

Thorne and Hatfield Moors Oral History Project

Interview with: Ray Hodges

Date: 2 June 2006

Interviewer: Lynne Fox

Background

Ray Hodges spent his childhood at Moorends before marrying and moving to Thorne. His particular friend was Ronald Bell (known as Nocky) who lived with his family on the moors at Bell's Pond. Ray therefore spent his leisure time on the moors during and after the Second World War and presents an excellent child's eye view of the Moors.

Summary

Early background. Born in Wales in 1935. Grandfather was miner & moved in 1937 for work in Thorne pit. Followed later by father & family.

Lived in Thorne whilst pit houses in Moorends were being constructed

Schooling – Moorends Junior then Thorne Secondary Modern

Playing football – school team won Daily Dispatch Shield

Relationship with Thorne Moors.

Access to Moors

Bell family. Families at Whaley Balk. Sharpe family.

Swimming in Ball's Pond

Collecting Rhododendrons & damsons – 'White City'

Farmers. Leaping dykes on poles used by farmers to dry crops

Kids from the village

Making swings from old rope and belting found on the pit tip. Sliding down tip on belting in snow

Home Guard practiced shooting at Emerson's farm. Targets set up against tip. Riding on

mechanism used to raise & lower targets. Searching for bullets in tip. Wartime souvenirs.

Wartime airfields – Lindholme & Finningley. Plane crashes at Moorends & on Thorne Moors.

Watching bombers fly out. Watching bombing of Goole Docks.

Soldiers including Americans billeted in Thorne prior to embarkation.

Prisoners of War working on land.

Evacuees from London

Salvage crews cutting down railings for war effort

What he did after leaving school. Selling ice cream from horse & cart. How it was kept frozen.

Met wife in the dairy

Subsequent working life culminating in work for ICI in Doncaster

Later access onto Moors more restricted.

Wife (Jean) went with school to collect rhododendrons for the May Queen

'Threepenny rush' – children's cinema on Saturday afternoon at Moorends Empire

What children did to earn the threepence

'Uncle Arthur' at Moorends Hotel

'Gordon's' prank with 'severed' finger