

## Transcript of Interview with Lorna Hatcher, June 2022.

### Lorna speaking to Ben Heath.

Ben: Yeah, it's over to you. Yeah. Good to go.

Lorna: I'm Lorna Hatcher and I'm, well, nearly 82.

As far back as I can remember we were, my husband and I, were always at Radipole Park Drive. We used to go across the Radipole Lake after they built the path across, which was probably about 1946 when they built it.

And I wrote a poem, actually, about the Radipole Lake and going through the reeds. And we used to go over the swings a lot. And my husband, when he was about 13, used to make balsa wood airplanes and we used to take them down to Radipole Park Drive and fly them and I'd be screaming with excitement like a stupid little kid.

And us and our girlfriends we used to go over there a lot. And there was some like sun houses with flowers in at the beginning of, well, as you turned into where the swans are, the swannery, there were little glass houses as we used to call them and they were filled with beautiful flowers and we used to look in, my girlfriends and I, used to go in there and look at all the flowers and then walk up to Radipole Park Drive. And we used to take the neighbours children out in their prams and they give us like thruppence for taking the children off their hands for the afternoon. We'd be walking up Radipole Park Drive with these babies and prams.

And I remember one night we were going back and we left it a bit late and we walked across the new path that they'd built and one of the mothers was worried because it was getting dusk and they came to look for us and they found us walking half way along the path because they thought we'd go the road way and, anyway, it was alright going across the path into Goldcroft Road.

And that's where my husband's buried, because that's where we grew up.

So, yeah, I've got really lovely memories of Radipole Park Drive.

Ben: And do you remember where you were saying about the bombing and the building of the bridge?

Lorna: Well, I can remember the bombing vaguely because I was about four and a half when the war finished, nearly five, but I was told they didn't build a bridge straight away. But I think we were about seven or eight when we used to go across this bridge so it couldn't have been too long after the war.

But I was told that that's where they got the rubble from to build the path. And when we walked on it first we were worried that it was all going to go out into the water, you know, because you couldn't imagine, before it was all water reeds.

My brother took me across there with his friend, over to Radipole Park Drive, and we walked across this path and the reeds and I wrote him this poem about it saying how it was a really hot afternoon, but when we went to go through the reeds it was hotter than ever because we were sheltered from any breeze there may have been.

And I wanted to write this poem for years and years and I could not get started on it. And then one summer afternoon, I was out in the garden mowing my lawn and I had a backless dress on. It came up high at the top with straps around the neck and the back was totally bare.

And I was mowing the lawn and my back was scorching in the sun, and I thought, my back's really red hot and then I recalled it was the same as my brother's hot back when he'd piggybacked me through the reeds and I could feel my little legs touching his hot back as he walked through the reeds .

And that gave me the inspiration to write the poem because I thought, well yes, and I started off with 'brown rat's tails, loosely hammered, framed my face. I lagged behind, I couldn't walk your pace.' And it was him and his friend, they were walking through the reeds and I was a bit... I looked up and I could see the ball rushes and I thought, I'm a bit frightened to go in there, because him and his, he was five years older than me and his friend the same age, and they were gonna sort of walk through and I hesitated, I didn't want to walk through so then he piggybacked me and my little legs were against his hot back and it wasn't till like, I was in my 50s I think when I wrote the poem, and I was mowing the lawn and my back was so hot and I thought that was just like Stan's back. His back was as hot as that and then I could see myself.

So I wrote this poem about the lake, Radipole Lake, and Park Drive, and how we came out on...I don't know if you've ever been up Pottery Lane have you?

Ben: Yeah. Yep.

Lorna: Well, at the top of there, next to the cemetery, there was allotments. I'm not sure, I think they're still there now, but anyway when we came out through the reeds we walked up that Pottery Lane and the boys were talking and they dumped me down outside the allotments and went in the allotments because we were all hungry. They were saying 'we're hungry, hungry' and I thought, well I am, but I never said anything. And they plonked me down outside and a while later they came out with these carrots and we sat and ate these carrots. And I remember thinking, I was only like four and a half, and I remember thinking won't the gardener mind? Because I knew that my dad had an allotment and he was a keen gardener and I knew that they belonged to someone, even though I was only four and a half and I thought, oh!

And so that that was one of the last verses in the poem that I wrote that he stole the carrots.

I suppose I've got loads more memories of Radipole Park Drive really, but that's the main things I remember.

Ben: Yeah, that's great. And have you still got a copy of the poem?

Lorna: Oh yes, on the internet. On You Tube.

OK.

So you could watch it if you like.