

Interview with Mike Kill January 2019 by Tony Cornell

TC

My name is Tony Cornell and I am a volunteer working on Mildenhall Cricket Clubs "That's Over" heritage Project. Today is the 15th of January 2019 and I am interviewing Mike Kill the club's long time groundsman, at the Mildenhall cricket Club pavilion. Mike and I will be discussing his early life and his path to joining and playing for Mildenhall. The recording of this interview will be archived at the Cricket Club and will be made available online and used to promote the heritage and history of Mildenhall Cricket Club, and the town as a whole. Hello Mike thank you for seeing us today. Can you tell me your full name and your date of birth?

MK

Good Morning. My name is Michael Albert Kill and my date of birth is the 26th October 1939.

TC

1939, which means you have got a big birthday probably coming up this year

MK

This year? Oh yes

TC

Okay can you tell me where you were born and a bit about your childhood?

MK

I was born just outside Portsmouth, Hampshire although I didn't live in that part of the world long my family moved around, my father was always in the services, and we tended to follow where he was posted in this country. I lived as a child in various places for a short time, Liverpool, the east end of London for a while and finishing up in a very nice area called Crouch End which is in North London in the borough. What was the borough of Hornsey its now part of Haringey. And I stayed in that area for quite some years. I went to school in that area and went finally to a school called Stationers Grammar School. Stationers was one of these companies. It was a company's school, like old merchant tailors and people like that, it was a good school, although there was a quiet bit of sport played, not much cricket unfortunately. I was not a lover of soccer and they didn't play rugby, so apart from the yearly sports day when I volunteered for putting the shot because I was a big lump in those days and still am. That is the summit of my school sport really, although when I was in the junior school we had quite a keen sports master that loved cricket and he organised cricket after school in the evenings and we played on a piece of ground which was not a cricket field at all and the pitch, the strip of grass we played on was quite uneven and bumpy. But the one thing that really started me off was after these cricket matches or during the school day. On one occasion he asked me to take the cricket bats to the room that held all the sports gear and he said I would find some linseed oil and would I clean the cricket bats, oil them and put them away. Well I enjoyed doing this very much and the smell of the linseed oil started me off and actually I took much longer than I should have done to do this. Eventually when I went back my class, my form teacher was not amused. A very fierce lady and said where have you been and I explained and she went and grabbed this sports master and he got a roasting so that was the end of my cricket at school

After school I had various jobs, didn't really settle and eventually I decided. National Service was about to finish and I thought I'll try a spell in the services and so I joined the Royal Military Police.

TC

As a regular?

MK

Yes I had a three year stint which meant you got double the pay that a National Serviceman would get. And after basic training at an awful place in Surrey called Inkermann Barracks which was Victorian women's prison originally, no heating, great big rooms which were freezing and of course we spent a lot of our time marching up and down the barracks square terrible waste of time but the army seemed to enjoy it, Eventually I was posted to Singapore and I went on six weeks embarkation leave. When I came back the posting had been cancelled and I finished up in Berlin, which was a very interesting place to be at that time because it was before the actual wall was built and there was barbwire fencing all around the Russian sector of Berlin and they were stopping East German, they were East Germans at that time they were stopping them from escaping over to Western sector of Berlin, including shooting some of them, shooting their own people. Eventually my three year term was up and I came home. I think it was the very next year that the Berlin wall went up.

TC

Early sixties

Mk

That's right about 60/61 round about that time. Coming back to England I can't think oh I got a job doing maintenance of a chain of garages mainly building work really and at that time the guy I worked with was a keen cricketer and I was also very friendly with a chap who was more a friend of my brothers at that time. A chap named Dick Goudge who was a great character, loved his beer, his curry. His standard of cricket we was playing wasn't very high, it was basically village cricket around South Hertfordshire and North London what is now Barnet which is now a London borough of Barnet, in those days it was part of the county of Hertfordshire and I played cricket at the weekends around that area, very enjoyable and I was living in that area and then the opportunity, I got married, got the opportunity to take a job working with my older brother at a place called Mildenhall. The intension was to come down to Mildenhall and build one of the, I think it was the first factory on the new industrial estate and for a company name Winchmore who made white wood furniture.

TC

Long before Ikea or anybody like that got into it

MK

Yes I think so, there was another firm called Liden L I D E N and they were our main competitors. But my role was mainly carrying on construction work, when we finished that factory, I moved on and built another factory for a company called Rosenberg who I think have since gone, and another little company called Rose brothers which was all on the industrial estate, finishing up with a factory for a company name Wee Bairn who made babies clothes and that factory now belongs to Cocksedges, and what happened after that?

TC

So were you employed by Winchmore, or were you just subcontracting?

Mk

No I was employed by Winchmore by a guy named Mears, Maurice Mears who was the boss of Winchmore, so I was basically working for them and supervising this construction of these various factories. We employed local people and when the school term finished in the summer we took on about half a dozen young lads to work in the factory, the Winchmore factory. I occasionally meet some of these lads until these days. So we have a bit of a chat.

TC

What was your accommodation when you first came here?

Mk

To start with we moved here my brother and I and three other guys including Maurice Mears we came here on the 1st of February 1965 and it was bitterly cold. We were supposed to meet a large yard site caravan which was going to be our home through the next few months, and it hadn't arrived and of course that time of the year it soon gets dark. Eventually it did arrive. It came with blankets and all the rest sort of things, it was damp. It came a little iron fire with a boxed, steel boxed around the chimney. You would fill the box with water so the heat coming from it gave you a little bit of water. So we were a scruffy lot so that first night we eventually bedded down. We went for a meal in the town of Mildenhall, and the first place I think we used was called the Chef's Hat which was a small restaurant just as you approach New Street going through the High Street and we occasionally would go in the Bell and places like that. Once we were settled in the caravan one of the guys working in there was a chap named Ron Dunbar was quiet a good cook and he liked doing fancy things. Sometimes the atmosphere in the caravan got a bit strong and we also had an outside toilet we took it in turns to empty, but it was good fun.

Through the summer, sometime we would go home. My brother and I would drive back to Barnet, back in the area where I was living. Other weekends we would stay then my wife and small daughter came down here in the beginning of the autumn and that was it and I was here to stay. I hadn't intended to stay but Mildenhall was such, I liked Mildenhall very much from the start. I am a great user of public houses or I was in those days and now I found it was the very very best way to meet the local people, men of course mostly, and in those days pubs were good you could play darts, dominoes, cribbage dice it was good fun. Landlords could make a good living, luckily Greene King would put people from the town in their pubs, so you were part of a community which was really really nice in those days. Unfortunately it's changed now it's all about food. Luckily there is one nice little pub left in the town, the Queens Arms which is still as a pub should be.

TC

So you found yourself into Mildenhall. You brought Connie up here to live and presumably you are in a proper house by this time?

MK

Yes one of the new council houses we were given, part of the contract if you like to come to Mildenhall.

TC

There was an "Overspill" scheme at that time.

MK

Yes that's right the houses were part of that "Overspill" scheme and we were moved into the very first block which was on the end of Trinity Avenue, it's still there obviously now. The original Trinity Avenue finished where? Difficult to say. Past Scott Avenue round about that area and then the new houses started in Trinity Avenue, then I think Pembroke Close, Peterhouse Close to gradually spread. And of course it was all on what had been University lands, Cambridge University lands so the streets were named after the University's. [t that time I was using a little pub just across the road called The Globe which no longer exists and one of the regulars who came into there was Bill Abbs who at that time he was sort of manager of Haggars the bakers in the town in the High Street facing towards the Market place and he was a cricket man we got talking in the pub and unfortunately I must have given him the impression that I could play cricket because I was invited along to a AGM. There weren't many people there, probably maybe sixteen, twenty at the most. One or two of those people (do you want me to mention names?)

TC

Yes please do

MK

Yes one or two people there at that time. I think the Chairman was Ken

TC

Oh yes Ken Tate

Mk

Yes that's right and he was Chairman. The President was Major Neve. I think Michael Clarke was secretary and then other members were Roger Pendleton, Steve Cooke, Courtney Hicks. I don't know whether..

TC

And probably my predecessor John Lawes?

MK

Who's that oh John Lawes, he was a big part of the club? He was captain on a Saturday, the Saturday cricket. He was a local business man. I think he was a rep selling eggs for a company called Sapper?

TC

I don't know

MK

From Fornham St Martin and he had quite a big motor car in those days, so he could pack five or six of us in to go to away matches. He liked a beer himself, there was no drink driving in those days, so we had some good evenings coming home.

TC

So your first experience of going up to the old ground at St Andrews Street?

MK

Yes because that was very basic unfortunately that was shared with the local football club and they had it from the end of September till about Easter in mid-April and of course by the time it was handed to us it had been badly cut up, quiet muddy. We then had to renovate the centre area, which had been the football centre circle, and try and bring that back to some sort of cricket square and the first thing we did as soon as the footballers finished we had to flood the centre with water to soften it up, well down and then we would fork the area which was probably wide enough for four, five strips? Pitches. And we would fork it all that and again flood it and then on the following week. We had on the ground a large cast iron roller which originally had been intended to be pulled by a horse, but it was arranged that half a dozen of us or as many as would turn up would come along about half past ten on the following Sunday morning. Bill Abbs would be on the tiller on the front and up and down, up and down we'd go.

And we think uh Oh that's right in those days' pubs for Sunday lunches were open between twelve and two and at twelve o'clock we would hear the church clock ring or church bell we said yes we are done and Mr Abbs would say we will have another half an hour and eventually that was finished we would leave it to dry out and as you can imagine when we came to start playing cricket it was still very soft and the other unfortunate thing because the square as we called it, was the centre circle for the soccer pitch it had been marked out with creosote which meant there was quite a few marks into the pitch and was very difficult to get rid of. I think by the end of, by about the end of June July somewhere about then it would be a reasonable surface, not dangerous and it was quite a small outfield as well, the swimming pool wasn't there. What else is there now?

We had a very old shanty type dressing room, just a green wooden hut with a flap on the front which you lifted up to get some daylight and the scorer would sit there and also there was, what would you call it? A boiler, gas, calor gas

TC

For tea?

MK

Yes for tea, we would fill that with water and then off we'd go

TC

Changing facilities?

MK

Oh non-existent really just a little dark room each for the home team and the away team. It did have a window with a shutter on. You could remove the shutter and give us a little light, There was no actual lighting as such.

TC

My recollection was it was almost like a corridor the changing room.

MK Yes that's right. To get eleven big boots in there, mind you people didn't have those enormous cricket bags and boxes. You could almost bring your kit along in a carrier bag.

TC

The kit was provided by the club?

MK

Yes the actual pads bats and batting gloves and wicketkeepers gear was given as you say by the club and it was all put in a large brown holdall and anybody who did particularly badly in the match was made to re pack the bag at the end of the game. But with the boiler making the tea we would fill it up and get it going. Sometimes when we were out fielding without us knowing it, it would run out of gas and of course when we trooped off at tea time we got very cold tea. But you know that's how it was grass roots cricket really and we really enjoyed ourselves and then.

TC

There was a, if I remember when I came. I came a few years after you there was an equipment hut down the bottom.

MK

Yes that's right. There was sort of what we called a Nissen hut which was like a curved steel building which we kept mowers, I say mowers, we had a mower I think to start with I think the council cut the outfield for us. We did eventually buy a new set of gang mowers. Ransom gang mowers, we bought them from David Powell or his father John Powell who had a small business at Worlington, just behind where the old Post Office use to be. They were very good to us, any time we had problems with machinery they would be there fix it and we would carry on working, David is still around he lives in the Street in Barton Mills. His father John is long gone. I remember there was quite a family of Powells one ran a pub in West Row and another one worked for Cocksedges, they had quite a family.

TC

When you started playing, or started joining the cricket club, presumably you started at the beginning of the season?

MK

Yes that's right

TC

What was training or net practice or anything like that?

Mk

Well there was a strip of concrete as I remember laid towards the top end of the field where the wooden hut was and there was a small brick building which was our toilet for both us and the football club of course and But I don't remember nets very much at all I did lay two more strips down the bottom of the field using some concrete that was supposed to be used on one of the factories I think and we tried to, we bought some netting and tried to practise down there, but this was coming towards the end of our time at the ground because several people Mike Clarke, Brian Vale, John Lawes , Courtney Hicks several of these people for some years had been running bingo in the town and to try and raise funds to possibly buy a piece of land to make our own cricket ground.

TC

So that was already being muted when you first joined?

MK

Yes, unfortunately Bill Abbs who was by that time maybe Chairman didn't think it was quiet the thing for a cricket club to do, run bingo. He was not exactly over ruled but the, it went ahead anyway. It started very very small, in a place which was called the clubroom at the back of the White Hart hotel. It wouldn't hold many people but straight away it was quiet popular. The ladies of the town and thereabouts came along and gradually it grew until we moved into the old town hall, which was situated about half way down St Andrews Street where there are some new flats now.

TC

I believe it was called Cobblers Court at one time? I don't believe it still retains that name.

MK

Is it, I think the problem with the old town hall was that the walls had started to bulge out so I think the roof might crush the whole lot? I think we had some dinner dances in there?

TC

Yes there were some dinner dances or supper dances as they were called in those days. I remember when I joined the club they were going strong.

MK

That's it yes, but then from there, in the town was a cinema called The Comet after the aeroplane that flew from Mildenhall to Australia and luckily we were very friendly with the lady who was manageress Mrs Morley and we agreed with her that we would go to the cinema on Friday night, just one night a week and run the bingo there. I think the cinema held a couple of hundred people?

TC

My recollection is twice as many as that

Mk

Was it

TC

I think it could get four hundred in at a squeeze.

MK

It became very very popular and people would come from Brandon and far a fields to play and we had this devise, which Mike Clarke most of the time, other people took their turn which was up on the stage which was where the screen was and it held table tennis balls which were various colours and were numbered. I think they went up to ninety as I recall and the balls would drop out of the front and Mike would call out the number and place it on this little hole on this machine, unfortunately occasionally when we use to play a line across a card and the ladies would mark off the numbers. When you got a line it would stop and be checked and then occasionally Mike would press the button on the top which allowed all the balls to drop which wasn't supposed to happen until the end of the game, so of course there was panic then that had to be sorted out. But it was very very successful.

TC

I remember the machine being called The Golden Goose.

MK

That's right it was, it had the Golden Goose painted on the front yes as I say it was very successful and we eventually raised round about £7000. Something like that and the Sports Council as it was at that time would give you two pounds for every one you'd raised, so we finished up with round about twenty one, twenty two thousand pound something like that which was a lot of money in those days and that was used to purchase a piece of land from Bernard Parker a local miller. I think originally there was thirteen acres but we couldn't afford the whole thirteen so we bought nine, and he kept a little triangular piece which finishes down to the Wamil, towards the Wamil, what's called locally the Wamil. We then had to organise a contractor to come in with bulldozer to do a lot of levelling, grubbing out trees roots and burning out lots and lots of trees

TC

Did you see the site before anything was done?

Mk

Yes it was basically what I would have called it almost water meadow. I am told by local people at that time you will never play cricket there it's always been to boggy it floods, but I think what had changed a river had been cut or a canal

TC

It was called it the cut. They call it the cut

Mk Yes the cut that's right and I think, I don't know but that may have contributed to draining the land, because also I was told by locals in olden days when the river flooded it would back up all the way up Mill Street as far as Lloyds Bank but that didn't happen or that hasn't happened since we have been on the ground. I have had a couple of autumns, not autumns, springs more where if it's been very very wet we have had puddles laying on there. But anyway the contractor spent two or three weeks down here grading the surface, getting it nice and flat. Before he slip sowed grass seed, we had, we organised stone picking and I think players, wives, children all came along with a bucket and we gradually worked our way across the field picking up all the larger stones which would have damaged machinery. That was great fun, tea was organised and things like that and then eventually the field was seeded that was in the September of seventy.

TC

Was the square prepared at the same time or done separately?

MK

No he did the square at the same time. There was just one guy, his friend. I say friend, labourer. Yes they levelled it. We were given advice. The contractors name was a guy called Keith Maider a very very nice man , he bought a caravan on to the site and as I said he spent two or three weeks there. We also got advise from a man named Louis Cave an elderly gentleman I think he would be called an agronomist he was an expert on grass and he came an looked at the situation and to make up the foundation of the square he advised us that we wouldn't need drainage and having walked around the whole area, he did one or two tests at various times he told us that the soil on the riverbank was very very fertile of a type that would make up the square, give us a good cricket square, normally you would have used a heavy clay but he didn't think we needed that and the soil was fertile because in years past I believe it was navigable, barges were pulled up to Mildenhall from what the West Row direction because there was a gas works in Mildenhall and they brought coal or coke to the gasworks and so they kept the river dredged and all these dredging's were just dumped on the riverbank and it was very very fertile soil. So that was brought back and the square was levelled and raked and raked and raked and got nice and flat and that was seeded with a special grass and the contractor moved away and it was left to us. As I say that was September seventy. We were still playing at that time on the old ground, sharing the ground with the football club and come the spring of seventy one I think Mike Clarke and I maybe one or two others walked down here we realised suddenly we'd got all this grass to cut at the same time as maintaining the old ground and as I say we had our own gang mowers by then and we bought an old Ferguson tractor from a gentleman named Brigadier Ashburner who at that time owned Wamil Hall and I would drive through the town with these gang mowers on the back, driving from the old ground down past where the old Ex Serviceman's club used to be . Became the Social club, but that has been demolished now. Through the town along the West Row road, down Wamil Way to the cricket ground and I would proceed to mow both the fields or the whole area. I would get down here sometimes and it would suddenly pour with rain, so back I went haven't to leave it until the next day and I did this all though the spring and summer of seventy one. At the same time Mike Clarke was keeping the square tidy, mowing that keeping that neat.

TC

Were you having to bring mowers down to do that at that time?

MK

Yes, but eventually, I not sure, it might have been the winter of seventy one, Mikes brother David Clarke son of Richard who was a small builder in the town. Mike sorry David had started to build us a pavilion which was started on a raised bank. This was another one of Mike Clarke who of course was an architect and the supervisor of the whole site. Mike had thought of this idea of pushing a bank of soil up and we could put the pavilion up on top giving us a nice view over the whole area and David also laid a platform of concrete in the opposite corner of the ground, towards the West Row side of the ground. He laid a platform of concrete and we moved the old Nissen hut from the shared ground down to Wamil and we were able to keep our machinery and the tractor in there and that saved the journey through the town.

TC

And that Nissen hut is still in use. Nearly fifty years later

MK

Oh yer it wasn't new then I think we bought it off the war department, it was sought of an army type thing. I don't know, Mike could probably found that, From then on at the time that first summer, spring and summer of seventy one we realised we had this grass to cut. So I said look I'll make a start on it and I'm still doing it. I don't know what it is 2019 quite a long time

TC

We are approaching fifty years twenty twenty two I think will be fifty years since we started down here

Mk

Yes Seventy two was the first game. It's all been very successful, we've got quite a good name for the standard of our facilities, the pitch, the outfield and it was just a nice place to be. I enjoyed very much spending time down here.

TC

I think in the early days you roped your father in. He helped didn't he?

MK

Yes father, my father moved down to Mildenhall as he'd had been living on his own and was quite lonely so he came to Mildenhall and he would come. I had an old Labrador then, he would come to my house get the dog and he would come down to the cricket ground. He would dig soil to repair the bowler's damage He also helped out on the customer's side of the bar. Like me he liked his beer. You know it sort of grew and grew, the strength of the cricket improved. I think playing on a much better surface helped generally you know. I think with the batting. I know myself I found batting much more enjoyable here than it had ever been on the old ground because without getting to technical the ball came onto the bat, which it never did on the old ground

TC

So going back to recollections on the old ground and when you first joined the club. Who were the star players of then?

MK

We had several. The team overall had been quite weak at that time. We had one or two useful players. Our big rivals Lakenheath were a very strong team, they had some excellent cricketers and they would usually give us a good hiding, but we had, I remember Michael Finnis one of a family of brothers, I think there was a sister as well?

TC

There was two sisters

MK

Michael Finnis was a very good bowler. We had a young lad whose father kept the Volunteer pub Brian Reeve he was a good bowler quite a hard hitting bat and other people came along and played for a season or so. Beverly Labbett who I think his mother was possibly a school teacher.

TC

Yes I understand she was a school teacher in the town

MK

But Beverley was stylish batsman I think he must have been at Uni or something like that. He was class compered to us you know, but he didn't play for us regularly. He played for us when he was back at home. We had a guy come from London who was a very very good cricketer but dare I say it was a little bit of a rogue.

TC

I know who you are going to talk about.

MK

His name was Pyne, Ron Pyne I believe he had played cricket for Surry seconds. He was that sort of standard. He was a really really good batsman, he could bowl leg spin if necessary and he could also keep wicket very well and when he played for us we had quite a good strong team. He didn't stay in the town I suppose he was here about five years maybe or a bit more, then he moved on, Since then we've had various people join us who have been useful cricketers from different parts of the country came to Mildenhall for a season or two moved on. But we always had, what would you call it? A base of good solid club men who were the foundation of this club. The gentleman who I am speaking to now Tony, came along a year or so after me, and straight away was involved in the running of the club. Other people Roy Young.

TC

There was more of a nucleus of local people.

MK

Oh yes very much, Roy Young, Ray Crane they both worked at Lloyds Bank at that time. Brian Vale I mentioned earlier on he, I think he was on the committee in those early days when I came. He was a small builder and was quite busy.

TC

And John Lawes who you spoke about, he was a batsman as I recall

MK

John was a useful batsman, I wouldn't say a classy batsman, but then on the sort of pitches we were playing on at that time. Unfortunately John who had a great deal to do with raising of the money for the new ground totally dis-involved himself when we started to move to here and I don't think I have ever seen him since. I think Mike Clarke might have met him once or twice, but it was sad really, because he had been really one of the guiding forces behind everything and left, and moved away. I believe he is up in Lincolnshire I was told.

TC

Going back. You said the club was not much more than a village side when you joined it and there was the infamous day when you played at Histon in 1966.

MK

As I said our batting was not the strongest and we went to play at Histon near Cambridge, nice cricket pitch, I think it was part of also their sports complex, a football ground. They had a very nice club house and this particular day. I don't know whether we won the toss and decided to bat, but anyway we batted first. I can't remember to much detail about the game except that I think we were finally bowled out for twenty one

TC

Twenty one I think is in the record books

MK

Twenty one and there was nine ducks was there.

TC

I believe there was possibly only two people who scored runs

Mk

I think extras was probably one of the higher scores.

TC

I take it, it wasn't you who highest scored.

MK

I managed to get one of the round shaped figures, but that evening after, we had a great time with them they were a smashing bunch actually Histon we got very very friendly with them and when they came to play us on a bank holiday Monday and after the game, one particular game we trooped down to the Ex Serviceman's club to drink, we were invited there by the chairman old Fred Locke because the club was struggling and they were losing members, people aging and at that time they did not allow children in there, I am not sure they even allowed women.

TC

I think when I joined the club two years after yourself ladies were just beginning to be accepted to there, I think that was the case.

MK

Well this particular occasion we trooped down there after the cricket match, I can't remember the result of the game but they had a wicketkeeper a smashing lad named Bill Thoday, and his wife always came with him and somebody, for some reason or other we spotted a piano in what was called the cycle shed in one end of the club room and it was found that Bill Thoday's wife was a pianist. I think she was what they called a busking type, she didn't necessary play from music.

TC

Played by ear was the term?

Mk

Probably, I think she could read music?

TC

I remember, her name was Cynthia

Mk

Cynthia, that's right, a smashing girl. And so half a dozen of us grabbed this piano and moved it down to the bar end of the building and she played for us that evening and we had a wonderful time, best of all the original members who were probably pensioners, sitting around, probably just sit there in the evening maybe play dominoes. But she would play their type of music as well as ours and they loved it and I think the committee of the club realised that this could be a good thing and they started to have little by little entertainment occasionally. There was a duo called Nibs and Jo, Nibs Audus and his drummer and occasionally we would have, I don't know whether you would call it a rock band, but they , Silver Ace do you remember them?

TC

I do

MK

And they would play more of the sixties type music and that was really the making of the social club. But that all happened around the time we were due to move down to our own building our own clubhouse so we left and had our own super evenings in the club pavilion.

TC

Previously there had been no alcohol on the ground so we retired to the social club or Ex Servicemen's club for our drinking after the game, was a regular thing.

Mk

Prior to that I remember that when I first came they use to walk through by what use to be the pits do you know the cemetery and they use to go into the Maids Head which was a nice pub, nice Greene King pub. Gary and Ivy Willis were the custodians there. Gary was one of first people to do food in the town and the meals were very very good. The food had a good name for it. Ivy his wife loved gossip and she wanted to know everything that was going on in the town so she would slid along the bar and listen to what was being said. But eventually we left there and we were invited to the Ex Servicemen's club.

TC

So you joined Mildenhall you got involved came down here and cut the field when we first got here and that was your future.

MK

Well yes, I worked for about thirty years in the town for Bussens and Parkins who were famous ironmongers, builder's merchants. They always said if you can't buy anything from anywhere else go to Bussens, which we kept all strange items you know for years you were able to go and get fire parts and all sorts of funny things and because it was so near to the cricket ground I could wander through in my lunch break and do a bit of mowing, bit of rolling where ever and then at five o'clock I could go home and have a meal, come back down and spend the evening till dark,. One of the great pleasures I always had was when I put the machines away and walking back to get to my car. I use to stop, look back and think that's nice, that does look nice and over the years I have quite a lot of compliments from town's people saying what a nice place it is its one of the better parts of Mildenhall. We are lucky because we have the river Lark as one of our boundaries and then the other three sides of the ground, over the years we planted many trees. Originally we had a lovely row of, what were the ones that got? Elms, they got Dutch Elms disease. After two or three years we found the Elms had all got the disease and they all had to be felled which is a great pity and they still keep trying to come back, they get to about ten feet then die again. So we replaced them with other types of trees and now the whole circle around the ground is trees

Tc

Its beautifully landscaped isn't it

MK

Oh yes it's a really nice place and that's another thing I always think that when people come to play at Mildenhall bringing their families it's a nice place to come to, they are going to have a nice day here. We have always been a nice social club, sociable club. Unfortunately that side of cricket is fading quite a bit now People don't tend to stop long after the cricket they may have one drink and off they go. I think that's a lot to do with drink driving of course. In the early days we were here until all times sometimes twelve, one o'clock in the morning. We had to be aware of the local constabulary. We always got on alright with them I think

TC

I think we did

MK

Yes

TC

OK it's been lovely reminiscing and talking about the past and how you got involved with the cricket club. I know you have spent many year since manicuring the ground

MK

And I had twenty five years on the committee Well the funny thing was that first AGM I was invited onto the committee, nobody knew me but I was , I think it was Roger Pendleton who

said I think we ought to have Mike Kill on the committee. I said thank you very much but you don't know me I'll wait until another year, but I stayed on for another twenty five years and then stood down to allow newer people to have a bit of a say on to the running of things, sorry |I interrupted you.

TC

No, no that fine and its good I have appreciate all that you said and we will finish on that note , but with the proviso that perhaps we will sit down and talk about then and now at some stage. How we see cricket now compared to how it was in the old days, but that's for another day

Mk

Well I don't know if that's a good idea actually cricket has changed so drastically not necessary to my liking and dare I say it I regard myself as an old fart who's totally out of touch with what happens now so I just enjoy sitting in the corner watching the excellent standard of cricket what's played.

TC

Well I couldn't possibly add to that Mike so I think that's a good time to say thank you very much and thanks again for you time

Mk

OK