

LOHP ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH MR RAYMOND GARNHAM

ON: MONDAY 26/03/2012

VENUE: AT Mr Garnhams house: Westview, 13 The Green, North Lopham, Diss, IP22

Tel: 01379 687622

BORN: South Lopham on 13/03/1923- 89 years old-moved to North Lopham after returning from 2<sup>nd</sup> WW.

7 siblings-5 sisters and 2 brothers. Non remained in the local area

FATHER: Small builder. Remembers him building council houses in the 30's before the war-stopped in the 40's

Recalls the village blacksmith and his 2 sons and daughter. 1 son remained in Diss

SCHOOL: in South Lopham. Didn't like school. Headmistress was a scot called Mary Gill who was not popular and used the cane a lot.

Left school at 14 and became an apprentice brick layer to someone from Market Weston (he had built the white horse pub) Continued to be brick layer until went into army in 1941

REMEMBERS: -

Prior to war there was cement ration and no building except pill boxes.

Grow more food campaign .Many fields ploughed up to grow food including Lopham Fen.

Field ploughed up in Thursfield then became American air base.

People moved away from the common in Lopham after ploughed up and wanted to live on/near The Street-nearer shops.

FOOD: People grew some food but not enough to live on. Potatoes , carrots and fruit- Apples, Pears and Plums-mainly Apples.

As child ate Norfolk dumplings (flour and water mix 'floating' in gravy), Roast beef and Yorkshire Pudding. Only had chicken at Christmas

Cooked on a range-some people had Dutch Bread Ovens.

Water was heated in a copper fuelled by wood and coal.

Saturday afternoons his father used to lop and chop trees for firewood. Mentiones Pensthorn (?spelling) Lane and Farm.

GAMES: played football, cricket and boxing

The Prentice brothers nicknamed Billie and Bottler (He was called Bottler as in the winter when no work on the farm he would travel to the Midlands to work in a brewery). Small farmers. He worked for them for the summer harvest.

Farmers used horses until he was about 14 then tractors introduced and by 1951 all horses gone.

After the war things changed. Many evacuees remained and married.

ROADS were poor. Remembers steam wagons with pneumatic tyres. Remembers many vipers being squashed on the road by them

Remembers a boy staying with his grandmother being bitten by viper and she poured boiling water over the bite. Ended up in hospital with burn.

VILLAGE FETES: Underwoods fair would visit Hopton and North Lopham

Competition between North and South Lopham-didn't agree on where to have village hall when built in 1936

Local parson had his Rectory barn converted to a hall but he couldn't afford to pay for it. Remembers films being shown during war. Now converted to a house.

FARMING: Grew wheat, beans and peas but mainly barley and cattlebeet. Some cows in most farms but not in his mothers time when nearest cows were 3 miles away. Remembers Charley Walton kept bullocks on rough pasture where used to be Chequers (?pub)

People used Greyhounds to catch Rabbits. Not a lot of rabbits then. Everyone ate Rabbit many lived on them.

Remembers Whippet racing in the early days but didn't last long.

Most farmers kept few chickens, ducks and pigs and horses. Very few sheep.

Some boys helped with the Harvest. He got paid quite well.

FAUNA AND FLORA: Remembers years ago ditches full of flowers-primroses and violets. Not after ditches cleared by diggers. Used to pick blackberries in hedges but agriculture took down many hedges.

Thinks more trees now than when he was young.

Children would steal Water hens eggs from nests in reeds using spoon tied on stick.

Not many birds and animals – he thinks because most were shot/poached. Many 'professional' poachers then.

FLOODING: Diss road, Bridge Farm and Dottle (?spelling) Bridge flooded every winter-could be 5ft deep. Across the Fen and South Lopham could look like the sea. Says council did things to the river and then didn't flood.

BURNING: only remembers reeds burning when set alight by kids. Used candle in jam jar containing paraffin so when fire started kids were miles away .Also Gorse and Bushes fired.

PEAT DIGGING: Not in his time but his Father used to dig peat. If you owned own house you owned a portion of Fen to dig. North Lopham sold their rights to council. South Lopham didn't. His grandfather used to talk about cutting reed and sedge.

Many wet areas were ploughed up and drained during war. Where used to be Sedge and Gorse became fields.

LOCAL CHARACTER: called Pop Horehouse (?spelling) used to be called a tramp worked as a labourer in Diss and used to carry home (lived in a shack) a few bricks every day on his bike and built himself a little bungalow-about 1954 time. On the site where the R+L Fen centre is now. Saw him years later when he'd retired and had been moved by council to Snow St.

NO MEMORY of any Snipe or Bittern or even Pigeons and Pheasants as he said all were shot.

Horse riding stables after war but too expensive and only lasted about 10-15 yrs.

YEARS AGO people walked and cycled more -to villages for groceries and to Diss on market day.

Remembers groceries being sold by man on a bike and at his house.

More poor people .Remembers tramps walking from Diss and Pulham to Thetford begging for tea and bread on the way.

Thinks people more friendly and you knew everybody years ago