

Thorne and Hatfield Moors Oral History Project

Interview with: Paul Buckland

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Interviewer: Lynne Fox

SUMMARY

Early life and education – Doncaster Grammar School and Technical College. Degree in geology at Birmingham. Year in Kenya. PhD in geology studying the Vale of York. Work as field archaeologist

Early involvement with experts at Doncaster Museum lead to initial interest in geology. Importance of collections and expertise in Doncaster. Material from excavation of Roman pottery kilns at Cantley & Rossington

Eventually specialised in insect remains – quaternary entomology

Description of process & uses of quaternary entomology – links with archaeology

More details of areas of work in UK and worldwide

Introduction to Thorne & Hatfield Moors and William Bunting – description of landscape & flora

Description of the creation of the Moors – geological beginnings in Ice Age, formation of Lake Humber around 16,500 years before present, formation of rivers and Humberhead Levels, primeval forest, waterlogging through rising sea levels, formation of peat bogs.

Arrival of first life-forms about 13,500 years b.p. - insects

Evidence of climatic fluctuations and changes over time – development of local landscape and underlying soils

First evidence of humans – possibly individual hunters – around 10,500 years b.p.

Tundra environment. Probably hunting animals such as bison or wild cattle, reindeer & horses.

Development of forest as climate warms. Remains of 4000 year old trees still visible as ‘bog oaks’ on the Moors. Evidence of human activity in landscape.

Differences between Thorne Moors and Hatfield Moor Development and formation of the two Moors, their relationship to other similar environments. The disappearance of these environments in Europe through human activity. Thorne & Hatfield Moors are the last remnants of an extensive system of mires.

How the Moors provide a record of the world and the landscape and life in the area encapsulated within the peat and underlying geology – in some cases as far back as 120,000 years b.p.

Human activity within this landscape – Neolithic onwards. Extensive Roman activity

Channel of present River Don man-made, probably during Roman occupation

Details of Roman pottery industry in the area

From earliest times Thorne & Hatfield Moors on a boundary – geological and political.

Discovery of wooden structure on Thorne Moor by William Bunting and investigation by PB.

Linear structure about 3000 years old, could be track or platform. Most important for the beetle fauna associated with it - a major contribution to understanding of the pre-human forest landscape.

This structure about 1000 years later than that found on Hatfield Moor

Evidence of medieval landscape – future work planned on retting of hemp & flax.

Importance of Thorne & Hatfield Moors in regional, national & international terms

Comments on current plans and the future for the Moors.