

Thorne and Hatfield Moors Oral History Project

Interview with: James Hinchliffe

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Interviewer: Lynne Fox

Summary

James Hinchliffe works two farms on the edge of Thorne Moor near Rawcliffe Bridge. His farms sit on either side of the East Coast Railway line. He is active in wildlife conservation – he is a volunteer for Natural England and experiments with different crops to encourage birds. He is also a commercial farmer running a successful business and is part of a research programme monitoring ways in which the use of agrochemicals can work alongside wildlife conservation. His land was flood-warped.

Description of location of his farms.

His own origins & how he came to the farm when he was 6.

His first experience of the moors. Didn't visit for long period then reintroduced about 3 years ago by Natural England volunteer.

Childhood memories of peat workers

Description of farm and crops. Relationship of farm with moor.

Birds. Maintenance of only wood left standing after 1970s –originally for commercial reasons but now mainly for birds.

How farm & moor can work together.

His voluntary work for Natural England

Development of his interest in wildlife

Descriptions of the moor when he was a child, 3 years ago – the 'moon landscape', and changes since restoration.

Few people in Rawcliffe Bridge know of existence of moors. His views on public access.

What he enjoys about the moors.

Why the farm isn't part of any government schemes to support wildlife conservation

Their wildlife work on the farm.

BASF-funded trials of agrochemicals. Birds assessed 7 times a year

Experimenting with different crops of bird food – supporting birds that live on Moors. Future possibilities with Natural England

Why he works with BASF

Big success in restoring tree-sparrow population. Trying to encourage owls

Size of land farmed

Volunteer work for Natural England through the year. Butterfly Survey. Adders.

Access & rights of way. Common land. Bunting

Warping of land. Description of warp layer. Farming warped land. How warped land is made into usable agricultural land. Horses in WW1

What he would do with Thorne Moor – doubts about open public access. Differences between Thorne Moor & Hatfield Moor.