**MILLER Lesley**

**Introduction for the recording and the transcript.**

This recording is part of the oral history project carried out by the Suffolk Horse Society in 2013 with advice from Cambridge Community Heritage, and a generous grant from the Heritage Lotteries Fund.

In the recording you will hear the voice of Miss Lesley Miller describing her memories of the Suffolk Punch heavy horse.

Lesley is a retired farmer, breeder and horsewoman

The recording was made by Hilary Cadman, a member of the Suffolk Horse Society.

The date of the recording was 23rd August 2013 and it was carried out at her home at Ramsey Forty Foot, Cambridgeshire.

The duration of the recording is about 42 minutes.

Lesley Miller

Hilary This is Hilary Cadman for the Suffolk Horse History project, here with Lesley Miller of Ramsey in Cambridgeshire. Good morning Lesley.

Lesley Hello Hilary, how are you?

Hilary Fine. Lesley, tell me; Where were you born and when?

Lesley I was born in Sutton, where near Sutton, Melton in 1941. My birthday is in March. My father farmed a tenant farm on the Quilter estate, of about 300 acres, and we were brought up there as children, and it was an amazing place to be brought up, because it is such a lovely area, a very beautiful area. We used to be right down to the River Deven, which was hence my father’s prefix. My father ended up with Suffolks, I think probably because my relatives had had Suffolks and also other heavy horses, and I am jumping about.

Hilary It doesn’t matter just...

Lesley If I go back to the beginning. My father was actually born in Iceland, his parents were missionaries. My grandfather was a civil engineer who had gone out as a missionary to set up a missionary station, and he met my grandmother out there, and my father and his family were brought up, until they ready to go to secondary education, and then my grandfather brought the family back and they farmed then Asington House, which is now Sudbury, and the children then went to Subdbury grammar school. I think er... I am not sure what horses my grandfather had, but he definitely had horses, but they were possibly were Suffolks, or they were probably mix breed horses as a lot of the younger, or older horses were.

 When my father finished school he went to college, taking an agriculture course and then went out to work for a big company, again in East Africa, and then later on he took his own farm in East Africa and he farmed tobacco and dairy cattle. He won several cups with his dairy cattle I think. He came back in either 1936, or 1937 and took over Pettistree Hall farm at Sutton, which was on the Quilter estate, it is a tenant farm of about 300 acres, and goes right down to the river Deven.

 He bought his first horses I think... first Suffolk pedigree horses in 1938, two mares and then he also got married that year. And from then onwards he always bred horses. The horseman that I remember is a chap called Bob Ward, who was... He used to break all the young horses and also show the horses and work the horses. I remember my brother as a very small boy walking up behind the furrow, when Bob was ploughing with a pair of horses. I also remember my father taking Liz, my next sister and myself to the sales in Ipswich. They used to do the showing beside the pitch of the Ipswich Football Club, in Portland Road, and then the horses used to cross the road and go in the Sperling and Hempson sale yard, and we were told to be very quiet and not move, in case we bought a horse by accident. Not that we ever did. [laughs]

Hilary So your father was breeding horses, breaking horses, selling them on as well.

Lesley Yes. Yes.

Hilary And how many did he use on his land?

Lesley That I don’t remember, there was always at least a pair working, but he... obviously because it was the beginning of the war, there were also tractors on the farm as well. But there was always horses about, and there were always mares and foals about.

Hilary And was he showing them?

Lesley He showed them... Probably not in the early days, but later on, in fact, I remember we used to have a lorry from Carters who used to be based at Melton, they used to take the horses to the shows. We used to go to the Woodbridge Show and Framlingham Show always, occasionally Hadley, but erm... and also the Suffolk Show. And Framlingham, we usually took mares and foals... At Framlingham, I remember we also used to take the ponies and also to Woodbridge. And in fact Liz and I used to hack the ponies to Woodbridge while the Suffolks went on the lorry, and that used to be held just at the top of Woods Lane, in Melton, on a big field there. And I remember it snowing, because it used to be on Easter Monday. In those days you used to see a ring absolutely full of stallions which was absolutely stunning to see. Sadly nowadays you only see one or two stallions which is a great shame, but we have to remember the horses are spread all over the country now, which they were normally in East Anglia.

Hilary Do you know if the horses each have their own set of harness, and whether it was kept some..

Lesley I think the horses that worked probably did. I remember the stable which was a line of stalls, the horses were all tied up with a halter and a log, so that they could eat. There was a manger in front of them and a hay rack, and the hay was in the loft above, and then they would have been fed out of a bin, I think with a corn skip, and Bob used to feed the horses. There was also a chaff house behind the stable, where the chaff used to get put after threshing.

Hilary Were they stabled in the winter or in a yard?

Lesley Ours were stabled in the winter, they used to get let into the yard to drink. Some of the horses would have been yarded. The young horses were always yarded, although having said that, they were also wintered out on the marshes. I remember when the east coast floods were in 1953, the river Deven broke its banks, luckily then the house was on high ground, but in fact two sides of the farm was flooded, because the River Deven broke its bank, but also it flooded all up Shottisham creek, which is the other side of the farm. And all the marshes that were down there were flooded, and we used to have horses on the marsh in the winter. In fact, if I can remember, the only day we had off school for the floods in fact, we had to help rescue some of the horses that were belly deep in water, and take them down to a barn, which is called the Low Barn, but in fact it was higher than where the horses were standing. So they got put in yards down there.

Hilary That must have been quite traumatic at the time.

Lesley It was really something that I do remember quite vividly, I suppose because I was slightly older. The memory I have of the floods... After the water had gone down I really can’t get out of my mind all the dead worms lying white on top of the ground, and it actually took the land a long time to recover, because where we were the water was still salt, and so it contaminated all the ground, which took a long time to get right.

Hilary And took away grazing.

Lesley Yeah I think they had to crop the land to start with because it was so salt. In fact one of the other things I remember in the local paper, the East Anglian Daily Times, there was an article after the Suffolk Show in that year, because one of the horses that we rescued actually got third prize at the Suffolk Show. She was called ‘Deven Nylon’, and in fact she was one of the three foals that were born in 1951, when it was the great London Exhibition. My mother used to name the horses, and for some unknown reason they were called ‘Devon Nylon, Pylon and Skylon’, and Nylon was the one that was rescued.

 I think the others were sold on. Not... everyone was sold after two years. But the other thing I remember as kids we actually got into trouble, because we used to go down... We roamed the farm fairly freely and when all the men and machinery were working to repair the river bank, they also heightened it by six foot I think, to make sure it didn’t happen again. We used to go down to watch all the machinery working and I think the parents wondered where we were... Well we did get into trouble. It is very strange the things you do remember.

Hilary Do you remember the knacker coming to the farm at all?

Lesley No. I do remember the stallion being delivered by horse box, and all I remember is him being delivered because we used to get shushed out the way, we were not allowed around when that happens. But father used to breed one or two foals, sometimes three every year, so there was always a few mares in foal.

Hilary And I think your father’s brother was quite involved in horses wasn’t he.

Lesley Yes my uncle William was actually quite a well known... a very well known vet in fact, he qualified in Glasgow and then he used to lecture at the Edinburgh Vet College, and he was the first director of the Animal Health Trust, or the Equine Research Station, as it was known then, and continued there until he retired. So he was very well known, and met the Queen on several occasions. I think at one stage he had got one of her... or Prince Phillip’s polo ponies they were looking after, and he also wrote several books. He... We always remember him as uncle William and he was, as I say, a very kind man as well as a very well known man.

Hilary And so what happened to your father’s farm?

Lesley As I say, he died in 1956 and the farm was taken back into the Quilter estate, but mother and us kids were allowed to live there, really for a peppercorn rent until we had all finished school. In fact mother stayed there until 1978. We obviously used to go backwards and forwards. In fact I worked on the Quilter estate for six years before I then joined the State Veterinary Service.

Hilary What were doing for Quilters?

Lesley I used to do a bit of everything, but mainly I was rearing the calves and looking after the young cattle. I used to release milk. I used to relieve the shepherd, and help the shepherd at lambing time, and also when he was clipping, and just general farm work, carting corn, making feed and all the rest of these things. And I actually loved it, but obviously the pay wasn’t very good, I was always very disgruntled because in those days I used to get paid women’s rates, and the men used to get more. And the fact that everything they did I could do, so I was quite peeved about that. Then eventually my sister was due to get married and she applied for a job at the Ministry, working for the State Veterinary Service, and then decided that it wasn’t going to suit her, so in fact I filled in the forms, and that’s how I came to be part of the State Veterinary Service.

Hilary And how did that pan out? Did you travel a lot?

Lesley I travelled within the job, but I also moved from one county to another. I started in the Peterborough area, and was in what used to be called Huntingdonshire, and the Holland part of Lincolnshire, both of which are now no more. I then moved back to Suffolk and worked in Ipswich for six years, before going up to the Royal Show ground to part time up there, at the show ground. I used to work on the live stock units with one of the vets, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I then took promotion and got moved down to Hertfordshire, where we had a very interesting job, as we used to go as far as the Thames, so we used to cover London, or parts of London. Also part of the East End of London, and also the city, and all sorts of areas. I enjoyed my time in Hertfordshire, there’s not too many people there. Far too many cars though. The office then closed and I ended up in Huntingdon, and then after I had been there another six years or seven years, they decided they were having another reorganisation, and the office was then going to close, and I would have had to move. So at that stage I decided I would take early retirement as mother was by then living with me, and I didn’t think it fair to move her around the country again. So erm... I took early retirement. I did a bit of horse sitting for about a year, and then I got a job with the local Equine Veterinary practice and worked for them as a veterinary nurse with the horses, for four and half years until I took final retirement.

Hilary Presumably during your period of being a State Veterinary Nurse, or in the service you covered horses as well as other livestock. did you?

Lesley No not really. I think imports and exports but very little otherwise, it was mainly dealing with [notro???] disease like foot and mouth, rabies, brucellosis, and cerotic bovine mycosis, BSE, which everybody knows about. Salmonella in chickens, all these sort of things. We were basically animal policemen sort of, but the vets got involved with welfare and we would do follow up welfare, but not on our own. And then as I say when I worked for the other vets, the equine vets, it was helping just look after the resident horses, also sometimes to go out with vets to do castrations and things like that, and helping at operations and cleaning, lots of dogs body kind of jobs, but I loved it. It was good fun. And I was amazed actually how ignorant some horses were. People spoil their horses, especially the light horses, they really are thoroughly spoilt, we had to teach them a lot of manners. But that’s how it goes. It happens with the heavy horses as well, I am afraid. Before I joined the Equine vets, I had actually bought my first Suffolk.

Hilary How did that come about?

Lesley I’d always had light horses, and I had always... Well for a long time I had bred light horses. I mean I used to have a Welsh Cob that I used to put to a thoroughbred stallion and get hunters, but the farmer where I kept the horses was very keen on the heavy horses. And he knew that I had a dream to buy a Suffolk, and he actually said to me ‘You go and buy a Suffolk, I will let you keep it rent free’. And he also introduced me to Bob Peacock, who I had kind of known on the edges of his life, because I was always interested in the Suffolks, and he encouraged me as well. So I started to look around for a horse and the prison at Hoseley Bay had actually got three to sell. So I rang up and went to have a look, and in fact they had got two older mares, and a two year old, and I thought there’s not much point really in buying an older mare if I want a horse for the future. So Bruce Smith took me to see Colin and Jean, and Maxine who was in the yard with several other horses, and he put a halter on her and walked her up a little bit and... we decided that... Well I decided that I perhaps would quite like her, so I came home and decided I would get her vetted. Actually in the meantime Bob Peacock had rung Bruce to make sure that I wasn’t buying the wrong horse, that I was buying the right horse. Just keeping an eye on me, as he was very good at doing. After having her vetted apparently she had a small hernia, so we decided that as long as the prison got that sorted that I would have her. I think my sister and I went down to have a look at her one day, before I actually brought her home, and I have got quite a nice picture of her with Bruce, before we brought her home. Eventually I went off with Norman Warrington in my lorry, a little lorry that was geared to Welsh Cobs and Bruce loaded her up, and we brought her home, and she never moved the whole way home. We didn’t know she was there. She was such a super, super mare.

 As I say I had had light horses, but never heavy horses, so we learnt a lot together.

Hilary So did you break her yourself?

Lesley Mhm. Bob really encouraged me. In fact I hadn’t had her that long and he just said ‘Oh you should take her to a show. Go off to Gorefield’. I said ‘Well. I can’t really do that’. So he lent me a bridle, he braided her up, packed Maureen and I off in the lorry, and we went off to Gorefield, which is near Wisbech. It is quite a well known heavy horse show, it is noted for Shires being the country of the Wards and various other Shire horse people. We arrived on this playing field and parked next to a trailer with a Shire horse and people came wondering what this lorry was with these two women. In fact one of the first people we met was Bob Clarridge, who was talking to Maureen saying ‘Who are you? What have you got?’ and Maureen was talking to him, and told him who my father was. He said ‘Well that’s all right then’. So that was quite nice to know, so we were in then. But Bob Peacock really helped me an awful lot, because it was it through and through a Suffolk man. He encourage... My original plan was just to breed from Gina and perhaps go to a few local shows. But he said ‘Oh no you should do more with her, you can work her’. At one of the farm sales that Marshal and I, the landlord, had been to, he said ‘Ooh there’s some harness there, you had better go and pick that up’, so we went to this sale and bought some harness. It was a bit of a jumble, but some of it was useable. I sort of messed about with Gina generally because she was a very quiet horse, and put bits of harness on her and she didn’t seem to bother. When I came to put the collar on, I thought well... I know they turn it upside down to start with and then, you have got to twist it... So I taught her to eat a polo when I was putting the collar on, so she put her head down, and she was always after that, really good about putting the collar on. Then I sort of walk her around with the harness on and she didn’t bother, and I started to long rein her, as I always long rein young horses anyway, so that wasn’t anything different. Then one of these days, I think there was somebody else with me and we managed to put a log behind her and started pulling a log around, and she was fine. Then I went to another sale and bought some harrows, so we put the harrows behind her, and she was such a good horse. In fact I... I bought her in 1996, this was when I started working for the vets as well... so erm... one day, so that we got practice. My friend and I took her to the vets and we harrowed all the paddocks there, and that got us a really good breaking in, both of us, me and the horse. [laughs]

 From then on Gina would work for anybody. We didn’t do much with her in shafts. I did get her broke into shafts, a chap called Terry Pinner did that for me, and he lives in Great Stukeley which is quite a busy village. We used to drive her all through the village and then I had her back, and then I bought a cart, and we used to drive around the village where I kept her, and up onto the airfield. But I never had transport to take the cart anywhere so we never did a huge amount with her.

Hilary But you used to take her to a lot of shows didn’t you.

Lesley We used to do a lot of shows and also working days. In the meantime I had joined Eastern Counties Heavy Horse Association. And in fact when I first had Gina they did a lot of training courses, with Dennis Hater, who used to be up at Banhams Zoo. Martin Goymour was very welcoming to anybody with heavy horses, and very free with his horses, his horseman and his facilities time. And Dennis was also the same, he was extremely good at teaching people. He taught me better how to braid... Bob had shown me how to braid, and I had practiced, but I... I honed my skills, if you like, at Banham. And also Dennis used to have us long reining horses and driving a horse in a wagon. And one of the days I actually took Gina to one of these training days, and Dennis had me long reining around the yard, and showed me how to do it, and also how to harness up properly, safely. It was all very good.

 As I say I found the heavy horse people so welcoming and helpful. The only time you had a bit of friction possibly was in the show ring, but when people get more competitive, but other than that they have been extremely kind and helpful.

Hilary And you bred from Gina didn’t you?

Lesley Yes. I had several foals from Gina. The first one I had, which was slightly frowned on... I put her to a thoroughbred for her first foal. I took her to a stallion that Martin Ward had in Sutton, near Ely actually, and he was er... a very nice foal. But we did take him to the Spectacular. We showed him a little bit, because there were a few mixed classes in this part of world, for mixed part bred heavy horses. I remember taking him to the East of England Show, because the catalogue didn’t specify that the horse had to be 100% Suffolk, and I remember a judge wasn’t too enamoured of judging him. But he was the only foal there, and the steward’s said ‘You have got to show the foal’.

 A friend of mine, who I knew in a riding club, paid me a deposit for him when he was three weeks old, because she desperately wanted another Suffolk cross, as she had had one in the past. She still has him. But he ended up a huge horse. He ended up 19hands, and far too big for what he should have been. Gina was barely 16hands and in fact the stallion was ‘Lo pearl’ and he was only 16.2. So we decided it was hybrid vigour, but also Gina was noted for her Suffolk foals being quite big as well. I think she must have had big breeding in her pedigree. Her second foal was called ‘Marshall’ after the farmer who encouraged me to have Gina – in fact he died in a flying accident a week before he was born – so it seemed appropriate to call him Marshall. I sold him on at 18 months and then went onto somebody else after that, but sadly he died of colic I think when he was five.

 Gina’s next foal was Mary, who was named after my mother, and obviously a filly, and in fact we showed her extensively and she did extremely well. In fact one of the highlights of my Suffolk career was taking her to Framlingham, which is quite a long way from where I live, and she ended up reserve champion, but she was champion foal, and champion mare and foal. And one of the cups that we won, I can’t remember which one it was now, it might have been the Newton Pratt cup, but my father had won previously, so that was very very emotional.

Hilary And you have used the same prefix as your father.

Lesley I do. Yes. I carry on with the Deven prefix, because I am the first one of the family to carry on, so that was allowed to carry on.

Hilary That was a good feeling.

Lesley That was a good feeling. No... As I say I’ve had several foals, and in fact I had two foals from Mary, who then went onto the Thomsons. She actually broke my arm, it wasn’t really her fault, she was being very protective of the foal, I had hold of her, and she said ‘I am not going to be tied up’ and squashed me against a post, which quite badly broke my arm. Some of you will have seen me around with my plaster on.

Hilary It happens.

Lesley Well it does. But she obviously bred Clover, another big horse, who the Buntings bought, after somebody else had her. There was one called Heather, whom I think is in Leicestershire. Mary had one called Maisy, her first foal and she is actually in Devon. I went down to see her recently. The vet has diagnosed her as a wobbler, but in fact she’s just had her first foal.

Hilary And a wobbler is?

Lesley It is incoordination of the horse, so they think it is damage to spine, probably in the neck, but in fact she has improved, so it may have been an injury. She was supposed to have been sold for a lot of money, when horses were making a lot of money, but the people who have got her now are called Nick Merrett, he has a dairy farm, and he was absolutely desperate to have a Suffolk horse. And Amanda said give him a ring and see what he ways. The family came up to see... the whole family came up to see her, and I said to them ‘She is supposed to be a wobbler, you are going to take a gamble whether you have her or not. I am not going to give her to you because I think I would rather that you paid me something. So they paid me £500. And this summer I have just been down to see her and she has a foal, a colt foal, and she seems to be fine. So she is quite sound, so that’s a good story.

Hilary One of the things that some people talk about is that perhaps Suffolk mares don’t breed quite so successfully these days, and there is an opinion about it is because they are not working like they did. What do you think of that?

Lesley I think a lot of them are far too fat, and I am probably guilty of that as much as anybody else, because they don’t do any work. I think when they were working, they were fitter, so they obviously weren’t fat. I am sure that they did breed more readily. I suppose the stallions were more fertile possibly because they were also working harder as well. In fact some people used to work the stallions. I know I had several chats to John Ellis, because he and I always got on extremely well, because he used to be, and his father was stud groom at Broxted, which was the Pooles’ estate, and because we were the other side of the road, if you like, on the Quilter estate, we had a lot in common. He said that they used to use stallions to pull their game cart. So I think also the stallions if they used to work as well, then they were obviously fitter as well. Nowadays most stallions just stand in a field or stand in a box so they don’t do anything to stay fit.

 I am going to go back a long way now.

Hilary Fine.

Lesley I am going back to Bob Ward days, I remember that we used to... Liz and I used to get to go down to the blacksmith’s with him, it was probably a mile and a half or so, and we used to get to ride the horses down, and he used to ride down as well. But I remember him once coming off and having to walk the rest of the way until we got to the blacksmiths. And we used to get to do the bellows, that the blacksmith, in those days in Sutton was actually called George Abbott, and the Abbott family... I think his brother used to run the local mill, and that was at Shotisham.

Hilary You were saying Bob Ward rode down to the blacksmiths, rather than the farrier.

Lesley Yes he used to do the shoeing down there.

Hilary Right.

Lesley That was something that was... It was a treat for us to go on the horses. Yeah. Have I told you about the cowman?

Hilary No.

Lesley We had two cowmen, I guess we had about, I don’t know, maybe 30 diary cows and they were mixed, all sorts of breeds but the cowman used to have a horse for carting around the yards. And I remember one they had was called Mavis, and she actually had ringbone I think, because she was a bit lame, but they still to use her just for light work, carting. And one of the jobs we... well we didn’t used to do the job, but the cowman used to do it. Father used to grow maize for the cattle, probably his heritage from working in Africa, and it used to be fed green in August, and they used to cut it and put it in the back of the tip cart, and then we used to get to sit behind the collar, when they were carting it out for the horses, and cattle. And they used to pull it off the back, and we just used to sit on the horse. I mean we weren’t doing anything. I am sure the horse was quite capable of doing it without us, but that was another little treat we used to get.

Hilary Did you ever hear at any time, anything about the sort of cures that some of the old horsemen had, frogs bone erm... any sort of secret cures.

Lesley Not really. I think we were probably too young. You have to remember I was only 15 when father died, so the horses went then, and I suppose we were too young to be chatting to Bob about what went on. In fact Tom Warne will always tell you that Bob Ward taught him what he knows about horses, so that was something else. Going on from that I remember when father died the horses went to the Ipswich sales obviously. I remember Harry Howe coming across the river from the Adam’s farm at Felixstowe to braid the horses for the sale, and I had been ‘helping’, and sort of brushed some of the horse off. And I remember I had trimmed up one of the horses tails, as we used to do the ponies so it was straight across. I think they call it ‘banged’, and you never do that for Suffolk horses. I’ve never forgotten that. It is quite interesting... I don’t know how I learnt to braid originally, but I was always braided tails, as they used to do in the old days, with the braid on the top of the tail, which is obviously how I learnt as a kid, because that’s how I always used to do the ponies and the hunters. And other people say ‘I don’t know how you do that’ but it just must have been the way I was taught, because it was obviously the way that Bob did it. But I don’t actually remember learning, it is just one of those things that you do. It is amazing how much you absorb by just being around the horses really.

Hilary So here you are today with two mares, very sadly lost a foal in the last two..

Lesley I’ve lost two foals in the last two years, which is bad news. Both first foals for the mares. One mare I had brought from Ireland, from Ray Kerr, and she is actually the half sister to Mary, Gina’s first filly foal, by the same stallion. And a very similar mare in many ways, but she wasn’t as foal proud. Her foal I had put down at five weeks. It took three of us to foal her because she... he was just too big a foal, and I think it damaged his hip, but also he trapped a nerve so he didn’t get enough colostrum I don’t think, because I used to get him up and let him have a drink but he probably didn’t... because he ended up with abscesses, so we just gave up. And this year, it was just... three and a half weeks late, and I think it just had starved. It was a very thin foal and I think the mare’s placenta hadn’t fed the foal well enough, which is a big shame. But hopefully both mares are in foal for next years so fingers crossed for then.

Hilary And I know that you... you’ve mentioned that you have got a lot of help from Bob Peacock, but I know that you, yourself have given a lot of encouragement, particularly to young handlers. And you are always willing to help out at shows and things so, you yourself have done a great deal in encouraging the next generation.

Lesley Yes I have tried. It is always good to help other people. And I had so much support when I first had the Suffolks. I’ve had several young girls come and help and they have done young handler with Gina and Mary, and in fact the two I have got now. The young girl I’ve got now is Abby Starlick and she is actually a terrific help, especially at the moment as I have got a broken wrist. Another story. And she loves working the horses. In fact we’ve had Queenie at several events and she has been harrowing with her. And the other thing we do, we go to schools, and school fetes, anywhere people want us. We have been to the Lords Show a couple of times, on the Rare Breeds stand. In fact we took Gina with her first Suffolk foal up there and spent four days at the show. I think anything you can do to promote the Suffolk horse, particularly in an area that is not noted for them, although you actually do see people. ‘Oh my father used to have Suffolk horses. Oh we used to have them’. The other thing you get is ‘What sort of Shire is this Suffolk?’ Well it is not. I just think the more you can do to put the horses in front of people then the better. Going back to Gina as well, I used to ride her a little bit, just because she was there... In fact a friend of mine said to me, I had got.. the light horse was obviously lame or something, oh just come out on Gina’ You just get on her and off you go, and she was a really good girl. I think there was an interesting picture that a friend of mine took. We had just broken in a 11.2 pony to ride, and Gina went out with me on her as escort duty, that must have looked a bit odd, these two very different sized horses going for a ride. She was... we did the odd ridden demonstration and er... the ones I have got now, we tend to ride... one is being ridden at the moment, the other one will be. I think erm... Abby actually is also a very good photographer, so she has taken lots of photographs. For the magazine, she has been asked to do them for Equine Life, and so she is a good help and a good girl at promoting the Suffolk horse as well. In fact, just... the day before she broke up we had Indra at her school, for a school day.

Hilary That must be...

Lesley She is promoting the horses as much as I am. Another thing we did with Gina, way back, was... In fact my mother was, by that time in a nursing home, and we took Gina to meet all the old people, and they absolutely loved it, and she was always very good with the public. I think... It is becoming more difficult now, you have to be very health and safety conscious about the public, because they have no common sense or horse sense, they will push a pushchair up behind the back of a horse and don’t have any idea... But we either take... If I have got a foal we usually take hurdles so that people are... the foal is safe, and so are the people. And if we have got just a Suffolk horse then quite often I just take electric tape, just so people realise there is a barrier, we still let them talk to the horses and things.

Hilary So you are going to carry on breeding. Carry on encouraging, and I wish you well.

Lesley Well thank you very much.

Hilary Thank you very much Lesley for talking to me.