a cow house down there. And, er, the cows used to go down there in the summer.**

**So I spent a lot of time down there doing the marshes and that, you know, sort of ....**

ALK: *Did you look after the bull?*

IB: **Did I look after the bull? No, we didn't go in with it. IB LAUGHS. They had one, never had a bull down there. They had a bull up here which, er, .....**

ALK: *In Sutton?*

IB: **Yeah, up the Mill Farm.**

ALK: *Yeah.*

IB: **Yeah, there weren't many people went in with that.**

ALK: *Kept it in a shack did they?*

IB: **Well, they kept it in two separate pens. If they, if they wanted the cow to go to the bull they put the cow in a, in a door from the yard that way. And they had a little door they could reach through to open to let him in, you see. Then to entice him back they put some food in the trough this side so he came back and they closed the door up again, you see.**

**But the day they took him away they thought, you know, when the cattle -----(?) come to take him away, er, everybody thought, you know, how the devil are we goin' to get him on the lorry. But he went up there. They got a rope at the front of the lorry and then onto the ring of his nose and he just walked straight up onto the lorry. Whether he knew his time had come I don't know. IB LAUGHS. Yeah.**

ALK: *And I can't work out if you had brothers and sisters yourself.*

IB: **Yes, I had two older brothers, Maurice and Gordon, er, and Peter – Peter and Jean and Dawn were younger. There were six of us and three of us were born at Hickling, Maurice, Gordon and myself and Peter was born in 1938. He lived in the council houses down here when they were first built.**

ALK: *In Sutton?*

IB: **Yeah, and Jean and Dawn. And, er, there's only myself and Dawn left now. And she lives out near Birmingham – she moved, moved away.**

ALK: *So tell me what it was like, growing up in the war here.*

IB: **Well, when you look back ...**

ALK: *Yeah.*

IB: **... you think they were good days.**

ALK: *Tell me.*

IB: **Now, you know, you think that, you know, you never had nothing, everybody was friendly, everyone was the same. Er, you know, and you done things for yourself like**

making pop guns and bow and arrows and things like that. All making things like making rabbit hutches or making barrers (barrows) or things like that, you know, and all that sort of thing. Er, whereas now I suppose children they don't – all they do now is go on computers don't they, yeah, these X boxes and ....

ALK: *So, if you think about going through the seasons of the year. Tell me what you did in each of the seasons. Say, start with winter. I dunno ....*

IB: **Winter well, we used to, a lot of the times we used to go on the gravel hole on sledges, sliding down the hill there. Er, always playing football, of course, and, er, er, we used to go skating on Hickling Broad when that used to bear.**

ALK: *Got any stories about that?*

IB: **I fell into Hickling Broad several times.**

ALK: *You get in trouble?*

IB: **Er, not really 'cos you used to mess about 'till you dried off, didn't you? *IB LAUGHS.***

**There used to be a lot on the sides of the Broad, you know, were frozen over, used to go on there skating and normally used to go round, up Sandy Lane, you know, what they used to call the old Dipping Pit where you could walk out when it wasn't, it was only shaller (shallow), and that gradually got deeper as you walked out, you know. We used to go swimming down there too.**

**You walk across the marsh and then go swimmin' in there – it was lovely and clean, lovely sandy bottom up there, yeah, when we were boys, yeah. Um, then, of course, we used to go swimmin' there – used to swim down from the, you know, from the stagin', from the Pleasure Boat. We used to swim out to that first post and back and round that and back and, yeah, used to catch eels. Used to go and dangle a worm in the holes in the old wet boatsheds on the other side of the river. Used to have a stick with a line and used to have a worm on the end and used to have holes in the old mud, the eels, they used to come up and catch the worm and we'd pull 'em off.**

ALK: *Where was that exactly that you did that?*

IB: **That was on the left as you go down to the Pleasure Boat, off the right hand side of the wall, the river, And there was a boat shed there, what did they call it, wet boat shed if you like, sort of the water was in the boat, the boat would be in there in water but there was this shed over. And, of course, there was all the mud and the eels, there used to be holes in the mud – you could see them holes, we used to dangle a worm on a line and... *IB LAUGHS.***

ALK: *Did you eat 'em, or put them back?*

IB: **No, we never did eat, we never did eat eels. I know Chris Nudd, he eat, he used to eat 'em. Er, yeah, so.**

ALK: *And what was Christmas time like at your house?*

IB: **Never had much. Er, I can remember one Christmas time we got, had a football between four of us and perhaps an orange and a bar of choc.... We used to, er, I know that Boxing Day there was about 6 inches of snow we had this football and we took it up on the gravel hole here – a big old leather ball then that was. Well, after about 5 minutes we couldn't kick it 'could we, 'cos it was that heavy. Get an orange and a...**

**And then, of course, in later, when I left school I worked a lot for Withers, and Furze Farm – they're in Sutton. And, er, used to use the horses there, you know, harrowin' and rollin' as a boy. Walkin' up and down the field all day long.**

ALK: *What were their names?*

IB: **Er, what the horses? I can remember the whole four.**

ALK: *Yeah, yeah.*

IB: **There was Smart, er, Blossom, er, Captain and Gerry – were the four horses we had there. When I first went there, and I used to get a shilling a week for going up there on a Sunday and feed ‘em, when I was a boy. That was before I left school, I used to go and get Mrs Withers, Mary Withers then, I used to go and get her coat and stick thing.**

**Er, 9d I got, 9d for that for the week, and er, then I used to go and sit in her kitchen with her, time she was a real lady for a lot of baking and things like that. And I used to, ‘cos we never had a radio at home, radio at home at all then, nothing, and I used to go in there and I’d listen to the whole instalments of “Dick Barton Special Agent” – course that used to come on for a quarter of an hour every night during the week. Then the whole instalments all used to come on on a Saturday morning and I used to listen to it in her kitchen, sittin’ in her kitchen, time she was feeding me with sausage rolls and things. *IB LAUGHS.***

**Yeah, I spent a lot of time until I went, and then when I got called up, er, [PHONE RINGS. My phone ----- get it (?) er’ and er’ they – its my phone (?)] and, er, yeah I spent a lot of time at Withers’ Farm when I was due to be called up.**

**Harold Withers, the guvnor then, said “Let me know when you get your papers” and he said “we’ll get you deferred” you see. I wouldn’t have to go in because I worked on the land. I never told him, I wouldn’t, I never told him so I went in the RAF when I was 18 – for three years. Yeah.**

ALK: *That’d be the end of the war?*

IB: **That’d be after the war. That was in 1953 then when I went in the forces, yeah.**

ALK: *They were still calling people up?*

IB: **Yes. You still had, I was then on , I was on, I was in for 3 years and then two and a half years reserve, and ....**

ALK: *Did you see the world?*

IB: **Er’, not too much ‘cos I played cricket for the RAF you see so I didn’t have to do too many duties.**

**Er’, I went out to Germany for a little while, near Stuttgart, but they flew me and another chap home from there to play cricket for the RAF so we used to play against sort of teams like Lancashire Second XI, Cambridge and Oxford University.**

ALK: *You must have known Jackie Borrett?*

IB: **Jack Borrett. Yeah I knew Jack Borrett – yeah, we used to play... You see in them days as a youngster I, although they wouldn’t like to hear me say that, I couldn’t play for, with those sort of people like Jack and them, er’, because I, I never had the money to join Ingham and teams like that.**

**Although they were very good to me, they, they used to ask me to go and play sometimes for them and they always treated me all right. But if I went there as a club member, er, that’d cost you. Cost you money to buy a round of drinks or that sort of thing or, and I know for a start they were, you’d have ten pounds worth of draw tickets, you’d have to buy and get rid of them yourself to get your money back.**

**Well that was more than two weeks’ wages of mine - £10 – which was too, you know, I just couldn’t afford it. And when I came out of the force I got married, you see.**

ALK: *Mmm. How did you meet your lady?*

IB: **Well, she was a local. She came from Berkshire and she moved to the cottage opposite the church down here, and, er, we got off and on when we go to school if you know what I mean. When she first left school she worked in Burdett’s shop.**

ALK: *Was she at Stalham school or at Hickling school?*

IB: **She start, no she was Sutton school then, when she first come here at 9. She was 9.**

ALK: *But you weren't at school in Sutton? Oh you were in school at Sutton as well.*

IB: **As well, yeah. I went to Hickling and Sutton off and on, you know, backwards and forwards.**

**But I spent most of my time in Hickling school when I was young for the simple reason my mother had the younger children. I was shipped off to live with my grandmother you see – which was, I suppose, that was too much for her.**

ALK: *At Hickling School did they have the pond shaped like the Broad, when you were there?*

IB: **No, no, they had a playing field out the back and a sort of garden out the back. I can remember...**

ALK: *Did you grow things?*

IB: **Yeah, we used to grow sort of, play about in the garden pretty much. IB LAUGHS. Yeah, yeah and that ...**

ALK: *And did you move on to Stalham?*

IB: **Yeah.**

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

IB: **Eleven, we were eleven then. Yeah. Eleven years old. when we left school then.**

ALK: *You went straight then to work for the farmer?*

IB: **Yeah, when we come out the school. Yeah, 'cos I used to go and work there at harvest time, see and that was during the war. And, er, Mary Withers who I spent time with, you know getting her -----(?), she used to say to me "You can go, you can get extra, your mother can get extra rations for you, you know." And she saw the lady Nicholson in the church, in the shop at Sutton and, er, my mother got extra coupons or extra little bit o' cheese or an extra little bit of this, a little bit of that.**

**So, er, because I, if you had your, used to have your, what they used to call you, forces if you like, er, male sort of tea time in the harvest you could get extra coupons or extra rations 'cos you used to have to pack your food up and take that. Yeah.**

ALK: *What would you have, out there in the fields during the harvest?*

IB: **Oh, a bit of cheese or something like that, and a tomato, yeah.**

ALK: *And what would you drink?*

IB: **Cold tea. You'd have a bottle with a sock over it. IB LAUGHS. Yeah, used to put a sock over it to keep it warm, that kept it warm for a little while but not too much.**

**But nine times out of ten if we stopped sort of, say, you used to start about 7 in the morning – sometimes before that – you'd stop about 9 perhaps and have a bite to eat. Well, I used to eat all what I got then, and the rest of the day I'd have to go without, you know.**

ALK: *Did you go after rabbits, and that kind of thing?*

IB: **Yeah we used to go chasing rabbits in the harvest field when we were boys and you'd get a rabbit if you could get away with it. But, if you didn't get caught, er, yeah, we used to always have a stick with a knob on the end 'cos if you catch a rabbit they'd hit the shoes you see and barrel over and you hit 'em then.**

**If you, sort of, but I was lucky that way 'cos when I worked at Withers the old, Joe Webster who was team then and you sort of was actually head of, lookin' after the**

horses. He used to have to turn the horses out after they finished work at night, down on the marshes and then, as he went, he used to set snares on the railroad, where the bypass is now, he used to set snares there and in the mornings he used to go and get the horses up about five o'clock in the morning to get them up to feed them before they had to go to work. If there was a rabbit in the snare he'd kill it you see and he very often used to give me one.

ALK: *Did he?*

IB: Yeah. But if we caught one in the fields we'd put it in a coat like that and run home quick as we could, 'cos, 'cos at the end harv...., after they used to cut the fields, all the rabbits that were caught would have to be laid out.

ALK: *Yes.*

IB: And then they used to auction them off to the people who were there, you know, like all the people who worked on the farm would have to buy 'em. I think they were three shillings each.

ALK: *Right.*

IB: So, if you were caught, if a lot of them see you caught, if you catch one you'd got to get home with it before they take it away from you. Yeah.

ALK: *Did you get fish?*

IB: Fish, yeah used to go fishin' down the river. Yeah.

ALK: *What did you get you could eat?*

IB: Well, you couldn't eat, eat 'em really. You could catch bream. I have tried eating the old bream but they used to taste a bit muddy, you know. Used to put them in salt water overnight and then, er, used to have...

One thing we used to get a good bit were moorhens' eggs. We used to go across the ----- (?) down here behind the church where moorhens used to be, scores of moorhens and early mornings we used to go there and get, get the moorhens' eggs. And have them fried up for breakfast – they were alright, they were rich. Yeah.

ALK: *So, going on through the year did you do Jack Valentines?*

IB: Yeah.

ALK: *What did you do for that?*

IB: Well, er, of course people used to just knock at your door and you used to run out, didn't you? Er, when my two boys were young we used to do it then. Up where the pottery is now, when I lived in there. Er, sometimes we used to get our neighbour at the end to do it for us you see.

Then they didn't know who it was you see and he'd probably put something on the step on a bit of string, you see. When they came out to pick it up he'd draw it away – things like that, you know. They used to, er, shout, you know, "Thank you Jack Valentine. Thank you Jack." There'd be a few sweets, something like that. Yeah.

Yeah, I know fireworks night. We used to have a bonfire out on this field here, people used to throw stuff on there the latter part of the years when we were raisin' money for the village hall down here.

ALK: *Again, in Sutton?*

IB: Yeah.

ALK: *Yeah.*



**IB:** We'd, you know, have a fireworks night out there, hot potatoes and things like that out there and that sort of thing.

That's in later years, after I was married, you know.

*ALK:* So, getting back to thinking about Hickling. You talked about the shops a bit, especially Markham's meat shop.

**IB:** Yeah.

*ALK:* Can you walk me down from the top, by the Bull and tell me about the shops you remember in Hickling?

**IB:** Well they say there used to be a shop up near the Bull but I, I can't remember that.

I can't remember a shop bein' up there. But, I mean I knew, I knew the ..., Osborne's was on the right, you know. Just near Doves Corner – sold all stationery things. And then, of course, you had, er, er, Harry Martin, you know, who was the biggest shop, right opposite the Green on the left, coming from High Hill way, this way. Then you had Enoch Gibbs little shop just past that, then you had Burdett's, then the opposite side of the road you had Turners.

*ALK:* What did Burdett's sell?

**IB:** Sell all groceries, everything, yeah. Er, Harry Parnell live in there then, yeah.

And then the opposite side you had Turner's, you see, which was the Post Office. He used to sell clothing and we used to get, get our shoes and boots from there when we were younger.

Er, and then later years there was a shop sort of on Staithe Road. Parry had a shop there, you know, a little thatched place that always used to be open on a Sunday, you know, sellin' ice creams and things like that there.

Er, I can't remember the one, the one up near The Bull, er.

*ALKL:* And did people come round, um, with a horse and something or other selling anything?

**IB:** Yeah, yeah. You used to get the old rag and bone man come round, any old scrap and things like that, you know.

And then, of course, you had, I know when we lived at Sutton, er, Jack Markham who had the butchers - he used to come round and my mother used to get meat off him when he lived at Sutton. He used to come round on a motor bike and side chair delivering the meat. Er, er, yeah.

*ALK:* Fish?

**IB:** Fish, yeah. Well, we had Herbert Wright here at Sutton. He used to come round and sell wet fish.

I dunno whether Harry Chapman, the fish shop down the Stubb, whether he came round with wet fish but he had a fish shop at the same time.

They were, they were - they were alright, they used to fill you up in them days. They weren't what you call good fish and chips but they filled you up.

Er, they were two of a kind I think because they weren't too fussy how clean they were or anything like that. I know Herbert Wright here at Sutton, he used to throw the coal on the fire underneath in his hands and he used to wipe his hands down his white apron like that and get hold of a bit of fish and battered it. No, no cleaning then, but it never done us any harm.

And fish and chips then were ninepence - shilling, sixpence for a bit of fish and three pence for your chips. Well, I can remember.

And then, of course, when I played cricket – when we were boys we spent a lot of time sort of up near The Pleasure Boat and then we'd sort of have a, have a crafty drink - we were all under age when Gwenny Amis kept it, used to go in a little place round the back, but you'd get a half a pint if, er, if we were lucky. **INKY LAUGHS.**

Used to be, I spent a lot of time playing with the Blaxells.

ALK: *Mmm.*

IB: **Used to go down his on a Sunday morning, playing tennis - with Peter and Derek.  
'Cos they went to Hickling School then.**

**Of course later years they went to Bracondale School they did - but we spent a lot of time sort of when I was ten or eleven.**

ALK: *Did you get out on the Broad? Did you punt or anything like that?*

IB: **No, no. I didn't, no, never, never.**

ALK: *Didn't get involved with the shooting and....?*

IB: **No, no, no. I remember.....**

ALK: *Royalty coming down and that.*

IB: **And then, of course, there was Nurse Bishop, who lived up near, sort of near the Staithe, who was the District Nurse.**

ALK: *Mmmm.*

IB: **And she brought my mother into the world, she brought me into the world and she brought my oldest son into the world. Nurse Bishop did.**

ALK: *At home?*

IB: **At home, yeah. They were all born at home.**

ALK: *Great.*

IB: **Yeah, um, the doctors then of course, Wallace, Walshe and Willets.**

ALK: *Say again.*

IB: **Wall, Wallace was the doctor at Stalham.**

ALK: *Yeah.*

IB: **Then, then, then there was a Walshe and Willet, Willets, and he's still alive – I think he still live down the Staithe Road here.**

ALK: *Did they come out to the little doctor's surgery in Hickling?*

IB: **I should imagine they did, yeah.**

ALK: *But you didn't go there?*

IB: **No, we always used to go to Stalham**

ALK: *Yeah.*

IB: **We used to have to walk to Stalham.**

ALK: *Yeah. Do you remember going to the doctor?*

IB: **Oh, yes.**

ALK: *What was it like?*

**IB:** Well, Walshe, Wallace was alright. Walshe, he was an ex-Army doctor. Irish chap he was, very nice chap, down to earth sort of, sort of chap he was.

Yeah we used to go there and he wasn't too fussy really what he... He'd give you a few pills and, I know in them days for some unknown reason you used to get a lot of boils, like on your wrist or on your neck or something like that and I know I had one on my neck.

And that was, that was a blind one you see, so I went to him one night. "Oh, yes boy".

No matter what you'd got he'd had it! "I've had one of them boy. I know what it's like, boy" he used to say.

He said "I'll soon do that." And, er, I sort of took my shirt off and I sat there and he sprayed a little cold stuff on it and the next thing I felt all this stuff runnin' down my back.

"There you are, boy." he says "That's alright now. You'll be alright now, boy" he said. And that sort of thing, you know. He wouldn't ....

*ALK:* Did you get sick much?

**IB:** Not really, no. No. No, we ain't, er. No, we ain't. Fairly healthy really I suppose.

*ALK:* Did you have to pay to have that done or how did that work?

**IB:** No, I don't, I don't think we had to pay then. Not that I know of.

*ALK:* So, it was before the National Health?

**IB:** Oh, I would have thought so, yes. I can't remember ever paying for it.

*ALK:* Your parents didn't worry about paying for the health?

**IB:** I don't think so. No. I don't know whether they had to pay or anything.

*ALK:* Mmm, mmm.

**IB:** But, but Hickling I don't know, I mean you probably know, someone told you the shoemaker used to have a shed upside Frank Watts', on the bit of green there. He used to have a shed there, he used to do shoe repairs, he was an Elliott. I can remember that being there.

Of course, on the left as you go into the Greyhound they were garages along there, some garages along there and, of course, every Sunday afternoon all the, like Billy Nicholls and Kenny Addy and Doddo and all them who were sort of 10 and more years older than me. They sort of would go in the Greyhound on a Sunday dinner time and then all Sunday afternoon they'd stand outside on that corner yarning, you see.

And I was that much younger and they used to kid me up to have a fight with some other who was there, Ian Cator, for a penny. They used to throw a penny in the road for us to fight over. *IB LAUGHS.* Er, all that sort of thing, boys they were.

*ALK:* Who won? Were you better?

**IB:** Well, er, sort of some and some, you know. *IB LAUGHS.* Yeah, so yeah. Yeah, of course I played, I mean I played football for Brightmere when Joe used to have a big, a big loudspeaker on the edge of his barn playing out "Oh, oh, what a referee" and that sort of thing and Mrs Golby used to make the teas, at half time, used to have a cup o' tea at half time in the barn and, er, yeah.

*ALK:* Good times?

**IB:** They were good times then, yeah.

*ALK:* Yeah, yeah.

**IB:** Yeah, I played, I played in the game when they won 46, 46 nought I think it was, against Suffield Park. I played in that game but the trouble on it then to get regular games there weren't many villages had teams under 18 – so a lot of times we were playing against grown men. Sort of toughened you up a bit playing against strong men when you were younger. But as I say I'd rather have it now.

This Mr Perry, he was a bank manager at Stalham, er, his wife, I think, ran the farm. Jame., you know, James Perry's stepfather he'd be.

**ALK:** *Mmm.*

**IB:** Er, and er, he played cricket with us and, and he'd got a lovely bat and he used to let me borrow that, because he, he never used to bat hardily, you know, he just used to come, you know, and play – sort of getting very old. And, I used to play with that.

Well, then, course, when I went in the Forces and when I came out of the Forces, I then worked on for Roy (?), for Mill and Bray Farm – all round there and I was ploughing a field next to there, they used to come round past what I call Howard's slope – and he used to walk his little dogs round there.

After 3 o' clock when he left the bank at Stalham he'd come home and he'd run these little dogs, and I was ploughing right next to them. I stopped and spoke to him, 'cos I hadn't seen, spoke to him in years since I played cricket. I'd been in the RAF and came out again and he said to me "You still play cricket?", I said "Yeah, I play for Smallburgh, Stalham, up Stalham I have a game." I said.

He said "I've got a bat at home" he said "I wonder whether you'd like that."

And I sort of rubbed my hands, I thought that is that bat he used to let me borrow. But that was a lovely bat, you know, and, er, he said "If you'd like to come round this evening." He said, er, um, "You can have that bat."

So, of course, on my bike, round there I go. And of course, Mrs Perry came to the door, "Yes, what would you like?"

I said "I see your husband this afternoon" and, I said "He's got a cricket bat he was going to give me." "Oh yes" she said "I don't know nothing about that" she said.

Anyway, he came out, and he came out with this old bat and that was, er, black and I thought well that ain't the one I had, I thought. Anyway, pleased that he gimme a bat, I brought it home and I thought, right I got my own bat now and I know I went to, played with it once or twice do you know it felt like no spring in it or anything like that and I thought oh, that's sort of dead.

So I let my young boys play with it, on the road, you know, sort of up here on the road. You played cricket on the road then with a sort of tennis ball. They used to hit about with that and then the bat I won, I won a bat if you got 100.

The first time you got 100 for Smallburgh the old boy used to buy you a cricket bat – he'd give you £8. And £8 then would buy a new cricket bat. I bought this new cricket bat and I had that for some time and that got cracked and I thought well I gotta have my own bat, I don't like the old club bat.

So I took this old bat and played at Dereham against Dereham one day and the ball went off that sweet as I don't know what and I got 50 and I finished up playin' with that and never felt anything else. Why I don't know – and I finished up, I was playing at South Walsham and I hit a ball there and it split right down the middle, straight as if you'd sawn it down, the grain, right down the middle. Yeah.

**ALK:** *Like the ball knew its time was up...*

**IB:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, well I mean, er, I got, I played a lot of cricket.

Latter years I played a lot of darts. I played, I got my greenhouse, got my summer house out there full of trophies – dart trophies, cricket trophies, boxing trophies – boxing when I was at school. Boxed for Norfolk schoolboys, went down to Southend one weekend, to Westcliff, boxed.

One of the boys, Fred Greener, as it happened we found out years later he boxed against one of the Kray twins. Er, I dunno which one it was, but the actual boy then he boxed against, he turned out to be one of the Kray twins.

We all went down there one weekend by train, had the Saturday night along Southend, along the pier – I can remember that.

ALK: *Well you've done us, you've done us proud with those stories. Coming towards the end and two things – one is we're going to do a presentation particularly about memories of the war so if you've got any other stories about when you were a young lad in the, in the war years that would be very good, or anything else you wanted to tell me before we stop, either way.*

IB: **Well I mean every weekend, I mean every Friday even when I moved back and lived with my mother, er, I used to come and spend the weekend with my grandmother.**

Friday nights after school I'd walk through the Mill Road here and we were afraid to go past Joe Chapman's 'cos he had an Alsatian dog, and that used to come out and chase you.

If we went this way, round Bray Road, at Webb's Farm – they had an Alsatian there, that would come out and bite you if you didn't look out. Chase you on your bike so we used to walk down the Mill Road, round past the hut and then walk straight over that field which went in to the Loke Way, which led down to where my grandmother lived, used to come out near Huggy's, back of Huggy's this loke did.

We walked down there and, of course, we were at the back o' my grandmother's then so, er, that's the way we normally used to go.

And, er, yeah I, there's a lot of things we used to do during the war, I mean we used to do during the war - me and my brother once, one weekend we thought we'd go campin' and, er, we put this old, made this tent out of old sacks and we went and, went round here, down that loke way just afore you get into Hickling over here, and pitched this tent but we never stayed there. We got fed up with it after a day so we never actually spent the night there, We, **IB LAUGHS**, came home again, yeah, yeah. But I said I spent a lot of time watching old people, used to sit and watch them.

ALK: *That's lovely.*

IB: **Yeah, yeah. Spent a lot of time in Bob Pollard's blacksmith shop.**

ALK: *Yeah. If you could have done anything you wanted to, what would you have liked to have done...*

IB: **I don't think I...**

ALK: *...workwise."*

IB: **I don't think I'd want to do anything else really.**

ALK: *Enjoyed it.*

IB: **Yeah. I enjoyed what I done, yeah.**

ALK: *Good life.*

IB: **I was brought up sort of on the land.**

ALK: *Yeah.*

IB: **And that, and I finished up back, not on the land, I finished up a lorry driver for the Becks at Brunstead Hall, where I finished up. I was goin' all over the place delivering corn to these maltings and places like that – yeah, different docks, Ipswich dock, Felixstowe, Kings Lynn dock.**

ALK: *Taking over from the wherries.*

IB: You were taking the corn down there and loadin' it onto the boats or taking it down to the brewer, you know, the different brewers. Cart the wheat down to Felixstowe, to MacDougall Hovis, place down there where they used to make the bread.

No, I won't change nothing I don't think, really. No, I won't change nothing, glad I went in the forces really – that made a man of you. I came out just at a time as the Suez War broke out, when they blocked the canal and that.

I was on reserve then 'cos I just got married, I was wondering whether I'd got to go out, but that happened just after I got, came out of the RAF. I was on two and a half year reserve and I could be called up any time. We got £8 a year for being on the reserve. I think after the first year they done away with it, so I only got that £8 for one year.

But I know I worked 'cos when I came out of the forces, got married to Jean and lived up here – 'cos that was a tied cottage then you see. And then I, er, (53.31) I remember just after I was married, you see, had my oldest son and I was then touch and go whether I would have to go out there, you know – be called up again.

But I never was, so, er, yeah. Yeah, used to go -----(?), spent a lot of time down on the marshes, down Eastfield, when I worked for Roy Wilkes, you know, mushroomin' and things like that.

I remember the old mill being blown up and, ... I think a lot of people don't realise there was a mill there. But there was, there was a mill this end.

ALK: *That's our hour. Dinged it didn't he.*

IB: Oh, that's the hour up, is it?

ALK: *I think it is.*

IB: So.

ALK: *Well done. You didn't know you could talk for so long, sir.*

*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...*