

We used to eat blackberries and we used to sell blackberries to make dye with.

To dye clothing and wool? Did you sell that locally or did you have to take it to Diss?

No, it used to be bought in the village and he used to sell it, put it all into tubs and sell it away.

So the blackberries would be sold to a man in the village and he'd do some processing?

Well he shouldn't have done but he did. He took some water to make it go further. But that used to be collected and that used to go away for dye.

It is really difficult to get out, if you get blackberry juice on you.

A penny a pound. We used to collect blackberries for a penny a pound.

I remember a peat digger's spade which hung in one of the outbuildings at the Rectory, because we went to live in the Rectory for a while, and there was this curious little implement. It was a spade with a knife, as it were, at right angles so that when you cut a block of peat, I don't know what you did with the first one, but once you got an edge, you could dig and each time you moved along, because you only need two bits to be cut through, if you can imagine cutting a strip of beet, that was the sort of implement they used in the fens.

And Dad was telling us that each house in the village has a plot on the fen and that was numbered and named by the house, so that we were allowed to go down and dig peat, cut wood and reed to repair our thatched roof off the fen.

On the fen, there was what you'd call sedge grounds, where sedge used to grow. I'd been down there with my father. Nearly every house on the village had a sedge ground. They allocated a bit of ground to cut the sedge. You used it to clamp your potatoes. You'd lay that down and when you take the potatoes out of the garden, put the potatoes on the sedge, and cover them up with sedge. No frost would go through that sedge.

How big a plot were you able to cut?

Quite an area. It's surprising those old boys knew where their plots were along there. I've been down there with my father and mowed it. He mowed his piece and then turned it over to dry it.

How big was a piece?

About 10 yards by 20.

A big piece then. And everybody in the village had some?

A lot of people didn't use to use it, but they were allocated ... in earlier days before my time it was used more than it was then.
