

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

**Interview with: Nicky Whitehouse**

**Date: 8 December 2006**

**Interviewer: Lynne Fox**

### ***Background***

Nicky Whitehouse specialises in the study of fossil insects in order to develop an understanding of prehistoric landscapes and environments. She is part of the team headed by Henry Chapman and including Ben Gearey that is working on the prehistoric landscape of Thorne & Hatfield Moors including the excavation and study of the Neolithic 'trackway' discovered on Hatfield Moor in 2004.

### ***Summary***

Description of what she does and her study of Thorne & Hatfield Moors

How she studies the peat and what it can tell us about the environment & Landscape over the last 4500 years

Studying the buried trees – what they tell us – evidence of & understanding climate change

Description of prehistoric landscape

Differences between Thorne Moors & Hatfield Moor – geology, ice-age. Resulting differences in flora & fauna

Results of subsequent research by Henry Chapman & Ben Gearey

Beginning of peat development coincides with major shift in climate & sea-level change

The importance of Thorne & Hatfield Moors. Similarities to Baltic & Scandinavian bogs than other English peat bogs

Thorne Moors' importance as ancient woodland

Impact of different methods of peat extraction. Moderate scale cutting enhances environment, large scale cutting degrades environment. Industrial milling destroys it.

Her concerns over limits of current conservation viewpoint

Past & present climate change

A description of her own work – the process of extracting information from sites

Her academic background & initial involvement with Thorne Moors through Professor Paul Buckland

Her involvement with Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum

Her involvement on the excavation of the Neolithic 'trackway' on Hatfield Moor – what her study of insects tells us about the 'trackway' & the landscape within which it was built & the wider contemporary environment

What the study of insects can tell us about human activities & living conditions – modern studies in Dublin

Her continuing interest in Thorne & Hatfield Moors despite her move to Belfast University