

A talk given to North Kyme schoolchildren by Mrs Nora Everard on 6th May 1998
when she was 85 years of age.

First children I would like to tell you about something that we did a long time ago; over 40 years, so we will start at the beginning and lead up to it.

When I came to live at North Kyme I came as the District Nurse. A District Nurse goes into people's homes where there is illness to help to make people better, mothers, fathers and children. My most important job of all was to look after the new babies. I came to North Kyme School to look at children for spots and rashes and also to look at children's hair.

I was nursing for a few more years before I married Mr Horace Everard. We had three children; all boys. As the boys were growing up I wondered what I could do to help to keep them out of mischief, because most little boys and girls get into mischief at some time.

I decided to try to start a scout group with scouts for the older boys and cubs for the younger ones. I thought that this was a good idea, but there was no hut for them to meet in and no land to put one on, and more important, no money to buy these things with. Because of this I decided to run whist drives in my own home. Whist is a card game that is not played very much nowadays. Now it's all bingo. I then wrote to the brewery that owned "The Plough" public house to ask them if they would sell a piece of land to the rear of the pub. It was derelict land, full of weeds and rubbish. The bungalows that you see there now were not built then.

After waiting a while the reply came to say that we could buy the land for £50. I wrote to Kesteven Education Committee asking for a donation and they sent me £30. A farmer in the village gave me another £30. That bought the land.

Next we read in "The Sleaford Standard" of a sale of wooden huts at Cranwell aerodrome. Mr Horace Everard and his father went to see them. Some were too small, some were too big, but 2 were just the right size to fit on the piece of land. They bought one for North Kyme.

Then we needed more money I was told that there was some money in the bank belonging to North Kyme village. It was left over from events that had been arranged to give teas to the village for a Royal Wedding or a Coronation. I asked if the scouts could have the money and they said that they would have a village meeting about this. We had a meeting in the school. 46 people came and all agreed that we could have the money, so I told the villagers that the hut would be big enough for all the village to use, for weddings, parties and concerts etc.

So now we had the hut and the men of the village came every night to help to put it up. They helped Mr Everard to take it down at Cranwell first and load it onto his lorry to bring it here. It was wonderful how the men worked after a hard day on the land and they all gave their services free of charge. One man put on the water to the toilets and taps in the kitchen. One put in the electric lighting and they painted the inside. The committee had been started to run the project and it gave raffle and whist drive prizes with refreshments. They were a wonderful lot of people.

When we opened the scout hut, which you probably know nowadays as the village hall, there were 10 boys from North Kyme, 3 from Billingham, and 2 from South Kyme. Everything went well.

The Women's Institute used the building until it faded away and the Derby & Joan Club still use the hut. It is still used for weddings, parties, concerts and church suppers.

About 14 years ago a flourishing vegetable and craft show started in the village hall and it is still doing well. After a few years the scouts got an invitation to go camping on the Queen's estate at Sandringham and so we had to buy a tent. We got a round army tent second hand. Mr Everard got his lorry out and put a metal frame over it with a lorry sheet over the frame in case it rained on the way to Norfolk. It was a long way and when he arrived Mr Everard helped to put up the tent before returning home. The following Saturday he went back to fetch them all back.

Things went on well for a short time longer but then tragedy struck. Our assistant scout master was standing at the back of his van when a learner driver crashed into him and broke both his legs. He was in hospital for a long time and when he came out he had to give up scouting. His wife had been the club mistress, but they had to leave the village as they took on a shop.

The scout master, Mr Andrew kept on as well as he could for a few years but then he had to give up and although we tried to find someone else to take over, we had no luck and so the North Kyme Scouts came to an end. The only thing left is their hut. They had paraded on St George's Day in Sleaford and Ruskington and they looked grand with the flag held high, marching along.

The scouts have come and gone like a lot of things. Our baker has gone. The last one was Mr Wilson who retired to go back to Billingham and live near his son Barry. Before that it was Mr Skelton. He trained a Kyme boy to be a baker so that he could have a shop and bake house of his own in Horncastle. Before that the baker's shop (now the Coach House Restaurant) had been a public house called "The Chequers". There were two public houses side by side in the middle of the village. That was strange. There was another public house called the "Red Cow" on the road to South Kyme. Just fancy 3 pubs in little Kyme. They must have thought that we were thirsty people in Kyme.

We had a blacksmith to shoe the horses, but now all the horses have gone. Now there are only tractors and no high sided carts like the horses used to pull. So the big cart wheels that the wheelwright Mr Brook made were no longer wanted. We had a tiny field opposite "The Plough" pub called the Pound. If a horse got out of its field and came into the village someone would shoo it into the Pound and the farmer who owned the horse would know where to look for his escaped animal. Now all the horses have gone and the little field was sold to the man at the post office Mr Tory. It is now the site of a new bungalow.

We had a cobbler. The first cobbler was at a house near the post office. It said "Boot and Shoe Repairer" over his window. The next cobbler had a wooden hut on the car park. Through the war the village had a Home Guard. The older men of the village took it in turns to walk around the village at night in case fire bombs were dropped. The men on duty used the cobbler's hut to have a hot drink or shelter if it was raining.

The milkman came round with a big can of milk and would measure out half a pint or a pint into the jug that you had ready for him. Now of course the bottles of milk are much nicer.

When I first came to North Kyme in 1936 there were no footpaths and no street lighting as we have now. The brick building of the school on the road side is 132 years old. The church is 121 years old. Now before the church was built if you wanted a wedding, christening, funeral or church service you had to walk to South Kyme Church, unless you were lucky enough to have a horse and trap. This was in the days before motors. They kept a few pews ready for North Kyme people at South Kyme.

The Ferry Lane had a bridge going over the river when I first came to Kyme and you had to pay to go over it. Later the council took it over and so we didn't have to pay any more.

Through the years we have had different concert parties, both before and after the war, with village people taking part in these.

We have had 11 clergy since the church was built and the Reverend R Abraham is the 12th. When the church was first built it was a chapel of ease. The church came under South Kyme. It took until my time to get this changed to North Kyme Church. This had to be done by parliament and the first time the change was not allowed. It was passed the second time around.

We also had a chapel. The first one was one tiny room. It was turned into a house with a bit built on the back. The chapel built after that was well built and had electric light. There was a good attendance for a long time, but then families moved away and as the congregation got less. The few that were left could not afford the new roof that was needed and the building was sold to a builder. He pulled it down and built two houses on the land.

Mr Walter Everard had a mill to grind the corn that the farmers brought to him by horse and cart. The farmer would tether the horses to a ring in a big Horse Chestnut tree. The children came to gather the conkers when they fell to the ground in the autumn.

Before the war the village had a football team. Mr Walter Everard took them to play other villages in his lorry. After the war another team was formed. Their colours were green shirts with yellow collars and black shorts. The school team still have green shirts today. This team was called North Kyme United. The first football field was in Mr Machin's field next to the petrol station. Mr Drury's field was also used for football. One field used was on the corner, turning to Billingham. It belonged to "The Plough" public house. The Sunday football team, North Kyme Panthers used that field. The Saturday football team closed down in 1969 and has not been started up again since.

The pumping station at North Kyme pumps water out of the fields and dykes and into the river Skirth to stop flooding. It was changed from steam to electricity in 1945. The water flows away from North Kyme into the Skirth and into the River Witham. There was a pump at North Kyme as far back as 1854.

In the next village, Billingham, they had a big fair with swings and roundabouts every year. When they were moving on a few used to stop in North Kyme, at Mr Machin's field. After a few years they said that it didn't pay to stop at North Kyme. Most of the children went to Billingham anyway and lots of the parents went there to meet up with friends and relations.

We had an agricultural show each year in Mr Skinner's field. It was lovely to see the horses jumping over the hurdles. The trade stands were good and there were classes for judging animals. People from all the villages around came to North Kyme to enjoy a day out. The farmers from North Kyme, South Kyme and Billingham formed a committee to organise the whole show. Cups and riding whips were given for different events.

The first show was in aid of the Red Cross. We think it started in 1947 and continued until 1953. The horses had their manes and tails plaited and tied with coloured ribbons, they were all groomed and decorated with horse brasses all shining and bright. What a wonderful sight.

Farm wagons, drays and carts shiny with glossy paint and pulled by some of the finest specimens of Clydesdale, Percheron and Shire horses anyone could wish to see.

Cups were presented to the winners of :-

1. The best cart horse.
2. The best 4 year old and upwards mare or gelding.
3. The neatest and cleanest farmer's turnout of colts and filly's.
4. Rig classes.
5. Lincoln Red cattle.
6. Best beef cow.
7. Best dairy cow.
8. Best pony and rider.
9. Fancy dress on horseback.
10. Vegetables, bread, cakes and eggs.

Hundreds of people turned out to see it all. What a wonderful day out – I wish it was still here for us all to enjoy.

In the village there were cottages with thatched roofs. The last one, opposite the post office, was pulled down for a brick house to be built. Another cottage, where the school playing field is, just crumbled away.

Before the war we had a tennis court and a bowling green in the village opposite the church gate. Now a new bungalow is built there. We do have indoor bowling in the village hall nowadays.

A river runs through Kyme and joins the river through Billingham. This has not changed, but how things do change in a little country village. The horses are missed and noisy traffic and tractors replace them.

I hope that you will remember what I have told you about North Kyme children.

Goodbye children.