

Voices of Hickling

Interview Transcript: Molly Greenacre

Interviewed by Ann Louise Kinmonth on June 17th 2018

MG: My name is Molly Greenacre and I was born in October 1935

ALK: I'm talking to you in your lovely house about your memories of Hickling, which you've told me begin round about your teenage years.

MG: Yes, I was 18 when I came to live here.

ALK: So tell us how that happened...

MG: Well I met, I went to a Youth Club at Martham and I met this young man who had, who, yes I used to meet him there and then I also had a friend who lived at Horsey and I was going to have tea with her and he was her cousin and he turned up as well on his motorbike, so that was nice and later on he, I'd heard his motorbike had caught fire.

Then he came to the Youth Club in a car and I just walked to Youth Club so he took me home one night and asked me to go out with him. Well, it made me smile and you wouldn't be allowed today, the door which he needed to get out of the car was done up with string because the door wouldn't work, so when I got out he had to get in first because the door was done up with string.

And so anyway I went to the pictures with him and of course it had a hood on this car so it would leak, so if it rained I had to put my mac on or my umbrella up.

Anyway after some time we duly got married in 1954 and I came to live here with him as he was already living here at Bay Farm.

ALK: What was Bay Farm like?

MG: They had 18 acres of land with it. And it had an airing cupboard with an electric heater in the bottom, and it had - yes, we did - just as I moved in we did just have a water supply.

ALK: Was it actually round here?

MG: Yes, it was at Bay Farm where we had the taps and everything which were lovely and so we had a tank with hot water in, and we had an electric cooker, oh and I had a pressure cooker. My aunt bought my Auntie one and she was terrified of it and I was very young a brave and I've used this pressure cooker ever since because she gave it to me.

Wonderful things they are and so...

ALK: How was it different from where you lived in Martham?

MG: Well it wasn't that different, except Martham of course still had its railway line and there was no railway line here. If you wanted to go on the train you had to either go to Potter Heigham Station or Catfield Station.

ALK: Did there used to be a railway line here?

MG: Not here, no not in Hickling.

ALK: Tell me about how you used to the railway.

MG: Well you had to cycle to Potter Heigham or Catfield and you got on a train there.

But when I lived at Martham, I worked in Yarmouth so I could go down to Martham Station and get on the train and go to work and it shows how ancient I am because I worked at the food office, and I was one of the first people who learnt to use a comptometer.

I was sent to Cambridge by them to learn how to use this comptometer, you would think when I said that would be wonderful at these latest machines that everyone has and I haven't got one. (LAUGH) But that's the way it is.

ALK: So you came to Bay Farm and you worked on Bay Farm yourself , what did you do?

MG: Well, we had blackcurrants, so I picked blackcurrants and we had to ask neighbours to come and help so I'd paid them each day and they'd picked fruit all day.

ALK: Who came?

MG: Some people called Clark and they lived just down opposite the Greyhound and friends of theirs, and I just can't remember their surname, but they were very nice people and we were friends for ages after we didn't grow anymore blackcurrants.

We also grew sugar beet, so we had to chop the tops off them and then, when they were taken to the factory to produce the sugar, we had to have a fork and throw them onto to the lorry.

There was nothing modern that there is now and we were always happy about what was available, we're amazed at what happens now!

ALK: Did your husband have family at Hickling?

MG: No. His family at that time lived in Ilford in Essex, and his father had a stroke and they bought Walnut Tree Cottage at Stalham and came to live there, 'cos he had retired.

He'd just retired and he had a very demanding job, and as he got older it was too much for him so he came to live at Stalham, but he only survived another 18 months and he died there and Derek's mother stayed there.

ALK: And did your parents support you.

MG: Oh yes they lived at Martham, but I was the eldest of 5 children you see so I used to have my sisters come and eventually we had a television. My Dad had a car so they'd all climb in his car and come and watch our television which was lovely, he liked that. (LAUGH) Yes we did that. Oh yes, right, we had a telephone: that was marvellous, and, eh, what else did we have in Hickling in the house?

I had a washing machine, that was a boiler, it wasn't a, you know, not a mechanical type washing machine. I used to boil the sheets and pillow cases and towels and tea cloths. Of course they came out snowy white.

And the shops were wonderful, 'cos they sold everything.

ALK: Now walk us down the shops you remember.

MG: Well the first shop I came to was, well there was the garage, Mr Pratt had the garage next door to us.

Then opposite, just a little way down the road, was the paper shop with Mr & Mrs Osborne and David & John.

And then a bit further on was Jack Martin. He had a big grocery shop and I used to buy a ¼lb of ham for 9d. That was that. And the best ham was a shilling a ¼, but he did stock everything.

On the opposite side of the road on the corner, the building opposite, the Doctor would come and hold a surgery there, not every day, perhaps 2 or 3 times a week. It's now the home where people come and live, not the Doctors surgery any more.

Then, if I continued my walk down the road there would be another grocery shop which was - oh dear I can't remember - and opposite that was the Post Office.

If I walked a bit further down there was a big green shed in the front garden and that was the man who mended our shoes, a Mr Elliot.

Then a little way further along was what is now called Black Horse Cottage and that was where the butcher was and I used to go there to get my meat.

And if I went down the road towards the Broad there was a thatched fish and chip shop, so we could get fish and chips there - so we had everything.

On my way down there was the Village Hall, where we had our WI meetings and one of our very dear ladies was Gwen Amiss. The year that she had the Royal Family came, she knew they were coming but she couldn't tell us, so she came to a meeting and she was jumping up and down with excitement and she say 'Oh you girls, Oh you girls' and clapping her hands.

And she said 'I can't tell you, I can't tell you but you will know very soon' and we thought whatever's wrong - something's happening and she can't tell us.

You know, we were quite puzzled, but very few days later of course all the news was on the radio and it was in the EDP so we knew what her excitement was, but it was lovely to have her bouncing up and down with excitement, because she know before us of course!

So that was one event we had there.

Also, because the WI was spread very well over Norfolk, if we wanted to do anything (if there was 10 of us) we could have a teacher come, so, well, we took advantage of that because it was a big WI here and people came from all the villages round, so we had cookery and dress making and lampshade making. To this day I still make material

type lampshades, and it was great fun because we could do all kinds of things.

ALK: How many of you would go.

MG: 10 - we had to have 10 of us, there was always 10 of us, because they wouldn't provide us with a teacher if we didn't have as many as 10. So that was good.

So we all got to know each other very well; it was a nice time because, yes we all had cars but we didn't need to go so far for knowledge, really, that we do now.

If I want to do a sewing class I have to go to Wroxham. Or if I want to do a cookery class, they're not so easy to get to. I think now I'd probably have to go into Norwich for a cookery class now, but then it wasn't like that we could get them here.

The education side of WI was wonderful - and it still is, but I think because there was probably so many of us it was, you know, worth sending people out to teach us.

ALK: What happened to the WI?

MG: Well it just drained away really, just, you know. I still go to a WI but not here, I go to a WI at Rollesby, but it just sort of faded away really.

ALK: What else did you do for leisure or entertainment?

MG: Oh well I sailed.

ALK: Tell me about that.

MG: Derek sailed, well he sailed, yes we sailed on Hickling Broad, we raced, he had a National 12 - that was because it was a 12ft National - and one in the same class was a Firefly.

So we had a club here and we used to race.

And my husband knew all the rules. He was a very peaceful sort of get-along-easy man, but, you sail a boat with him and anybody doesn't stick to the rules, his voice becomes very loud.

Anyway we had a lot of fun with it.

Anyway we then sold that and had a Merlin Rocket which is 14ft and very fast, so we, let's face it by then we were in our, oh we had Gillian when I was 21, our daughter, but, um, yes my mum would come and stay with Gillian while I sailed or the whole family would come as well sometimes, so we did used to sail a lot.

I just loved the Merlin Rocket and we had an early built one which was 13.30 and then we had a more modern one and, um, that was wider so that when I hung overboard - you know to balance the boat - meant I had to move further because it was built just a little bit wider than our first Merlin we had, but it was a lot of fun.

So we did that for a few years and then we, oh another thing we has was we had catamarans come and join and they were fast and they didn't, well, I couldn't be so unkind as to say they spoilt it exactly for us, but they were a lot faster than a single hulled boat.

So we felt, oh I don't know, we weren't that keen and then we heard that Rollesby Broad which is a public water supply was going to allow, be allowed to have sailing boats on, so we joined there and took our Merlin Rocket and sailed there. But we had to be very careful - we had to wash the bottom of the boat with bleach because it was a public water supply.

ALK: When was that, when did that happen?

MG: I can't remember, that was a long while ago that was. Gillian must have been in her early teens because we sailed several years at Hickling and then went to Rollesby.

ALK: What was your favourite sailing course on Hickling, which did you like best sailing?

MG: Oh I liked it when we went right down the end and across - I mean it was a lovely broad to sail on and the water was clear.

I loved it when we first went down 'cos we could go through the... When we weren't racing, we could relax - what I call relaxed type sailing - and you could just go in and out of the reed beds because there was channels there then and the water was so lovely and clear.

ALK: When would that have been? Was that when you were eighteen?

MG: Yes, 19, 20.

ALK: So 1935 when you were born and by now you were 18 so the water was clear about the early 50s

MG: Yes.

ALK: It was beautiful.

MG: Yes it was. Absolutely beautiful.

ALK: Tell me a bit about that, what did you see when you were there?

MG: Oh well there were all sorts of fish, there were pike which we just used to watch and we would listen to the - what is it, the one that calls? Used to hear it from here.

People used to come and stay at Whiteslea Lodge and race.

I think they had a Firefly and we used to race with them and various people round about.

But, yes. It wasn't nearly so weedy then as it is now I must say I wish they would cut a bit more reed away. But we never actually turned over our boat when we were racing but we did one winter sail with the Snowflakes at Horning and we did turn it over then, but by this time we wore wetsuits so we were not too cold.

ALK: Would you sail up to Horsey?

MG: Oh yes we would sail our dinghy up to Horsey. Oh yes, that was nice because we liked Horsey Mere.

I feel sorry now that lots of the boat people don't build the boats so they can come under Potter Heigham Bridge because there's a huge area of water that can't be sailed on.

Well, it can be sailed if you're sailing a boat, but you know cruisers can't 'cos they can't get here, so that's the way it is.

ALK: So other stories of teenage and early adult life years. You did mention something about the war that you had some memories of that.

MG: Yes well this was when I still lived at Martham, I still have very good hearing but I used, my father was in the Fire Service at Acle and so I used to be scared when he was on duty, and so I used to listen to hear the aeroplanes coming you see and they used to come over in great drifts and um we were all a bit scared.

Yeah, we used to hear it all but it was not, we didn't go to the shop in Norwich or Yarmouth in those days, you know we just shopped in Martham, because Martham shops were like Hickling shops, you could buy all you needed there and then people would cycle from Repps to Martham to shop, so of course we got to know several people there.

My father grew lots of vegetables and fruit and, it was him that really made me interested in gardening, then as I am now. He started me off and we all had plots of land, each one of us, and my family would, we had land opposite us, and they would come in the morning on a summer's morning and say 'oh your so and so have germinated' and I was so excited I'd rush out there and of course they hadn't. They were just teasing me 'cos they knew I'd get excited if I had anything germinate!
(LAUGH)

And I still do, I know it's to do with daylight etc but to me it's still marvellous. So, you know, that was...

ALK: Anything else about the war?

MG: Well we never went, we were never...

ALK: Did it affect your schooling, that type of thing?

MG: No. Well, yes. It did once, because there was a German aeroplane sort of for some reason left on its own and it saw the school and it was wonderful summer morning and it thought it would shoot us at school, so it shot the school up, but we had the utmost luck because it was before we started.

It was too early. We were not there, and we only just missed it because we were. oh, must have been ¾hr later when we arrived at school. We were not allowed to go in and we all stayed on the playground and policemen and army men came and looked at the school and we were allowed in.

The floor was lovely: it was a wood floor and there were chips in the wooden floor where the bullets had hit the floor.

And then 6 weeks later we all had a bar of chocolate from Canada! The Canadians sent us all a bar of chocolate.

ALK: Can you remember how you felt about it?

MG: I felt angry but I didn't think every... I used to make my mother laugh because I used to say not everybody is bad. And I played the piano, I learnt to play the piano. I had piano lessons and I was never allowed at home to play any German songs at all.

That was very not, you know... I mean that just, I didn't like that all, and I told my mother I thought not everybody in the world could be bad and I did learn to read quickly, so I used to read the newspapers and my parents would discuss what was happening in front of us all.

What happened after that? We did have German prisoners of war come and cut big hedges because you know they'd been allow to grow because there hadn't been enough people to keep them cut, so there was a particularly big one across the road, just a bit further up the road from us, and the German Prisoners of War came and cut this down.

So my mother said 'You're not to go up there'.

So my sister said to me 'well I think we should just go and see what they look like, see'.

So I said OK. So we went half way and she said well I'll stay here and you go further up and - I mean so I wasn't close to them but I could stand on a hedge and look across. I was on the road you see and I could look across to see them.

I came back to her and I said "well they just look like normal people, like we do, they're just normal. And they're cutting this hedge just like anybody else here would cut it." "Well they're all right," she said, so we went home and she told my mother that we'd not spoken to these gentlemen but I'd seen them and they looked all right to me, that was, you know, how it was really.

We had a big gun at the top of our road, you know, and, yes, it did go shoot at aeroplanes once or twice.

You know, we were all a bit scared, we all had to take gas masks to school and I had a baby sister who was born in 1942 and her gas mask was one where you had to put a baby in. I just prayed that we would never get gassed because she was, we couldn't hold her, because she was put - her whole body went in this gas thing, you see. We just had masks to put over our face, but she had a closed in cot-like type of thing, though we never did need them, that was good.

ALK: And if you were a young woman from Martham and you came from Hickling was that like going to a foreign country or was it you know were Hickling and Martham just part of the same thing?

MG: Yes, they were part of the same thing, yes. 'Cos from our house, believe it or not we did live on a hill in Martham, and I could look across and see sails on Hickling Broad 'cos they then started to sail again you see, yes, yes and then I'd been here with Derek of course.

ALK: Did you work entirely on the acreage or did you do other things as well?

MG: No I worked entirely on the acreage, yes. And then we sold it and...

ALK: *When was that when did you sell it?*

MG: Must have been 1960.

ALK: *That sort of time.*

MG: Yes.

ALK: *Who did you sell it to?*

MG: The Blaxells

ALK: *Oh, yes, of course.*

MG: And then we had this built in 1961.

ALK: *Yes.*

MG: Yes, and that was then I planted the tree that's just come down. Molly's mistake...

Cedrus Atlantica. I just thought the foliage was so pretty, and you know, that took my heart and I planted it and, um, it just go too big and had to come down, sadly, but never mind I'd enjoyed it.

ALK: *And thinking about the seasons, you told me a rather good story about sailing in the fog.*

MG: Ah yes well when we didn't have, when we moved from having Merlin Rocket, we were going to have a Wayfarer and we went to look at one. But another one that was up for sale was a Yeoman. And so we didn't buy the Wayfarer, we bought the Yeoman.

So the Yeoman was big enough for us to do the 3 Rivers Race, so that was good . But we sailed at Wroxham because that was the only place you could sail a Yeoman, to race a Yeoman in those days.

So the 3 Rivers race was from Horning and so we did that 'cos we took Gillian as crew. I was crew, Gillian was crew and Derek was the helm and that was great fun.

But we did have fog come down and it was always when the daylight hours were good like now when they had the race and we got to Hickling and it came down even worse, but because we'd sailed on Hickling so many times, the posts where the deep channel is were there then, so we could - or my husband could think where we were exactly.

You had to come right down the end of Hickling Broad, call your name and number and then post your, there's a post box and you had to sail around this post box and as you sail round it you put your number, you put an envelope that you'd been sent beforehand by the organisers and that has to go in this to make sure they could check that you'd been round. There was always a big one of the cruisers who were checking as well that we'd gone round, but you had to call your number and name and post this letter. We did that.

But because we knew the Broad so well, Derek got off it very well because there was a very slight break, very slight and Derek knew if he kept on a certain side of his face where we were, so while other people got lost we were able to sail off Hickling Broad because of the experience we'd had sailing previously on there so that was quite fun.

ALK: *Did you do it more than once?*

MG: We did it 3 times, 3 years.

ALK: *And tell me about it , where did you have to go?*

MG: Well you had to go and think you had to go to Ludham, down to Hickling.

The biggest thing Derek used to think about was whether we had to go under Acle Bridge or go a long way down towards Yarmouth. Well, the tide was stronger there so he used to watch, reading the paper, how the tide was because that was up to you, you had to do this course. I can't remember how many miles it was not now but, you had to do this course and you had to decide which way you would do it, so that tide would tell us which way we needed to go first, so we had a lot of thought into that before the day, you know.

And then we used to set off in the afternoon and each group of boats was in a class of its own and the poor holidaymakers must have been horrified when they saw us all, you know, who had cruisers, must have been horrified when they saw us coming down towards them!

But we all left Horning and came down towards Potter Heigham, and, of course, all the masts had to come down, so you had to be sure how to get your mast down and up again as quickly as you could. And you had to decide which way, which course you would take and about half past two in the morning it's very cold and you are very pleased that you've put flasks of hot something or other in your boat. I had box like you would have bottles of wine - cardboard - and I used to put my flasks in there. So it was lovely to have a hot drink at that time of the morning.

Lots of cruisers we would sail past, because they had had too much to drink and they were all asleep.

We rarely, rarely had too much wind, there was always just enough or not enough, but it was great fun and then when we did get back to Horning they would all cook breakfast for us.

ALK: *Lovely.*

MG: It was it was lot of fun, because when darkness does fall you have to have lights on your boat of course and all the holiday makers then they're all having a sleep. A lot of us knew each other, so it was fun, great fun.

ALK: *So thinking about living in the Hickling and the seasons, tell us what you enjoyed doing across the different seasons. Does anything come to mind? Winter, what did you do in the winter?*

MG: Oh well, several times the broad did freeze over and I've got a picture somewhere of me on a sledge and my brother is swinging me round on the sledge. And we all, all the village used to go down there and they'd play hockey and busloads of people would come and play hockey. Yes, not a huge amount, but one or two would come and play ice hockey on the broad.

Yes, it was great fun, but we haven't had that for a very long time.

ALK: *Do you remember the floods?*

MG: What do you mean? Sea floods?

ALK: *Yeah, sea or river*

MG: No. I remember the flood, the sea floods when I think there was people died at Sea Palling and that was a long time ago.

ALK: *'53.*

MG: Yes, it was, but we didn't have floods in Hickling.

My husband who was a Geographer in the end said he thought - he did a lot of research on it all - he thought that if we had another flood, Norwich would get flooded before we would, but that was his theory.

ALK: *You say he was a Geographer. What do you mean?*

MG: Well, he went to college and became a teacher. So he had a various life style, he really did, and - 'cos he already had been in the Merchant Navy. When he left school he went into the Merchant Navy as an apprentice and took troops back. And until I met him I hadn't realised how worldwide the war was, 'cos I have a list here of all the countries he went to before he took any food anywhere, he took troops back to their country.

I've still got the letters that his mother had sent to her from the Australians that he met on board the ship and he was taking them from Bahrain or somewhere back to Australia.

He said when they picked them all up, this lot, they all sang 'Now is the Hour' and he said there wasn't a dry eye on the ship. But I've still got those letters that his mother received from various troops that were on board.

I think he went to Australia two or three times and, as I say, took troops back to their countries and he had to then, he had to serve an apprenticeship he had to come ashore to go to college to do exams and so he then, that was the first thing he had to do and then when they started taking food round and he went to all sorts of places, it wasn't as exciting and adventurous I don't think as he had imagined and so he came ashore and that was how I met him 'cos he came ashore and stayed with his Granny at Potter Heigham, you know, so he had a varied life.

ALK: *Was he older than you?*

MG: Yes he was six years older than me.

ALK: *So, coming back to the seasons...*

MG: Yes you're try to catch me out! Go on.

ALK: *Well, we've done a bit of winter.*

MG: Yes.

ALK: In the summer you sailed. Did you do other things then - you know - swimming and all those things?

MG: Oh yes, what I haven't told you is that, I'm going back to the war now and we didn't have enough pilots so the government at that time decided that they would offer the young men in the country cheap flying lessons. So guess who was interested in that: you're right - my husband.

So he went to Little Snoring and we, it wasn't a club: you bought a share, and became a shareholder in this group and he learnt to fly. About 17/6d an hour it cost and he had to have you know, doctors to say he was fit enough and that didn't cost him, any of them at all.

So people like him could learn to fly, postmen and policemen and there were several people who learnt to fly, and he did he got his flying licence, but that gradually got more and more expensive, so it cut people like him out.

But it was a good idea that the government had at that time because they could have called people like him in. I mean it wasn't certain that we weren't going to have another war, was it?

Not initially. So they wanted to have people like him that they could call on and be useful to them, so that was how that happened. So we do know a variety of people and plus we also sailed and, so, we did get to know an awful variety of people here in Norfolk.

ALK: Coming back to the farming, did you know the other farming people?

MG: Yes.

ALK: You did?

MG: Oh yes we did.

ALK: Who were the people you knew doing farming?

MG: Well, Bernie's father came to farm here: he bought the farm he's in now, Bernie's father did. So we knew them.

Derek's uncle farmed at Horsey, and we knew the Stalham people - what was their name ? - they had a lovely fruit farm. Whatever was their name, I'm having a senior moment! I can't remember but they had the most wonderful quality fruit and we knew them.

Oh everybody knew them, you know, and lots of people worked there. Yes, there was farmers all over the place.

There was Harvey's at Waxham and Chapman's here, and we never bought cream because they used to bring us our milk and there was this lovely cream on the top of the milk.

So that was the Blaxells who farmed here.

ALK: How did the milk come?

MG: In a bottle, a washable bottle.

ALK: In a washable bottle.

MG: You'd put the clean bottles out every day and they collected it.

Oh that was a lovely time.

Then there was the Perrys - they were farmers. They were the Perrys, I think their name was.

Oh and then there was the Deanes, they had a big lot of milking cows there, a big herd.

ALK: You had the milk delivered. Did you have anything else delivered to the house, food wise?

MG: Yes we used to have our meat delivered and bread. Yes.

ALK: All mechanical, not by horse anymore?

MG: Oh no all mechanical. Yes.

ALK: It had changed over

MG: Yes that had changed.

ALK: You didn't have any livestock then on your acreage?

MG: Yes we did. We had pigs.

ALK: Yes.

MG: And what did we have? We had just one cow I believe. Yes, we did, but we didn't have her for very long.

Yes we did fatten pigs.

And we had chickens so we had eggs to sell, which we did, so I used to wash eggs. Yes, that was fun.

ALK: So thinking about how Hickling has changed in your life time and you've told me these stories. What would you pick out what was different now?

MG: Well the lack of shops.

ALK: That's not so good.

MG: No. 'Cos we'd go out and meet each other, you see, when I had Gillian and everybody pushed their babies round the village and we all told each other how wonderful they were and, of course, they were! And, you know, we'd go to the shop and do our shopping.

We didn't have supermarkets, which have probably killed it all.

Derek was good with a camera, and he did lots of weddings and new babies and he used to sell some pictures, because he had an eye to take a picture and he sometimes sold them to magazines and newspapers - until the Unions said... Well, you know,

they sort of became more powerful and 'You don't belong to a union you can't sell your pictures to that newspaper'.

And so he didn't - and that was that.

He then didn't sell pictures to magazines, but he did still take pictures for his own pleasure and for people who got married.

In fact the last one he did was Karen who lived opposite us who was, and he was in his, well he was 80 then and she just came in and said 'do take pictures'. He'd already taken her mothers, who'd got married again. He just did that because he was a friend and she said I wish you'd do mine and he said 'I'm too old for that', and she said 'No you're not'!

So hers was the last wedding pictures he did. She got married at Burgh Castle.

ALK: Fantastic. So what other things have changed? I see that's a big change, the shops. But how else has Hickling life changed?

MG: Well we don't seem.... well, so many people have moved or died and it's, well, the whole world has changed. It's a different way of life completely isn't it?

So we've gone along: we all do tend to get our cars out now to go somewhere don't we.

I do miss some of the people who were here when I first came of course.

ALK: Who do you miss?

MG: Well Gwen, and Mrs Barlow and Joyce Tallwin and um my friend Pat Deane, we were great friends and...

ALK: Isn't she still around?

MG: Ah, that's a different Pat Deane, she lived at. Oh and Violet, did you know Violet, Violet Myhill, she was just adorable... She died fairly recently and I did go to her funeral and cried the whole way through. She was such, we all loved her you know.

And her friend, Doris Gottison, they were great friends and on Fridays Doris worked at the school and Violet worked at the - oh, not the Borrets. The farm was down there anyway, and they'd always come here and have a cup of tea on a Friday - so that was nice - and then we'd go shopping together.

But before all this you know care came and you'd got to be careful, they'd all pile in my car and we'd all go down on the beach. It was lovely. And then we'd have at Christmas time, we'd get together and we'd have tea, the three families. And then we'd play silly games like balancing match sticks on the top of a bottle, you know, 'cos our children were young and I only had Gillian and Doris had Ros.

Oh, Blaxells, that was the farm where Violet worked. And so they've all, you know, all grown up now, but at that time we all got together to play games like that.

ALK: *So if you were, had all the power of money and you wanted to make changes to better in Hickling what would they be?*

MG: **Well if the Barn isn't paid for yet, I would pay for the Barn. I can't think what else I'd do.**

ALK: *That's a good move.*

MG: **Yes. I would do that.**

ALK: *We were saying earlier that the Norfolk Wild Life Trust is now getting a strategy for the Broad itself. So, if you were advising them about the Broad, what would you see it should be for, it's purpose and how you'd manage it?*

MG: **I'd like it not to be so muddy and so that it could be. Well I suppose it has been cleared of mud considerably but I think I'd cut a bit more reed. Well, we've always had just the one channel down the middle, I suppose, but could we just have it a little further out, not quite 'cos if you turn over there now and you're not in there you can stand up but then you could always do that but then the water was somehow better quality, well I think it was...**

ALK: *Do you think the water went cloudy?*

MG: **Well it's not really too cloudy, it's just thick with weed isn't it? And mud. Wouldn't say it's, but yeah, you're right, yeah it's a great pleasure to have it there isn't it?**

ALK: *Yes. I think you were talking about the bitterns earlier on.*

MG: **Oh the bitterns. Yes, that's the bitterns that were booming, yes.**

ALK: *What other birds and mammals do you remember seeing?*

MG: **Well I used to see more thrushes than I do now and, you know, the swans and the ducks. Even in those days there were more than there is now I think. Yes, that was a nice time, but there were more birds I think, but then....**

I have been to Europe quite a lot and I'm appalled at how trigger happy some of the Spanish people are with the little birds that are flying over so high, I'd go there and sort them out.

ALK: *Very wise. That's a very good idea. Good well you've been very good and I'm coming towards the end. Are there any other stories you'd wanted to record, that you'd like your daughter to listen to, that sort of thing?*

MG: **Well, when she went to school, it was just down the road and round the corner I went with her you see and I think we only went about 3 times and she said 'Well I'll be able to go on my own tomorrow because the thing is you don't think I'm catable'. So that's a funny one. We did start the Children's Playschool and Gerry and I started Playschool and that was years ago 'cos she emigrated to Australia, but we did start that and then it sort of took off from there.**

ALK: *You started it for your children?*

MG: **Yes we did.**

*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...*