

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

### **Interview with: Richard Walker**

**Date: 10 August 2006**

**Interviewer: Lynne Fox**

### **Summary**

**Richard Walker's family have a long history in Thorne as farmers and businessmen. He has played an active role in trying to reverse the loss of industry by promoting the interests of Thorne Moorends. He has acted as Town Councillor and Mayor and currently serves as a Councillor on Doncaster Council.**

Long family history in Thorne. Grandfather's farm (Nun Moors Farm) bordered moors so free access to moors all his life

Description of grandfather's farm – strips/cables of land. Moor Owners Association / Church Commissioners owned much of land. Each cable had dyke & hedgerow

Potato picking by hand – potato 'pies' for storage over winter

Family business, farmers & butchers – own slaughterhouse still extant in Thorne

He worked in slaughterhouse & deliveries whilst at school

Description of moors when he was a child

Maintaining dykes

Working with peat gravers as teenager

Filtering insects out of drinking water

School. Early working career. Working in iron-ore mine in Scunthorpe

Working in management for MECCA – work with the Miss World contest

Return to Thorne. Ran taxi / ambulance business

Eventually settled in funeral business

Elected to Thorne Moorends Town Council, became Mayor 2 years running

Elected to Doncaster Council – representing Thorne's interests – Vice Chair of Council

Some of the things that he has been involved with as Councillor – Peatland's Way, Ings Wood, 2

Royal visits

Thorne's connection with whaling industry – his relative was Captain of a whaler

Thomas Crapper born at Waterside

Makin Durham's improvements to the moor – warping

Ropery & Rope Walk connected to maritime industries at Waterside. Boating Dyke

Thorne historically thriving place – 3 railway stations

How a rope walk worked

Organised 2 Royal visits to Thorne. First War Memorial refurbished & rededicated by Duke of Kent & Bishop of Sheffield – trade exhibition in park

Dedication of new bridge over canal 'Princess Royal Bridge' – royal permission & opening by Princess Anne

Promoting interests of Thorne – adopted Ghurkha Regiment

Loss of industries, Dunstan's shipyard, Darley's Brewery etc.

New development & industries

Thorne Pit

Some historical details of Thorne

Promotion of the moors - Peatlands Way