

Voices of Hickling

Interview Transcript: Kathleen Deary

*Interviewed by Teri Ellis
on 14th August 2014*

TE: *Tell us your name, please.*

KD: **Kathleen Gladys Deary.**

TE: *And where you were brought up in Hickling?*

KD: **I was born at Ingham, at a double cottage there. Dad was a poultry worker then, looked after chickens and things.**

They moved to Hickling, in the new council houses, High Hill, Hickling. Number 2, when I was 2.

TE: *And you were born which year?*

KD: **1924.**

TE: *Well, perhaps we could start with your special memories of Hickling. You've told us the house you were born, brought up in.*

KD: **Yeah, we loved it. We were quite happy there, we had an allotment. So dad could go and work on the allotment and grow things for the house. And chickens, a dog. [LAUGHS].**

TE: *And did you have brothers and sisters?*

KD: **Yes. I had a sister 4 years older than myself, older. And my twin brother, I was a twin.**

TE: *And his name?*

KD: **Edward. Yes, called Ted as usual.**

TE: *And what job did your father do in Hickling? Was he still working with the poultry?*

KD: **No. I can't remember. I think we were 8 when we went down the Whiteslea Lodge, when Dad went down Whiteslea to work. We were 8 year old then, but we went to Hickling School.**

TE: *Um, mmm*

KD: **All the time and never went to any other school at all.**

TE: *So you moved to Whiteslea Lodge, down there.*

KD: **No, we didn't go to the Lodge. Poor mum, I was so sorry for her because we went into a new house in the council house, and she went to an old thatched cottage. Clay walls, it was awful.**

TE: *Where was that?*

KD: That was a cottage near, well, this side of Whiteslea where we lived. The walls were like, beams, and it was horrible.

TE: Yes. Was it well, water. Did you have well water and....?

KD: No, we had a pump.

TE: You had a pump, yeah.

KD: Yeah.

TE: What can you remember of life down there at Whiteslea?

KD: We were happy, yeah. Dad, he loved his gun. He used to let us shoot as well – just tin cans you know. [LAUGHS].

TE: Yeah

KD: Yeah. We were quite happy. There was another cottage further down, just past us. There was some family in them so we used to play with the boys down there. Yeah. We all used to go to school together when the weather was bad and wTE 2 miles to school.

TE: So it was a 2 mile walk to school.

KD: Yes, yeah. But when the weather was alright we used to cycle.

TE: So you stayed at Hickling School until what age?

KD: I left at 14. Went straight out to work.

TE: What did you do?

KD: Well, helping in the house, you know. Odd jobs, making beds, sweeping up.

TE: This is at Whiteslea again, is it?

KD: No. I didn't go down there at all. No, no. we weren't allowed down there. If we did go, we went with dad. We never went on our own, no. Of course dad had fields, and he had a horse. We had cows, pigs. We had chickens, we had a lovely time.

TE: A really country childhood. Yeah

KD: Mmm, well we did, we had to grow every thing to feed in those days and we had the cows for the milk, the chickens we had for the eggs, you know its. Yeah, so we were always busy, There was always something to do.

TE: Yes

KD: You know if you weren't on the land you were doing things indoors. And we had horrible coconut matting on the floors. Oh, it was awful.

TE: All the dust gets through.

KD: Yeah. The dust. You had to take them up. Mum used to take them up, Saturdays, to clean underneath.

TE: Yeah. Can you remember any particular episodes, like bad weathers, or particularly warm summers, or....?

KD: Well, we did get snowed up good and proper one time. We really did, and then we had to wTE everywhere, and I tell you. But mum was at the coppers, up the corner boiling the linen. How they did it I do not know.

TE: *With the fire under the copper?*

KD: Yeah. Fire in the wall for the oven. She used to get up Friday mornings early, make us some little hot loaves to have for our breakfast before we went to school, then it was about baking day.

TE: *Baking day and washing day.*

KD: Yeah. Special days. I used to help her with the washing. She taught me to cook, it was a good job she did, I had to go out at 14.

I went to a farmhouse at Ormesby when I was about 15 and I had to cook there. I even made bread.

TE: *So, you were just general help in the farm?*

KD: Yeah. They had a woman come and do the heavy work. And I looked after the beds and the cooking.

TE: *Did you ever make butter and things like that?*

KD: Butter.

TE: *No. No, with all these cows down there?*

KD: I made butter after I was married. Yeah. We made it here. And, of course, we had the cows and we used to skim the milk you know.

What do you call it?

TE: *Take the top off the milk, yeah. Buttermilk? Curd?*

KD: Can't think of the name we called it. Anyway, yes we used to make milk, er, butter and it used to be lovely.

TE: *I bet it was*

KD: Yeah. I enjoyed that. 'Cos, you see, wartime too, being rationed, and then you'd come home and make your own butter.

TE: Yes

KD: It was lovely.

TE: *Yes. So, what do you remember about the war in Hickling down there? Did it impact on you very much?*

KD: No, I wasn't there. In the wartime I was here.

TE: *Were you?*

KD: Yes.

TE: *So when did you move here?*

KD: I came here when I was 20. Came here when I was 20 and I've been here ever since.

In the wartime was here, you know. Oh yeah, we had bombs just across the farm over there, killed horses and things. One night I, we had a doodlebug come over what they... You know, it was one without an engine or something. It went over here and I had another man indoors talking, wanting to see Herbert about work on the farm and I forgot he was there and I just dived under the table, you know, just automatically dived under, yeah.

Then I worked with Mrs ----- (?) when I was, what 16, I worked for a schoolteacher up the road here then and I loved it there. I used to look after her, the girl, she had a daughter, Marion. She was lovely. And, during the war I was there with her, some of the time and we used to sleep under the bed.

TE: *Do you think it would have been much protection. I suppose there would have been a bit?*

KD: Well, it would have saved us if we'd got bombed or anything, that would have saved us from getting hurt that much. Yeah, always remember that, sleeping under the bed. And, of course, when you went cycling out you had to have your lights shaded on your bicycles, you had to have the tops showing down and not forward.

TE: *Yeah.*

KD: And you'd get stopped if you hadn't, by the police. They'd stop you if you hadn't got the regulations.

TE: *Did you go back to Hickling much? Or did you stay here, in Sea Palling, mostly?*

KD: Well, I went to work, as I said, when I was 14. I came back this way and I worked at a farm and I didn't like that very much.

They never bothered about whether I eat anything or not and they would even count to see if I'd eaten any of the jam tarts. So I wasn't happy there.

So I left there and that was when I came to Mrs Phillips down Beach Road there, Waxham Road here.

And then from there I went to Major General McHardy's at Hickling. Do you remember him?

TE: *It's a name I think I've heard. Yes.*

KD: I went as his cook/housekeeper with Betty Tillet, what lived down Eastfield, and she's gone now.

TE: *Yes, yeah.*

KD: And, er, I didn't like it very much. I can't say, I wasn't unhappy but I wasn't happy.

TE: *So how long did you stay there?*

KD: Two years.

TE: *Yeah.*

KD: Used to have to pluck birds and that, what had been in the cold store, not fridges in those days, and they'd be green. Oh, it was awful, I used to turn my face the other way and pull the innards out. It was horrible.

TE: *So where did you meet your husband then?*

KD: Whist drive, in the old village hall, Sea Palling.

TE: Yes

KD: Mother and I biked over from Hickling. 'Cos we used to go to whist drives in those days and he was up on the stage in the village hall and, of course, he knew my mum because mum had been round with the Red Cross nursing and he'd been to, she'd been to his house. So, he had an excuse to come and speak to mum so he could speak to me.

TE: *So he could speak to you*

KD: And that was it.

TE: *And how long were you courting?*

KD: Four years. I was only young you see, 16. Yeah, we got married at 20."

TE: *Uh, huh*

KD: And came here. We had an aunt and uncle lived next door and they said "If you want to get married you can come and you can have this end if you like". So we did have this end, been there ever since.

When Herbert died I couldn't leave it. I looked at some bungalows and things and I came back with Graham, my son, and I said "Graham" I said, "I'm not going to leave it". He said "Alright mum, if you're happy". So I stayed here.

TE: *Stayed here. So you've been here since you were 20?*

KD: Yeah, yeah.

TE: *Just down the road then really. So you started off at Ingham.*

KD: Yes

TE: *Then you spent your time at Hickling.*

KD: Hickling, yes.

TE: *And then you moved up the road to Sea Palling. So you're really a Sea Palling girl really, aren't you?*

KD: Yeah.

TE: *You've been here 70 years, haven't you?*

KD: It is a long while isn't it? Yes, you don't realise it, do you? How the years go by.

TE: *No. Not until somebody says it.*

KD: No, that is it. Yeah.

TE: *Er, we're just vaguely interested in what, what you can remember about illnesses at home and how people coped with illnesses in the family and when you called the doctor and things like that.*

KD: I can never remember a doctor coming. Hardly ever because mother knew a lot, you know, she was good, she loved her nursing.

TE: *Your mother was a nurse?*

KD: Red Cross nurse.

TE: Yes

KD: Yeah, she loved it. She used to go and help in the hospitals - Norfolk and Norwich and the Jenny Lind when it was there.

TE: *How did she get there?*

KD: Bus.

TE: *From where?*

KD: Hickling. She'd bike to Stalham, catch the bus and then go from Stalham to Norwich.

TE: *And what time did they start work then?*

KD: Oh, I can't tell you now. Well, I mean she used to go and help out, you see. She loved it. If she could have been there all, she would have done.

TE: *But that's a long journey. That was a long journey.*

KD: Oh yeah, yeah. But she loved it, she loved looking after the kiddies and that, in the Jenny Lind. Yeah.

She'd been in the theatre too, I remember her saying she seen the tonsils fly across the room she said. [LAUGHS]. Oh!

TE: *So really you didn't. You kind of looked, your mother looked, nursed you.*

KD: Yes. We were looked after well and, as we were saying in here, I used to be angry at school and, well not angry but hurt because kids would have new clothes and I couldn't have any and I used to say to mum "Well, why can't I have something new?"

And she said "Your money" she said "goes inside your tummy and not on the outside". Yeah, she always looked out. We had good food.

TE: Yes

KD: Yeah. We always did. Yeah, I can see the big saucepans on the cooking range now. They were lovely.

TE: *Was it? You've got a book there with some memories in it. What are the special ones in there that you would like to tell us about?*

KD: Glasses.

TE: Glasses

KD: Never mind. I can manage.

TE: *What does it say, my love?*

KD: It's... that was what we did at school.

TE: *Yes, we talked about the school a bit.*

KD: I can't(?) Its got to be here somewhere. What we did at school.

TE: *So you really enjoyed that?*

KD: I loved the schooldays.

TE: Yes

KD: Um, which we did at Hickling school.

Did you want to know that? About me cooking and they taught us to cook at school.

TE: Did they?

KD: Yes, and the boys had woodwork.

TE: Mmm

KD: And that's why I think I went out and did the cooking and my brother went as a boat builder.

TE: They taught you a lot of practical skills, didn't they?

KD: Oh yes.

TE: Yeah

KD: And they always taught us to knit and sew.

TE: Who was your teacher?

KD: She was a Miss Chettleborough at the time, yeah. She was lovely.

TE: She was lovely

KD: I loved her. She was lovely.

We had one teacher that got in, um, she would shout so much that it would frighten you. That was the middle teacher, sorry, the middle class.

And she shouted so much one time her teeth blew out one day and landed on somebody's desk. [LAUGHS].

TE: Do you remember the Head Teacher?

KD: We had masters. Yeah. Oh gosh, we've had Drake, Mr Mudd. Can't remember all that.

And I used to see the boys get the cane, they used to cane the boys in front of us – just for running round school corners. You had to wTE. And they got the cane. I used to cry because I see them getting caned. My brother got one, he had one. That was sad, that was. I didn't like to see that.

But, um, there's another thing at home, when we were at home we always did. We went to bed at night, 8 o'clock, every night come on, 8 o'clock to bed and we always used to either sing this or say it.

TE: Yes, tell me

KD: "Lord keep us safe this night, secure from all our fears. May angels guard us while we sleep 'til morning light appears."

TE: That's lovely

KD: And if we hadn't said it or sung it, they'd shout upstairs "We haven't heard your prayers yet" and we, we'd have to do that every night. Don't forget those little things do you?

We loved our church, dad was a bell ringer and he was also in the choir at one time. And we always went to Sunday school, never missed. Yeah, Sunday school, we liked it, I didn't mind it.

TE: *Where did you go to Sunday school?*

KD: **Well, that's now made into a house, right opposite the school. The church room, we called it the church room. Yeah, that was our Sunday school.**

TE: *In Hickling?*

KD: **Yes, yeah.**

TE: *That's your*

KD: **That's dad. I used to say, dad, he was lovely, a big man, he was over 6 foot, he was 6 foot 3, but even then he'd play with us kiddies on the floor and mum used to be sitting there holding a paraffin lamp in case we knocked the table and knocked the lamp over.**

TE: *You talk about him quite a lot, your dad*

KD: **Oh. I loved my dad.**

TE: *Did he talk to you about what it was like, working at Whiteslea? Did he have any stories to tell you?*

KD: **Yes, he told me about where he'd been, who he'd seen**

TE: *What do you remember?*

KD: **.... what they'd caught and what they'd got. Yes.**

TE: *We want to do a bit on, you know, famous people in Hickling so it would be interesting if he has any memories of Prince Charles or*

KD: **Oh yes.**

TE: *... that he talked to you about*

KD: **He had to get Prince Charles off the top of Whiteslea Lodge, the little Toby had gone up and climbed on the top. And dad had to go and get him down. He was 9 years old.**

TE: *What did you call him?*

KD: **Toby.**

TE: *Little Toby, hah!*

KD: **Yeah, yeah. I've got pictures of him with dad, with them.**

TE: *Did they come often to Whiteslea?*

KD: **No, not very often. No. And it's all stopped now, you don't hear of anything like it now. I don't know why.**

I hope it's not gone to ruin, Whiteslea, because it was a lovely place. Every room was full of bird pictures, the walls.

TE: *Do you remember it?*

KD: **Oh yes. It was like, we used to have parties there.**

When Lord and Lady Desborough were there, and they used to come down and they'd give us kiddies what lived in Stubb Road a party every year. There was always a little gift.

TE: *Was it in the summer or the winter?*

KD: **Well, it would sort of be Autumny time. Autumn time, yeah. I can remember that. We used to always have a little gift from, I've even still got a little purse what was all little beads, that I used to have years ago. I've still got that somewhere.**

Yeah, they were nice.

TE: *'Cos you weren't allowed to know that the Royal family were down, were you, when you were children.*

KD: **No.**

TE: *You weren't allowed to know that.*

KD: **Mum and dad used to say, you know, be quiet or...**

TE: *Don't tell anybody*

KD: **They'll go away. No they won't. No, we won't and didn't. Mum and dad had to put up the Duke of Edinburgh when the floods were, in 38.**

TE: *Was it 38 or 42?*

KD: **Yeah, when the flood was, yes.**

The Duke of Edinburgh came down to see and Whiteslea got flooded. So they said would he mind going up and living in the keeper's house? And he said "No, not at all", and mum looked after him, got him a bed and she cooked for him and everything.

He used to get down from the table and sit near the window to watch the birds visiting. Have his lunch, whatever.

TE: *It's further down Stubb from what's called Keeper's Cottage?*

KD: **No, that was in the Keeper's Cottage.**

TE: *It was in the Keeper's Cottage*

KD: **No, that was, what had happened.**

TE: *It's where Jean Vincent*

KD: **No, they had that old cottage and then after mum and dad had been there, a few years, when the children had left, we left home, they built them a new house.**

They took the old one down and they lived in a garage.

TE: *So, I'm a bit lost where these houses are.*

KD: **Keep, no in the same place.**

TE: *So, this is near Whiteslea?*

KD: **Not, there's a cottage before you go down to Whiteslea. Right on that corner, before you turn to go down the cinder track. Have you been down?**

TE: Yeah

KD: Well, there was a cottage on the right. There still is.

TE: Well, that's where now the warden lives

KD: Yeah. That's where I lived. That was my home.

TE: So that was the new house?

KD: That was rebuilt.

TE: It looks rebuilt

KD: The old one was pulled down and the new one was put up.

TE: So it looks a bit like a thatched council house rather than an ancient cottage.

KD: Mum was pleased with that.

TE: Well, it's nice, isn't it?

KD: Yeah.

TE: I think they'd like it now. So that's where, that's where it was.

KD: Oh yes. That's where the Duke of Edinburgh came and he slept there and he was quite happy there. Well, when the flood was, dad, I only just.....

TE: The 1938 flood.

KD: Yeah. We're all letting our drinks get cold. Dad decided, I just happened to ring him on the telephone then the phones went dead, to say that the sea had broke through. And dad said "Well, I'd better get a boat". So what he did, he got round Plummers at Waxham, the farmers, his lorry.

He went down to Whiteslea, the Duke was down there then, well, they had to be quiet.

Got this boat on a lorry and came here and saved one or two of them in the houses, at the flood time. The Rowe's, I think they got them, Percy Feathers.

TE: The '53 flood, yes

KD: The '53 flood.

TE: Yeah, because otherwise you were being naughty because you weren't 20 yet. 1938, so it's 1953.

KD: Yeah, 1953.

TE: 'Cos there were the two, yes. Do you remember the earlier one when you were in Hickling?

KD: Mmm, yeah, at Horsey, it came through at Horsey. I can remember. I was about 13. I can remember that 'cos we cycled from Hickling to go up there to see it and we couldn't get in, couldn't get into Horsey at all.

TE: What boat did he bring? You said he brought the boat, what boat was it?

KD: On Mr Plummer's lorry, and brought it down.

TE: Was it a sailing boat?

KD: No, no.

TE: *It was a motor boat?*

KD: Just a rowing boat. Like a rowing boat. Either that or a punt. It was one or the other, rowing boat or punt.

TE: *I see. He brought the boat as near as he could.*

KD: Saved the people. Yeah.

TE: *And saved the people here in Sea Palling.*

KD: Because there was a Mr & Mrs Rowe in the house down there and they just stood there and kissed each other goodbye. The end of the house went out like that. And they'd got a little boy, he was the same age as my Graham I think, or a bit younger, and they put him in the chest of drawers hoping it would float. But they got saved alright. They got saved, yeah, so did the little boy.

And the little girl, what used to come round with the evening papers, she came here and brought me my evening paper and went home and got drowned.

It was dreadful.

TE: *Was there a lot of loss of life?*

KD: She was only 7.

TE: *Was there a lot of loss of life with that flood?*

KD: Yes, it was about 9, I think 8 or 9. There was quite a few in one family.

TE: *Was there?*

KD: Yeah. That was the family what went. Yeah, the man had tied the baby on his back to try and save him, but they both got washed away. Right on the corner. It was awful.

TE: *Do you remember the water coming up at Hickling at all?*

KD: Yeah. In the first flooding, when Horsey was flooded....

My brother and I used to have one of dad's punts and we'd go out on the marshes because they'd been flooded. We had no fear of being too deep, you see.

And we used to love it. As soon as we got home from school we used to be going down to the marshes and getting the boat and off we'd go. Eddie would do it, my brother.

TE: *What boat did you use?*

KD: Punt.

TE: *Where did you get that from?*

KD: It was one of dad's, one of dad's, yeah.

TE: *You good with punting?*

KD: I didn't.

TE: *You didn't do it?*

KD: **No. My brother did.**

TE: *Why didn't you do it?*

KD: **Because I sit still and enjoyed it. [LAUGHS]. Yeah, I loved it. Yeah, I can remember that. I mean, when we were at school too, we used to hurry home from school and we'd run along the footpath there and across the marshes and go and swim in the Broad.**

TE: *Where did you swim?*

KD: **Down near the mill, at Hickling. There was a mill there. I don't know if it's still there even.**

TE: *Well, it would be the Tallowin's*

KD: **It was Chapman's, Chapman's Farm. Near Chapman's farm it was. And we used to go down a little loke to it. And we, us girls used to change in there.**

TE: *Would that be Willow Farm?*

KD: **I think it was.**

TE: *Did you call it the Dipping Place?*

KD: **I dunno, I dunno what we called it really. But it was lovely because you could wTE out as far as you wanted.**

TE: *I think it must be the Dipping Place. You couldn't tell*

KD: **Yes, I think it was. Yes.**

TE: *Yes. And the boys and the girls were swimming together?*

KD: **Yes.**

TE: *But the girls went into that place.*

KD: **We went into the old mill and changed, yeah. Went with the school sometimes but otherwise we used to go down on our own. My brother and I did, many a time. Used to run home from school and go and have a swim.**

Yeah it was lovely. But now you can't go in it can you? That's it, the Broad now, it's not nice to.

TE: *It's a bit murky now*

KD: **Not nice to swim in there.**

TE: *No*

KD: **You could see the sandy bottom of the Broad at one time.**

TE: *Did you fish?*

KD: **Not a lot. We did when we were tiny. You know where the old mill is down at Stubb, Nudds?**

TE: *Yes*

KD: **My brother and I used to go down there on our bikes with long sticks and strings with a safety pin on it to put a worm on.**

TE: *Did you catch anything?*

KD: **Nope. [LAUGHS].** Then when we, dad, used to have haystacks sometimes, and, of course, you had to have hay for the animals and that.

Night times we used to go round with sticks and put the sparrows out the stacks, we used to love it. Torches. Kiddies won't do that today, would they?

TE: *What about the rats?*

KD: Oh yeah! That's what we had the little Jack Russells for. They did that. They caught them. Cor, would they bark if they were on the tail of a rat? They'd go like mad. Yeah, they'd catch 'em.

TE: *But you don't mind? You weren't afraid of them?*

KD: No, we used to see them run sometimes, on the ----(?), in the shed. You know. The dogs would get them, or dad would shoot them. Yeah, I learnt to shoot.

TE: *You learnt to shoot?*

KD: Mmm. It was good at that . We used to shoot tin cans.

TE: *Yeah. What sort of gun did you use?*

KD: Little, tiny 12 bore. Yeah, it was good fun.

TE: *Did you shoot anything that lived?*

KD: No.

TE: *Never?*

KD: Yes, only rats. I caught rats out here.

TE: *Still got your gun?*

KD: No, no. My son had that.

TE: *So you're talking about the fun of growing up in Hickling.*

KD: Mmm.

TE: *We're interested in that. There are other things about why it was so nice. Those years that you had in Hickling.*

KD: Yeah, it was nice. I mean we had friends, other girl friends and boy friends, you know.

TE: *Can you name them?*

KD: Yeah. Joyce, Joyce Cator, she was, Cator. Who'd she marry? A bearded man, Charlie Waters.

TE: *Oh yes.*

KD: Joycie, she was my friend at school. And there was Joan Elliott, she was another one. Molly Lambert, Muriel's sister. Yeah. There was quite a lot of them.

TE: *There were a lot of young people in the village then, were there?*

KD: Oh yeah, yes. 'Cos the school was bigger then. Long while they probably just had one room or two rooms, now where we had 1, 2, 3, 4. Yeah.

TE: *Did any of the girls go on to Stalham? Did they all leave at 14?*

KD: **Well, you left school at 14 in those days.**

TE: *All of them left.*

KD: **But. Yes. I mean, they then built Stalham school and it was then opening as I was leaving Hickling school.**

TE: *OK*

KD: **See. So I never ever had a chance to go to Stalham.**

TE: *I understand*

KD: **And I went straight away to work, cycled to Ormesby and, where I had to work.**

TE: *It sounds like you came home in the evening. You didn't stay away, in Ormesby Farm, or?*

KD: **Oh yes. I slept there.**

TE: *You did sleep there?*

KD: **Yes, yes. And if I had a, we used to have a half day in those days and I used to love to cycle home, from Ormesby to Hickling.**

And mum would cycle nearly all the way back with me at night rather than I went alone, yeah, she was so good. In the dark, torches on your bicycles. We didn't have cars and that in those days.

TE: *No, no.*

KD: **We couldn't afford them then.**

TE: *The countryside was really dark as you were bicycling along.*

KD: **Yeah, but we did it. You didn't think anything of it , quite happy.**

TE: *You spoke a little bit about working for General McReady?*

KD: **McHardy. Yeah, McHardy.**

TE: *Where did they live?*

KD: **Down Sandy Lane, against the Broad.**

TE: *In a big thatched house.*

KD: **Yeah, yeah.**

TE: *And did you stay there?*

KD: **Mmm. With Betty Tillett. Yeah, she was the parlourmaid.**

TE: *Is she related to Fred Tillett?*

KD: **Yeah, brother and sister I think. Yeah.**

TE: *Did they have boats?*

KD: **Pardon.**

TE: *Did they use the Broad in front of the house?*

KD: No, no. I don't know whether General McHardy didn't, I don't think much. I can't think of all the ... They were all well known people down that road you know.

TE: *Did he build the cottage next to the house for people, for the Myhills to live in? Or was that later? Was there a cottage next to the house you were working in?*

KD: Mmm, I don't know.

TE: *Who was living down that road then?*

KD: No idea, can't remember.

TE: *It doesn't matter. Only if you do. If not, don't worry.*

KD: Sometimes it come to you. You can remember. But I know they were all very nice, moneyed people lived down there. Oh! Of course, the, um, the artist who did the birds and that.

TE: *Roland Green?*

KD: Roland Green, of course. He was down there then. Yeah, in those days.

TE: *Did you meet him?*

KD: No.

TE: *'Cos he did the bird pictures that you liked, at Whiteslea.'*

KD: Oh, beautiful they are. Have you been in Whiteslea?

TE: *I have, yeah. But not much. I went in years ago. Its been flooded a bit, some of the birds have got a bit spoiled.*

KD: Yes, spoilt it.

TE: *Is that picture done by him? With the bittern?*

KD: Yeah.

TE: *In your room.*

KD: Yeah, I've got one in my room. One of the pictures done by Roland Green. 'Cos mum had two, she gave my, my sister one and she gave me. Yeah. When dad died and that, she had to move and everything, yeah.

But Cadburys, the chocolate people, they used to come down quite a lot to Whiteslea.

TE: *They still do.*

KD: They still do?

TE: *But it's the next generation.*

KD: Yeah. And Lord and Lady Desborough, I liked them.

TE: *Everybody liked them. What do you know about them? What can you remember about them?*

KD: I dunno. They were so kind, they were, they were like yourself, they were really nice. And, as I say, they used to give us a party and, and that.

I tell you another thing I used to do when I was a child - when they went coot shooting they'd have hundreds and my brother and I used to go round the village carrying coots on our bicycle handlebars and take them to all the houses down Stubb Road.

They all had free coot. I didn't like them, they were greasy.

TE: *Were they?*

KD: Mmm. You skinned them. You didn't pluck them, you skinned them.

But that was all free meat and they loved them, they enjoyed them. [LAUGHS].

You could see me cycling up the road with coots all on my handlebars. [LAUGHS].

TE: *You used to go skating on the Broads every year?*

KD: Yes. Went skating with dad on the Broad. Yeah, I've got lovely pictures of that.

TE: *It would be nice to see those. You mentioned that you were snowed up on one occasion.....*

KD: Yeah.

TE: *... I don't know if you can remember when it was.*

KD: Yeah, I think I had, I think I had left home then, what I remember. About 15 I should think.

Was some snow, we did get snowed up, because Eddie and my dad were out with the shovels and everything. Clear things away.

TE: *Harry Nudd has described that to us.*

KD: Oh, did he?

TE: *He did.*

KD: Yes, yeah, I remember Harry.

TE: *His dad helped dig you out.*

KD: Oh, did he. I'd forgotten. Yeah. I think I'd really left home then, you know, I can remember them being snowed out. I can't remember what year it was though.

TE: *Did you ever skate on the Broad?*

KD: Yeah. Used to go at night time, in the moonlight. That was lovely. Dad take me, he'd look after me, he did. He taught me how to skate. [LAUGHS].

Yeah, and if there had been any snow somebody would go in front with a broom and push the snow away so we could all go skating on the Broad.

TE: *That might have been '46, '47*

KD: Yeah, I should think that would be about that time.

TE: *That was a particularly severe winter, wasn't it?*

KD: That was a severe winter. But mum ----- (?) my boat.

TE: *There's somebody pike fishing.*

KD: That's dad.

TE: *Is that on Hickling Broad?*

KD: Yeah. I got here, Prince Charles was 9 when he came down. Dad had to fetch him off the roof, little Toby, he had to piggy-back him down.

TE: *So you remember Gwen Amis?*

KD: Gwenny, I knew Gwenny. Yeah. She was great.

TE: *How did you know her?*

KD: Well, we got involved with her many times, you know.

If, we always used to go down to the Pleasure Boat. Nearly every Sunday we'd go to the Pleasure Boat and we'd go in and have something to eat or drink. Yeah.

We knew Gwenny, she, she used to help with the girl guides and things, and brownies because I was a brownie and a girl guide. Yeah, she used to help with them.

TE: *And she had Prince Charles staying with her as well.*

KD: Yes, she did. Yeah, yeah.

TE: *She's called after my granny who's her godmother...*

KD: Oh I say.

TE: *... Gwen*

KD: Was she really? Yeah, I knew Gwenny, and her hubby, she was quite alright.

TE: *Was that Jackie's mum, Jackie Vokes(?) mum?*

KD: Phillips, Gwen Phillips. Aubrey's, Aubrey Herbert Smith's sister. Yeah, my sister went and joined in the WAAFs, and my brother went in the navy.

I was at General McHardy's then and got call up papers and he didn't want me to go.

TE: *So...*

KD: So, I didn't go. I stayed with him as cook.

TE: *What did you think about that?*

KD: I regretted it.

TE: *I wondered.*

KD: I wish I had gone because my brothers went and my sister went and they sort, my twin brother, I knew he came home on survivor's leave because he got, get, he took the lots of troops across to Normandy when they first, you know, fighting.

TE: *The expeditionary force.*

KD: Yeah. And he got hit then and he came home on survivor's leave.

Just after I got married.

Mum said "If only you'd have waited a little longer."

Yeah, but Hilda went in the WAAFs, she was quite a, she went on the balloon barrages.

But I'd have gone in the WRENS had I gone, even though it's no cooking.

TE: You'd have got out?

KD: Yes. He wanted me. He said would, I mind, you know, he could get me off, this general, Major General McHardy, he'd get me off and so I said get me exempt, and I said to him "Yes, I don't mind", so, you know.

But I often wished I'd gone. Yeah. Seen a bit more life, where its been just round here, you know.

Yeah Hilda, she was in the guides, I was in the brownies, there's mum in her Red, Red Cross clothes, she loved her nursing.

TE: Tell us about this picture. With the King and the Queen.

KD: Yeah. We weren't allowed to go down. No.no. Yeah,

King George VI came and family members used to come down there and shoot on the estate. Dad used to take them out on the Broads in his punt, yeah.

TE: What happened to that punt?

KD: I don't know. Rotted away now I expect.

TE: Not sure, I think it might be at Whiteslea.

KD: Yeah, could be. It was in the first, first shed on the left, I know where it was. [LAUGHS]. Yeah.

No, we weren't allowed to go down Whiteslea and they weren't even allowed to tell us, mum and dad, when they were coming or who was coming. It was so strict with that.

But they were good, they did, they did as they were told, you know. Mum had a ride in the Duke's car and she thought it was lovely. She had to go down to Whiteslea for something and somebody, the chauffeur was there and he said "Well, I'll take you down". So he took her down. [LAUGHS].

TE: Did she sit in the back?

KD: I dunno where she sat. [LAUGHS]. She enjoyed it. [LAUGHS].

TE: Mirrie Lambert told me a similar story.

KD: Did she?

TE: Queen Mary took her.

KD: Oh, I say.

TE: Yes, she picked her up on the road, didn't she?

KD: I don't remember.

TE: Brought her from Oxford to Hickling.

KD: Oh!

TE: *Course she did get to go.*

KD: She did go.

TE: *But she, she didn't like it either. Didn't like the barracks.*

KD: Oh. I know my sister didn't like it where she was once. And she just, she told the officials or something, and they moved her. Yeah.

But she was on these big balloons that they had in those days. But they enjoyed themselves as well as working and I do know.

TE: *She took time off to come to your wedding didn't she?*

KD: Oh. Naughty girl. Yes, she did. They wouldn't let her come home.

She asked the officials, you know, the head ones, and my sister's getting married, can I go? And they said "No, of course you can't".

So she just got her bags and walked out and come home.

TE: *And what were the repercussions of that?*

KD: Well, we couldn't understand. She said to me "Kathleen", she said, "I'll get dressed" because she was going to be a bridesmaid and she said "I'll put my clothes on and get dressed."

So I said "Yeah. Alright."

"And then I can help you" I said "OK" and, of course, didn't realise what she was up to and, of course, it went wrong for us when two official WAAFs came down. They were going to take her back, you see. And they were so kind, because Hilda had got her bridesmaid's dress on and everything and they said "Oh well, we'll say we can't find you."

So they filled them two up with strawberries and raspberries and peas, all out of the garden, they went off with, and they came back next day and took Hilda back.

TE: *What a story.*

KD: Yeah. But that's so kind of them. To think that they let her stay for the wedding. But Hilda never said a word and we didn't know until years after that she'd come away and shouldn't have done. Got on a train and come home and everything.

She'd got a nerve you know.

TE: *You got married in Hickling church?*

KD: Yeah. We both did. Yeah, got married in Hickling church, yeah. 1st July 1944. [LAUGHS]. Yeah, remember it well.

TE: *What did you wear?*

KD: White, and a veil. Yeah, white -----, dad bought me my wedding dress. Yeah.

TE: *You had a photo, didn't you? So that must have been still rationing.*

KD: Yeah.

TE: *Clothes coupons?*

KD: Yeah, yeah. Jack Martin had the shop in those days and he helped mum with a lot of the stuff. Made my cake and and everything.

Mrs Key, what lived at Sea Palling then, she made my cake, her and another lady. And, um, I don't know about mother, I know mother had a hand in it anyway. But it was hard to get the ingredients. Yeah. And Jack Martin was kind to mum. He had the shop in those days. Yeah, I can remember Jack Martin.

TE: *Do you remember the other shops in Hickling? Do you remember what was around?*

KD: Yeah, Turner's, Gibbs's, there was the post office.

TE: *You'll have to tell us where they are on the road or we won't know.*

KD: Oh, I've got a picture of Turner's shop. In my scrapbook.

TE: *What did he sell?*

KD: Everything, groceries, all groceries, and Gibbs' was a sweet shop.

TE: *Ah. That's up near the church."*

KD: You know where, you knew where Jack Martin's shop was, did you?

Yeah. Well that side of Jack Martin's shop was Gibbs. That's a house now, they're houses now.

And when we used to go to school we used to, mum used to pack up bread and butter and we used to call in there and get penny bananas to eat with the bread and butter. Penny banana, yeah.

TE: *That wasn't during the War though. That was pre-war?*

KD: No. At school time. During school, yeah. 'Cos mum didn't always know what to pack up. They couldn't go and buy meat and stuff like they did in those days.

There's Jim Vincent in here with dad. My dad. There's dad again. There's a lovely big one of him somewhere.

TE: *So when was where. Do you pay visits to Hickling very often? Do you go down there?*

KD: Now, no. Do we Sue? Not really. No

TE: *We occasionally go down to the, um...*

KD: Yeah, we go down to the Pleasure Boat now and again, just go and have a look round. But that used to be our Sunday walk, from Stubb Road, go to the Pleasure Boat. Used to love that as kids.

Walk back then meant nothing, you know. Just walk up there, we used to love that.

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...