

DERSINGHAM 2000 HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW 24

Date interview conducted: 29th October 1998

Name: Derek Reynolds

When did you first come to Dersingham?

I have lived in the village 74 years. I was born in the village.

Where do you live now?

Homefield, Hunstanton Road.

What are your earliest memories of the village?

My father used to have a hairdresser's shop down Post Office Road, this end in the first row of cottages on the left. They have just took half of the building down so they can get by with their cars. I used to play with my chums about the village. We used to play with the Riches who lived across the road where the bootmakers' is. He had a big shed and we used to go to play in there. There was hardly any traffic; we used to go on the common and play. Every year somebody would set fire to the common. There used to be a rifle range; a shooting range. The 'Terriers' had a building in the village; down on the common, and the 'Terriers' had some butts where they used to go firing. We used to play about there and there was a cave we used to go in and crawled through the entrance and take matches and light things. I don't know if it's still there. When they were firing down on the butts they had things they used to lay on to fire the guns and there was a bloke down the bottom used to put up whether they scored. Towards the later part they used to put a red flag up to say they were firing because it was dangerous. We used to go down there and get the bullets. We would dig them out and flog them to other boys. During the autumn time we used to go chestnutting; we did cook them. We used to go cranberrying on the fen. I had a penny pocket money if I was good; I used to have to go and ask for it off my dad.

My father moved from Post Office Road in 1924 or 25. We had the shed built in our garden; I think it cost about £100. Walden's, the builders, built it. There was two hairdressers. Mr. King was round the village and he was in Manor Road. Dad used to do a push mail in the morning. So he'd be up about five, sort the mail, put it on his bike. He'd be home about half-past tennish. Open the shop. Ladies came to hairdressers and had their hair cut. He used to do singeing. After the cut you sealed the ends of the hair with a flame, so it didn't

bleed. Used to shave people with a cut throat razor. People used to bring their own razors in for him to hone up. He's sit there hours sharpening razors then he's strop them on the leather strop. He'd swear sometimes that people had been doing their corns with them, made them terribly blunt.

On the playing fields there used to be all whin bushes before they tidied it up. It was quite rough. We used to go up there to play.

Things have changed quite a lot. My father used to work for his father, my grandfather. He used to take a horse and cart to Lynn with the goods, greengrocers and stuff like that. Only a few houses on the main road, even up the Wootton Road there weren't many houses. He told me one particular place where the people were ill they had put all straw on the road to keep the noise down from the horse and carts.

Have you belonged to any clubs or organisations in the village?

Scouts; Mr. Waring ran it, he was the schoolmaster. When he left Dersingham school he went to Bircham. When I belonged we used to have the building opposite (Chinese Take-away). It used to be an old barn and Mr Playford bought that. Jarvis used to have the bakers shop and Playford bought it. It wasn't used for years. Someone was in the house on the right The actual barn wasn't used for years. Scouts were based over there.

I went to Sunday school.

What was the most important day you have ever spent in the village?

There was an important day .On the right past Linford's Corner where the houses are now, where the garage is and cars stand, in about 1938 they first built a filling station there. On that field there every year they used to have a day for sports for the village. We used to go there and have a day out. Like an early kind of fete. I can remember a chap with a bear coming up the road on a chain- a dancing bear.

I lost a lot mates in the war. I was away during the war. Things were so different. When I first joined up I had to go to Chichester down on the south coast; I'd never been that far before on my own. __

We used to go shooting. Dad always had guns.

What was the worst time you remember?

H'm! The best thing was the by-pass. The traffic used to stand still outside here on a Sunday; used to have a traffic policeman. Before the war we used to have a bicycle.

All the traffic used to come by. We used to have a car in 1947. We lived down Post Office Road then. I used to keep it up the far end in my Uncle's barn. You could leave your car then but you wouldn't do it today.

I remember the floods in 53. My dad was very ill. He wanted to see the floods. We went all the way round the coast. Showed him where water had been up. You could see the line where the water had been. Down Snettisham Beach it was very bad. The water was all the way up to Dersingham Station. There was beach huts washed up. We took him down to Wolferton. Someone's lawn there it was all rubbish. He always said it was it would happen. It cheered him up that it had come true.

What are the biggest changes you have seen in the village?

All the housing. All the Gelham Estate had been built. It was the first estate but there were council houses in the village Station Road; some up Dodds Hill. Most houses belong to farmers or the Queen; she owned a lot of places in the village. The two opposite Playford's owned Emblems. Stanton's farm belonged to Queen and so did Smith's farm up Fern Hill. Mr Lines, the butcher, he acquired quite a few houses down Centre Vale.

We miss all the little shops. A little kid could get a pennorth of sweets.

Where May Davey lives (Eve's Cottage, Chapel Road) that used to be little shop. Lasher Britain ran it; they sold gobstoppers. We used to go in for sticks of liquorice in Lasher Britain's.

We used to have lantern slides on a Friday at school. Mason George (?) used to do that. Kids used to buy sweets and monkey nuts. He was cruel head; we used to have the stick. He weren't a very nice man.

The village is quite big enough; it doesn't want to get any bigger. I expect they'll build on the marshes before they have finished. I hope they don't put anything on the recreation ground; there is a rumour.

What do you think about a new village hall?

The old hall would be OK if there was more parking places. It is the parking today. There are a lot of people against it. There's not that much need for it.

There are not many pieces of green left in the village. They have done the Hawthorns. I didn't like it although they fitted in very well.

What does the Millennium mean to you?

It doesn't mean anything to me. I doubt we will celebrate it. It's an important date. Good for the youngsters to look back.

What would you like to say to someone in Dersingham in a 100 years time?

I don't know. We are getting too brainy for ourselves.

We have been happy here. We would not like to live any where else

Mrs. Reynolds

I was born down Pansey Drive. It was an unmade up road until quite recently. Most roads unmade up