

Mike Turner

Picnicking in the valley.

So did you go down to the valley that is now flooded as a child?

Yes, we used to go down to there, we used to go down there, that was where we used to have our picnics in the summer, and we used to come down between what they call Meldon Down, used to come right down the valley and there was a path that went right the way down. There was stepping stones there and a lovely place where we used to have a picnic, a big flat area; we used to play hide and seek and rounders and bat and ball and all sorts of things like that. And then of course if you walked a little bit further down, then you came down to where the big deep pool was and a lot of people from Okehampton used to come, they used to call it Boys Brigade; it was quite a communal meeting point really, come out there picnicking, used to light your fire, used to come out there fully equipped with kettles and everything.

Tell me about the wildlife you used to see down here when you were a kid.

Oh dear, lots and lots of jackdaws around the quarry, loads of crows, ravens, mistlethrushes, blackbirds, yellowhammer – the new bird on the scene in those days was the Dartford warbler and I think my dad only saw the one that was down here, but there was all the rest of them, the linnets and the wheatears.