

Thorne and Hatfield Moors Oral History Project

Interview with: Trevor Sharpe (part 2) (including Barry Sharpe)

Date: 10 August 2006

Interviewer: Lynne Fox

Summary

Trevor and Barry Sharpe lived in Moorends but spent most of their time at their grandfather's house at Bell's (Sharpe's) Pond on Thorne Moors. The two houses at the Pond belonged to the Pit owners and were occupied by the Sharpes and the Bell family. About a quarter of a mile away were the two houses at Whaley Balk occupied by the Verhees family and the Smits. These houses belonged to British Moss Litter Company. Trevor and Barry both worked in the peat industry. Barry drove a Hy-Mac loading peat wagons. Trevor drove locos but eventually became factory foreman at Hatfield Mill.

Description of the way peat grows. Uses for peat - in aeroplane wings, Harrogate Baths (see Brian Hibbard recording), Royal horses. Carriage of peat by boat
Hand graving peat – Dutch method & English method
Dutch peat workers – Dutch Row
Different kinds of peat
Introduction of cutting machines
Families working together on moors
Stacking, piddying, transporting peat. Tools. Payment
Introduction of surface milling – process.
Baling & bagging in factory
Gas explosion & fire on Hatfield Moor
Moor fires. How peat burns, fighting fire
Better pay & conditions when Fisons took over from British Moss Litter Company – big pay increase