

Thorne and Hatfield Moors Oral History Project

Interview with: Brian Hibbard (part 1)

Date: 8 September 2006

Interviewer: Lynne Fox

Summary

Brian Hibbard has worked on Thorne Moors all his life. His mother and father worked on the moor (see Annie & Ernest Hibbard recordings). He worked on the loading gangs from hand loading for Fisons through to operating the machinery used in surface milling. Still an employee of Scotts UK, Brian has been very closely involved in the restoration of the Moors.

Childhood at Creyke's Sidings. Lived in house owned by British Moss Litter Company

Father's work hand graving peat – mum's work carrying it off.

Childhood memories – accompanying parents to work, play-pen made of peat blocks

Description of Creyke's Sidings. Water from well.

Childhood play on the moors. School. Description of moors before large scale peat extraction.

Father got him a job on the Moors. He has been there since he was 15 in 1970.

Why he went to work there.

His first job on the moor – maintenance & repair of railway line – Alf Moffatt

Introduction to loading gang. Description of their work.

Benefits of piece work.

More details of how loading gangs worked

Going to work by motorbike, laying portable line, filling wagons, rotating work. Camaraderie within the gang, tools & machinery.

Portable fitting shed. Gang shed. Changes due to surface milling.

Moors railway & portable line system – how it worked

Detailed description of how peat was extracted & transported prior to surface milling.

Hand gravers occasionally used to cut awkward sections.

Little change when moved from hand to machine cutting

Impact of surface milling techniques on workers – some couldn't make the transition

Impact on the moors

How different methods of extracting peat have left their mark on the moors

How his own work changed when surface milling introduced. Details of his subsequent work

Details of subsequent peat extraction operation

Building a road across the moor – use of lorries as well as railway.

Problems using big machines on the bog surface

Description of bog surface – can feel vibration of loco over long distances

Finding WW2 bomb in peat

Getting machinery stuck in peat

His current work in restoration programme

The changes in the 4 years since the buy-out.