

## **Thorne and Hatfield Moors Oral History Project**

### **Interview with: Mike Oliver (part 1)**

**Date: 22 June 2006**

**Interviewer: Lynne Fox**

### **Summary**

**Mike Oliver worked for many years as a Mining Surveyor for the National Coal Board. He was made redundant at the collapse of the coal industry in 1991 aged 51. He went to work for Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council as a Minerals Planner and became case officer for Thorne & Hatfield Moors during the key years of the conservation debate, in which he was closely involved. He has retained a keen interest in the conservation of the Moors even after his retirement. He discovered the Neolithic wooden trackway whilst walking on Hatfield Moor in 2004.**

Early life, school & training with National Coal Board. Details of his main areas of interest & specialism within mining surveying.

Redundancy. Became Minerals Planner for Doncaster MBC. Became case officer for Thorne & Hatfield Moors because of interest in green issues. Attended Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum as observer on behalf of Doncaster Council.

Moors always controversial. Walking fine line between English Nature & Fisons.

Threat to peatland species. Large Heath butterfly.

Size & scale of Moors. Impact of surface milling.

Changes in legislation eg Natura 2000 started move which eventually lead to buy-out of peat working rights and cessation of peat extraction.

Issues – valuation of peat working. Protection of Moors through European designation as Special Area of Conservation & Special Protection Area.

Working with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

Doncaster council's obligations & responsibilities. Size of problem

Eventual buy-out agreement.

English Nature's proposal to de-notify the SSSI status of Thorne Moor. Famous public meeting at Thorne Grammar School. Change of mind by English Nature led them to follow path of buy-out & restoration.

Moor fires. His own green interest & conservation work. The beauty of the Moors.

The discovery of the prehistoric wooden 'trackway' on Hatfield Moor - description of his first sighting. His surveying knowledge & experience enabled him to identify possible importance of find.

The first photograph. Contacting Doncaster Museum. Excavation.

His interpretation of what he found – differs from archaeologist's view. (see interview with Henry Chapman & Ben Gearey)

Outline of his theory about routeways and paths across topography of landscape during Neolithic as bog starts to develop.

Abraham de la Pryme's description of stone causeway across Hatfield Moor in 17<sup>th</sup> century