

Thorne & Hatfield Moors Oral History Project

Interview with: Kevin Bull (part 1)

Date: 17th October 2006

Interviewer: Lynne Fox

This is Lynne Fox for the Thorne and Hatfield Moors Oral History Project. Its Tuesday the 17th of October. I'm in the English Nature offices talking to Kevin Bull and I say English Nature Kevin until last week your job was with English Nature but now we've changed to Natural England haven't we.

Yes, that's right.

Could you just give me a little bit of an outline of what your job was with English Nature?

Yeah I mean, my position is the Site Manager for Thorne and Hatfield Moors and I'm responsible for the day to day management of the site, the health and safety of the site and the actual coordination of site staff and contractors who are carrying out the work on site.

Has that changed since it's moved to English Nature? To Natural England, sorry?

No it hasn't, I mean, there will be some changes because we as a new organisation will have different remits, we'll have extra areas of work and they will become possibly core areas of my work looking at access, recreation, on a much broader basis than we have done in the past but no, the core area of work will stay. I'm in charge of managing the site, we've got to try and get it back in to favourable condition through restoration and conservation work and that's what we're doing.

Just give me an idea of how big the site is that you manage.

We manage - the sites are split into two we've got Thorne to the North, Hatfield to the South, Thorne Moors along with Crowle Moor, which is part of the set up, is round about two thousand hectare and Hatfield along with the quarry area we've now got back, which is an additional piece of land we got back in 2002, is round about fifteen hundred hectare. So they're the two largest lowland peat bogs in Britain.

Before we go down the road of talking about your current job I wonder if I could just start by asking you to tell me when and where you were born?

Right, well I'm a local chap, stayed close, been, went away to work for a while but come back. I was born in the fifties, went to the local schools, and I've stayed here ever since. It's ironic in a way that I used to go bird nesting on the site when I was a lad, along with my father, shooting, collecting bird eggs and then here I am now managing the site from a nature conservation point of view. So it's a little bit like sort of, poacher turned gamekeeper.

I'm sure you don't mean that literally.

No it isn't no, but people would make that analysis of it and I have a great affinity with the site. I mean I can remember going on the site and certainly on parts of Hatfield before there was any, you know, any peat cutting going on and I can remember standing on the peat surface. If you would

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jump up and down you could see that peat surface ripple along the, along the surface and then you look at the position we're in now with the peat extraction that's taken place and the area that we're working trying to get involved to try and restore it back to that position and it's quite ironic in a way.

And did you, when you say local is it Thorne or Hatfield?

No, I was born in Thorne, in an area of Thorne called South Common. My father was miner and therefore we were right on the doorstep of the site. In fact I would guess where we lived at some point it could possibly have been part of the peat bog, I mean, a lot of it was reclaimed and drained and then became arable land and then on the, on the outskirts of that arable land there was, sort of, housing started to develop and that's where we were.

And do you have brothers and sisters?

I do, I'm the eldest of four, I've got a younger brother and two sisters and they're still local. My parents are still alive and they're still local, and numerous cousins as well, so we're very much a Thorne, a Thorne family.

Tell me a bit about your school days. Which school did you go to?

I, I went to Greentop Primary School and then eventually ended up at Thorne Grammar School and I left there in 1973, and stayed local, worked local. And then had a complete career change if you like and back in the early nineties I decided to go back to college and university to get the qualifications I needed to pursue this career I'm in now. It's something that's always interested me right from my bird nesting days, but yeah, I think when you leave school you're wanting to get out there into the big wide world, you want to earn money and that's what I did and it wasn't until I got back, you know, I had time to think. I was made redundant back in the early nineties and it was a crossroads I'd come to and, if I was ever gonna change my path of work that was when I was gonna do it.

So what did you do when you first left school?

I worked down at Hatfield Colliery as an electrician, trainee electrician there and stayed there for a while and then I actually worked for the local authority, and then after that I became an area manager for a company called PPP Medical Careworking at, at the commercial insurance side of work. And I had several years there probably about ten years or something and then things as I say, in the early nineties changed and I had to make a decision of where I wanted to go work wise and it was a big step because my wife, as I'd made the decision to go back to university, my wife told me she was expecting Anthony, and it was a big move. Fortunately we'd got enough money saved up then to cushion that period of time to allow me to continue the studying and then pick up work thereafter, and it worked out well.

You say you used to go onto the moor with your dad, can you tell me a bit about, about your, sort of, your dad's relationship with the area and with the moor?

I think my dad's relationship more than anything was just, I mean, I was introduced to shooting as a lad with an air rifle and the memory I have was mainly to do that, just to pursue that. I can remember getting up on a Sunday morning and me dad getting the air rifle out and we'd go walking up the, up the track ways and the lanes to the edge of the moors and we'd do, you know, shoot a

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couple of rabbits and things like that and we would eat the rabbits as well, they were brought home and skinned and, prepared for eating and that's what we did.

But I then extended that personally, I got into the bird watching side of things and I got really interested in that and there would be a gang of us go out, I mean, back in those days, you know, your mum would pack you up with, with half a dozen ch- sort of, jam butties and a bottle of pop and you'd go off for the day and there would, there could be as many as fifteen or twenty of the local lads who would go out and we'd go onto the moors and we'd go and collect, specifically go on to collect the gulls eggs. And I can remember, I smile now but, my mum used to go spare when I used to come home, but we would get out on the moors and I mean, you've been out there, the dirty sort of peat water, it does stain and we would get stripped off to our underpants and we would be wading in there and, and we would keep our t-shirts on or vests on and then we would pile the eggs up inside the vest and come out with twenty, thirty, forty gulls eggs and we would bring those home and then I would swap them for other birds eggs at the time. You know, and I would probably, you know, get one Black Headed gull egg would probably get me something like two mizzle thrushes eggs or something like that, or a greenfinch and that's how it was then, I mean nobody [cough] excuse me, saw that as being a problem.

[Coughing]

Just got a bit of a frog in me throat then.

It's alright.

But we can continue. And, and that's where we went, I mean, and from that then I would start to go out on my own as well and looking back on it it wasn't a place really to go out on your own, I mean, peat bog, certainly one what's been cut over in that sense can be a dangerous place. But I would go out just looking at birds and looking at adders and, you know, just basically thought it was an absolute wilderness out there, it was like a great jungle it was great, so, great experience to go out there.

Did you ever encounter any difficulties in getting out on to the moors?

Yeah, I mean, the moors itself has always been ring fenced, if that's the term to use, by the big drainage systems. I mean, you know the peat company have to drain the site to be able to commercially get on and cut the peat and so you'd always got this like, moat around the reserve and we used to come up, and the drains were very wide, I mean some of them were four and five metres wide, so we'd have to come up with clever ways of getting across, you know and we would build all sorts of bridges and structures to get across there and usually nine times out of ten I would fall in. There's no doubt about it, you've put all these birch structures across and timber across and you would be trying to balance across and either it would break or you would loose your footing and, normally went up, at least, to waist height, if not under the armpits on several occasions and you just got on with it then. Continued bird nesting and dried off as you walked round through the day.

So, yeah, it's, and it was a long walk, I mean, for a young lad going out there from, although we were on the edge of the reserve and we had to walk right through the farm land and, you know it was a good mile, good mile and a half before we got there. I can even remember trying to jump some of these drains, I mean at sort of, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, years of age you could feel very fit and I can remember trying to jump and landing short into the peat bank! You know and having to try and get your feet out of the peat, was difficult at times. Health and safety wise you'd never have, kids wouldn't be allowed to do that nowadays, they just wouldn't.

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Did you ever have any opposition from farmers or peat, or Fisons it would have been then wasn't it?

I think Fisons at the time just didn't let you on, I mean I can remember being chased on several occasions and there was the big fire tower based up on the eastern edge of Thorne Moors along the boundary with Crowle and you know, the guys would sit up there and they could spot you a mile off and I can remember having some real fun and games being chased about by people on motorbikes then, they would bomb about on motorbikes and, we saw it as a bit of a game really. I shouldn't say that because I, the boots on the other foot now! But there was no, there was nothing else in it other than just having a bit of fun and we would escape into the scrub and the undergrowth and they would never find us, you know. I mean, but we were never encouraged to go on by the peat company. I think one of the big issues that the peat company had was the fire risk and, you know, there's been some terrible fires on there over the years and I think they were more concerned about that than anything else.

Was, you say there was a gang of you that went onto the moors, was going onto the moors something that most boys did in the area, and most people did in the area, or was it somewhere that people didn't really know much about?

I think, I think the average person wouldn't have really known what the moors were about, I think if you were that way inclined in terms of being interested in nature and the outside, the outdoors then you would go. But I think it was just something that interested the gang of guys and lads I knocked about with. I mean, we would either go out there or we would all play footie under the street lamps till ten o'clock at night. I mean, it was the same, the same gang of lads which, which would do that. I don't know what the position was at Moorends with the people who lived local to the, further to the north of the reserve, but I guess there were other people on there. We used to come across other gangs of lads on there, you know. In fact, I can remember once we found a stash of gull's eggs which they'd been and collected and gone back out and we actually put them in our pockets and went back to Thorne! Which saved us having to wade out to the gull colony that day to pick some eggs up so... But I think it's, it's always been a place what's been difficult to get to until quite recently, one because people weren't encouraged to go on, but I think the access side of things as well and hopefully we'll try, we're starting to turn that round and make access much easier for people to get on and enjoy the site.

So once you got beyond twelve years old, did your relationship with the moor continue?

Yeah, I think it did in that, it did to a certain degree, I mean obviously things change as you get older and girls start to come into your life and you know, sport as well, I started to play a fair bit of football and rugby and then, when you get to the working age at fifteen and sixteen years of age, then, you know, you don't have as much spare time as you would when you're still at school, and, you know, you have to be up early in the mornings and you're tired when you come home and then the weekends come and you want to be out enjoying it. So I think that did dip certainly between the ages of sixteen and eighteen and then I still used to get out on my own, but not as often from that age onwards until I got married when I was twenty five.

And was it all for pleasure?

Yes always, I mean it's always a pleasure to go on the moors as far as I'm concerned and it was a bit of escapism if you like for me. I think it's such a wonderful place it's such a mystical place, and

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the sheer scale of it all. It's somewhere you can go and you know, or you could, and you could walk on there all day and never come across another person.

Can you give me an idea what it looked like?

It was much thicker scrub at the time in areas when I used to go on, the track ways were very difficult because I mean, access wasn't encouraged, so it's not like you would see now. But then it was separate as well in that sense because you'd also come across some of the really heavy commercialised areas where there was heavy peat extraction going on and that would be very bare. But you very rarely wandered into there because you were exposed and you would be spotted very easily by the people who were out on lookout. But it, it looked you know, at it's peak, it was quite desolate out there, you can imagine, I mean this morning, now we're speaking there's a bit of fog and everything and you can imagine out there it was like that. But that's what excites me about the site. You know, it's that, it's that sheer scale and that wilderness factor you get from the reserve, which I don't think you can experience anywhere like this in lowland Britain. I think you can get it in the uplands, but you can't experience this anywhere else, I don't think, in the lowland areas of England.

You've mentioned the commercial peat extraction, what kind of, we're still talking about when it was being cut by hand or..?

I think there was a combination, I think in the mid seventies, early to mid seventies I think there was still some hand cutting going on but by then it'd become much more mechanised and although surface milling hadn't kicked in by then, which is the most recent technique that's been used to take the peat off, it was, it was big block cutters, so you'd got the big block cutting machines on there and when I was at school, certainly for the two years before I left I used to come onto Hatfield Moors to earn some pocket money in the summer holidays. And my job would be to turn the blocks of peat over, to, so that they dried out evenly and you would get paid by the chain. I wasn't seen as being quite big enough to work with the wet peat, because I mean, a big block of wet peat is quite heavy, it's heavy work and you, you got paid extra if you actually worked alongside the machine and stacked the newly cut blocks of peat but my job was to turn the dry, the dry walls, which was quite fun.

Can, you tell me a bit more about that, how did that work as a casual, work, was it just like a summer job?

It was I mean, I, I got in touch with what we call a ganger, well, I was put in touch with somebody who was called a ganger and I can remember meeting a five o' clock in the morning at the bottom of a road called Miller Lane, which was just up the hill from where I lived and we would be picked up in a minibus and then we would be driven off to the moors to start for six o'clock and what I always remember more than anything, because it did interest me, was the number of rabbits that we used to pass in a morning. It's always stayed with me, I don't know why, and there's still a lot of rabbits down there now. But there used to be hundreds and hundreds of rabbits just running, you know, at that time in a morning as you drove down. And we would get out in the morning and would be given an area of work and would set to and the ganger would monitor that and decide where we were working.

Can you describe that a little bit more to me? So you would arrive in your minibus?

Yeah.

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And then, what would you see? What would be there?

Well you would see the moors out in front of you and there were areas where the, where the machine was cutting where it was into sort of, what we call virgin peat, and so the big block cutting machine was there, but that was mainly, to my knowledge anyway, manned by peat, by personnel who were actually full time, fully employed at the peat works and the casual labour, as I was at the time then, was just used for the easier jobs which, and then you could see wall upon wall of these, of this peat which was stacked up and it was all stacked up so that there was gaps in between the wall so that the air could circulate round it and dry it and, if you were starting at one end of the wall you would move the bricks, so you would take the ones at the top place them upside down on the ground, at the side, so you would rebuild this wall and you would just move it probably a metre to one side or the other, and there would be hundreds of these walls out there.

And that was, that was...

Yeah, that was to turn the peat to dry it and that was my job and as I say you got paid by the chain. I can't remember how much it was, how much I got paid, but it wasn't a lot of money.

So you did the whole, the re-walling, that you've just described, was designed to turn the wall actually upside down basically, to turn the dry peat to the bottom and the wetter peat that had been against the ground to the top, now you were doing that as a teenager as a summer job?

Yes.

Was it just a summer job?

Yes, yeah, I mean out there in winter, you couldn't get out on site it was too wet to get out there anyway, so yeah.

Was it all young people like you?

No, no, I think I was fortunate in a way because there wasn't that many young people got in there, I think you had to be, you had to have the connections to get in there. I mean most people would either have a paper round or something like that, I don't know if Saturday jobs were around then or not, but, no there wasn't a lot of young people out there. I don't know how we'd get round it today with the employment laws and things like that but, it was all cash in hand as well.

So who were the people you worked with?

They would have been local people, people, lot of women worked out there and they would take their young children with them as well, set up camp on site and they were hard workers as well, I mean you couldn't keep up with these women, I mean really sort of experienced, long term workers and they used to push you along a bit, expected a fair day's work from you if you wanted paying. I mean you got paid by the chain but they expected so many chains being done, you know, I mean it wasn't a case of just going out there and whatever you got, did, you got paid for, they wouldn't want, they wouldn't want a return for you if you didn't dig in there and work then you would get replaced. But yeah, a lot of women out there, but the guy, the ganger was a chap, I can't remember his name but he was a very short, stocky, very square sort of chap who smoked a lot of cigarettes, and how he got away with that on the moors I'm not quite sure. 'Cause, I mean, it wasn't encouraged.

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And would there be a lot of people, or would there just be like your minibus load, or would there be more than that?

I don't recall seeing lots and lots of people out there, I mean I was just associated with the people I got picked up and the ganger who run that particular gang, but I suspect there were other gangs scattered about the moors. I mean, again, when you look at the scale of the whole operation I mean these are huge, huge areas of land and there could well have been other people further out on the moors somewhere working coming in from different villages maybe, I don't know what the access was like further round. You know, sort of to the east and to the south, but I would have thought there would have been other people out there.

And so it would be just be your gang working in this, is it like a small area, 'cause you look at the moors now and where they have cut peat...

Yeah, yeah.

And I mean we'll probably get onto them in a minute, but, you know, it's a wide open area and you'd be able to see different gangs working, was that not what it was like?

I don't recall seeing other people in the distance, I mean we would just, we would be driven to this area and you would get there and you would walk out to where you were working and you would just keep working until the end of the day and so, you know, over a period of time you would start to cover a fair area of the moors.

And was it a big open space?

Oh yes, yeah, yeah, big, big areas and then there were other areas which were scrubbed over which may have been, you know, the drains may have been there and the scrub may have been taken out but because it hadn't been worked for a long time it'd started to regenerate again and you would have a gang of people who would go out there and they would actually cut, cut all this timber away so that you could actually, so that the machine could get in there, the big block cutting machine could get in to start the whole process again. And I can remember working very close to one on the south of the reserve and that's where the, I can remember coming across the, the plane in the seventies when they found, when they found one of the crashed Halifax Bombers.

Tell me a bit about the plane.

Yeah, I can remember it being found and I can remember, I can't remember the lads name now but I can remember him going, and you know, your inquisitive at that age and you're wanting to get in and, I can remember the, one of the pilots still being exposed there and then, I can remember the police coming and actually isolating that area off and the, the plane and the crew were still in there. It's been designated an official War Grave and we've signed up to protect it as that and it's quite a sad story, I mean that particular plane, now I've had chance to find out more about it, they were, they ran out of fuel and they were no more than three or four hundred metres from landing which is really sad and they'd just ditched into the peat bog and... the story I've heard is that they at that time of the year that there would have been some standing water on there and that they felt as though, that they could actually ditch the plane down there and possibly get out and it was just a very thin veneer of water on the top and sadly they perished on the impact.

And had it been buried?

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Well what happened was, I mean, as I, as I described earlier, I mean you could jump on the peat bog there at that time and it just ripples, so it was, I mean ninety percent of peat is water and so you can imagine you know, a plane coming in at a fair pace of knots and hitting that and it would actually, it would drive into that peat then it would gradually settle and probably sink below the surface and that would work it's way down over a period of time and I guess, I mean it was still in pristine condition in that area as far as I knew and so there could have been as much as three, to three and half metres of peat there so it would gradually work it's way into that peat body and would be consumed by it.

What I'm curious about is had it been invisible or was it just in with the scrub and suddenly you found this plane?

No I think that it'd worked it's way to the surface in the summer, because what happens with these planes is in winter, you know when the peat body itself is at it's wettest and it's like a huge sponge is a peat body, then it would all be all consumed in that, and then as it starts to dry the actual plane would probably lift out and I've actually seen that happen on Thorne. I remember back in ninety five just as I started on the moors on a contract, and it was a particularly dry summer, I think we only had thirteen inches of rainfall that year, and the tail fin of the one of Thorne, because it was starting to dry, actually lifted and you could actually see it exposed at that time and as it starts to re-wet and it's like, you know, the sponge gathers water and it starts to sink back down again and it consumes it all again in the water body and I think that's possibly what happened at Hatfield. It was a dry time, that's when we were cutting peat and turning peat and therefore I think the plane had just got exposed.

And we can be assured that it's not visible now?

No, I mean, parts of it are, you can see little bits of the fusilage and little bits of the wing but what we do plan to do is actually cover it up a little bit more and I've got to sort that side of things out with Scotts, the peat company. But I would like it to have a bit more peat, cause you can imagine as it's dried the peat hasn't been taken off that particular area where the plane is, but as it's dried out it's started to oxydise it shrinks, it slumps but also it's very, very susceptible to the wind and you start to get a lot of this peat blown off it and that's what's happened and it's started to expose little bits of the plane. So we need to, we need to cover it up a little bit more. But I'm confident as we start to rewet the site that it will, it will protect that plane even better.

Because we need to emphasise that it is a grave there are, there are bodies in there.

It is yeah, yeah.

And it's actually illegal to...

It is.

Even to go on it let alone interfere with it at all.

And we, that's right, we, yeah we wouldn't encourage anybody to do that, I mean we need to be respectful of what it is and that is, and that's how we manage that particular area.

Now you talked about cutting in the summer?

Yeah.

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Can you tell me what the conditions were like?

I can, it could be, how did somebody describe it to me once? A Godforsaken place, could Hatfield and Thorne Moors and it still can be on occasions when you're working throughout the summer. It's, it's, the two, they are sites of extremes I've always said this and, you know, today we're just, on an autumn day, go out there it's very misty and it can get very damp and dank out there, but that's nice, but in winter when it's cold and there's a wind, the wind chill factor on there is seriously cold, really, really cold and equally in summer, you can get out on site, and that's when I was working on there sort of stacking the peat, the horse flies could be something terrible, really, really bad and you know. It didn't matter what sort of concoctions you came up with to try and keep these flies off you, if they decided they wanted a feed then they were gonna have a feed and I can remember on several occasions just, that was it, enough and you just had to move and get away because some areas for whatever reason, will be worse than others. [cough] excuse me. And equally as we went towards the evening time the midges then would come out as well and that could just be as bad. So past conditions, and I think anybody who worked out there on site doing that type of work ended up having these midge bites.

And it was in summer time, so I presume it was quite warm?

Yes, it was very hot and I mean, I don't know if you've been out on the peat land in summer but you've got that big black area because it was all obviously de-vegetated so you could get in to work the peat and the peat, the sun would radiate back off the peat so it was really, really hot and I can remember taking my snap bag and you've got sandwiches and I would have at least two big bottles of water, because you would lose so much fluid being out there in summer you'd have to replace it. So yeah, yeah it was quite warm.

And when you're saying that it was quite warm, but it was hot, but you'd got the horse flies, what, how did you protect yourself, how did you dress?

You needed to keep some clothes on but it would have to be very light sort of t-shirts, never wore shorts because you would get eaten alive. I can remember having some very light flannel type trousers on with my socks tucked outside so that you couldn't get flies, you know, down, underneath your legs there, and you would have a hat, always wore a hat out there, because the sun would bake down on you and lots of sun cream, because you would get burnt. I'm not so bad, I'm very dark skinned but I mean people who are fair skinned would really, really suffer out there.

Now I've heard a story about the ladies on the gangs, or some of the ladies on that gang.

Yes, I can remember, it didn't happen everyday, but I can remember, I'd only been going two or three days when I first started on there and I got the shock of my life because there were some ladies who were working topless out there and as a fourteen, fifteen year old lad it was quite a, quite a site. Bit embarrassing at the time I think.

Was this because they were having a joke or was this because of...

I don't know, I never really asked too much because, you, you were looking all the time but tried not to look!

[Laughter]

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If that makes sense and, so I di'nt ask too much but I don't know whether it was somebody was sunbathing and taking the most of the sunrays at that time, I know when it got really, really hot, everybody was fully clothed, but I can remember on several occasions seeing ladies out there with no tops on.

If you can just, sort of bring this bit to it's conclusion because you were picked up at five thirty, you were taken out onto the moor, you did your days work, what, what time did you finish and how did you get paid?

We finished at two o'clock, I think it was two o'clock, very rarely did you work more than eight hours, and I was paid on the Friday, in a little brown envelope, cash. You were paid cash.

And how did they work out what you were entitled to?

Because you would be measured on how many chains, how many chains you'd done in that week and that's what you would get paid by, but I, I've sat long and hard and I can't remember what it was a chain now, I can't remember what we got paid, but it wasn't a lot of money. But I was very flush at the time, I mean I was, you know, you worked hard and as I say not everybody had a job at that age, so it was welcome cash.

We talked about going out there, out onto the moors and described it in different weather conditions and so on, and you talked about working from quite early in the morning and the rabbits. Can you tell me a little bit what it's like, when, you know, at night time when it's dark and firstly how, you know, what experience do you have of that?

I have a lot of experience certainly going on both moors now in my role as site manager, I get out there to do you know, sort of survey and monitoring work looking at different species and sometimes that means going out at night, especially with the night jars and the deer any counts on those, and, sorry I've lost me thread now, what was the question?

The question was a bit about describing how...

Yes, yeah, yeah, and I think it's a wonderful experience to go out on site at night. I mean, the site's changed so much, it's very dark out there, we've, we've now started to suffer, sadly a little bit of light pollution in the area, it's quite sad, but I can remember certainly ten years ago you'd go out there on an overcast night and you'd put your hand in front of you and you could not see your hand it was black and to go and experience that and just sit quiet in the Land Rover as I do, no lights on, just listen to the noises going on, it's fantastic and a real experience I can tell you, to go out there. Thorne especially when I go out and monitor the deer it's, to hear them and the owls calling and such like it's such a wonderful time and I've spent hours and hours out there doing that.

Hatfield, Hatfield's a different site. Hatfield's been very heavily commercially worked over the last twenty years, whereas sections of Thorne haven't been and so it's going through a massive transition at the moment in terms of rehabilitation. But Hatfield also has a bit of a, don't know whether I should say this, this is my personal take on Hatfield, there's a bit of a sinister side about Hatfield, I don't, I've never felt comfortable out on that site in some areas and there's all sorts of - people sort of talk about ghosts out on Hatfield. I've never, I've never seen a ghost on Hatfield, but you get all sorts of stories that have been passed to you along the time about things and I have to say I have felt very uncomfortable on two occasions especially over at Hatfield, I've had the dogs out with me as well and they've stopped solidly in their track, all the fur stuck up from head to toe, wouldn't go forward and that really makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up and if I'm

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honest I've left the site. I've felt that uneasy. But that's my own personal experience and I have heard other people mention the same thing about feeling very uncomfortable in certain areas of the site and as I've mentioned to you previously when we met there is a story about a, one story about somebody experiencing the monk which, in full habit, walking along the moors.

Can you tell me, because, tell me a bit more about that because you described who, not necessarily by name, but you described the kind of person he was who actually experienced this and what it was he experienced?

Yeah, the guy, I mean I wouldn't tell you his name, I think it'd be very unfair of me to do that, but the guy told me of an experience he'd had out on site. A very sort of straight forward logical type of guy, and he, this was daytime, and there was an experience one day of seeing this monk-like figure walking across the peat land, full habit and everything and he just walked into the peat as though he was walking down some steps and that really did put the frighteners on this guy so much so that he just didn't wanna go back to work in that area. And I've no reason to question that at all, knowing that the person who he is, as I say, very straight forward, very level headed, logical type of person and it does make you think, does make you think. And you know, I've spoken to other people who have had similar experience in that, in the sense that they sensed somebody or something's there and they've felt very uncomfortable with it and gone. I've never experience anything like that on Thorne, I think Thorne, you can go out there, I've had some really relaxing evenings out there and it's a wonderful, wonderful place to visit on a night.

And you say, what kind of things would you go out at nighttime for?

Well I mean, the two sites, Thorne and Hatfield are a key area nationally and internationally to some degree for breeding nightjars and so we have to go out and these are birds that are, what are known as crepuscular in their activity, that means that they come out in the evening and they hunt throughout the night and then come dawn they sort of back away and roosting and so to go out there and appreciate them and try to evaluate what we've got in terms of numbers and distribution throughout the site you need to go out on an evening to carry out that monitoring. So we go out there to do that and equally with the deer, I mean the deer, we get a lot of deer out in the day but certainly on Thorne and Hatfield they're more, they're sort of more nocturnal in their habits and so we go out there to do some deer counts to see exactly what we've got and where they are, and that's what we do.

So, and to go out and see the deer out on site and these weird nightjars again we do specific walks we have nightjar walks out on site and the site staff take that, and I'd encourage anybody to come along to these because it's not only the nightjars and the deer you see, we pick up owls and we pick up other species and you hear the foxes barking and, it's a real experience and sometimes it's difficult to get people to go home. You know, we may meet at nine o'clock in the evening, just as it's starting to get dusk and we'll have a steady walk out there and I've known, I've known myself to be out there till one o'clock, half past one in the morning and I keep saying I've got to go, I've gotta be up in the morning or whatever, but that says everything doesn't it about people I mean they go out -

The down side of it is the, is the midges they can come for a nibble on you so you need to come sort of well prepared for that, there's all sorts of concoctions of midge spray being sprayed about and, I'm surprised we see anything because the, you know, the aroma that comes off all these different concoctions is enough to knock a bullock down at hundred metres, you know never mind keep the - but we do and I think a lot of the people, what tells you how successful these, these sort of evening jaunts are is that, ninety percent of the people that go on them come back and so we're seriously

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gonna have to look at extending the number of walks we do to try and accommodate new people, because as soon as they're advertised they're booked up again. So yes, wonderful experience to go out there on an evening.

[Recording Ends]