**GOYMOUR Martin**

**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 Mr Martin Goymour describing his memories of the Suffolk Punch heavy horse.

Martin is the Director of Banham Zoo and a Suffolk Punch enthusiast.

The recording was made by Juliet Pennell, a member of the Suffolk Horse Society

The date of the recording was 18th July 2013 and it was carried out at Banham Zoo.

The duration of the recording is about 6 minutes.

Juliet This is Juliet Pennell interviewing Martin Goymour for Working Horses, Working Lives, sharing our stories of the Suffolk Punch on Thursday 18th July 2013

Martin I am Martin Goymour, I am currently the CEO of the Zoological Society of East Anglia, which covers both Banham Zoo and Africa Alive.

Juliet Thank you. Can you tell me how you first, or when you first came across Suffolks. Your first experiences of the Suffolk Punch.

Martin Well the family moved across the border from Bury St. Edmunds, when I was two years of age in 1952 to Grove Farm, Banham. It was a typical mixed farm of its era. We had dairy cattle, bulls, pigs etc. and I can remember that during the 1950s, er mid 1950s when I was five years of age, getting under the farm foreman’s feet, being into everything. The farm foreman’s then elderly father-in-law, Fred Fisher, was still employed in [?Erinsbay] at the farm, and he used one of the... er two heavy horses that were on the farm at that time, one of which was a Suffolk Punch, aptly named ‘Punch’. And was used, with a tumbrel, usually to take the mangles and bits and pieces up to the cattle in the meadows. And I often used to cadge a lift or be put on the tumbrel with Fred Fisher to get me out of the way. So that was one of my earliest, or is my earliest recollection of the Suffolk Punch.

Juliet And how long were the Suffolks on the farm for? Were there anymore after those two original ones?

Martin No obviously going off to school etc., by 1960 there were no horses on the farm. I don’t think I was actually acquainted with what happened to the last Suffolk Punch on Grove Farm, Banham, but I have fond memories of it.

Juliet And when did you next come across Suffolks, or when did they next sort of reappear?

Martin Well horses were not part of my life. I have a number of sisters who... some of which were into horse riding etc., so it was a girl’s thing. In 1991 we purchased the then Suffolk Wildlife Park, at Kessingland near Lowestoft, and as not to clash with the two animal collections, with the one at Banham’s zoo, we decided that er... Suffolk Wildlife park should adopt an African animal theme, but part of the inventory of stock when we took it over were two heavy horses. A Shire mare, ‘Waysbeck Emma’, and a Suffolk mare ‘Poppyland Princess’.

Juliet And what... you brought her back to Banham?

Martin Well they didn’t really fit in with the African theme that we were developing. So the two heavy horse mares came back to Banham, and whereas perhaps I was used to handling everything from snakes to primates, to birds etc., horses were alien. And seeking around, I came across the Eastern Counties Heavy Horse Association, which comprised a lot of the older generation of horsemen and women, who were quite keen on passing their skills of heavy horsemanship on. So I joined that association and learnt most of the basics from them, it was a painful process, but we got there in the end. I was always warned to watch out, not getting the heavy horse bug, which I didn’t think I would. However, within four or five years I think the number of horses have crept up, and we had perhaps half a dozen or more by then.

Juliet And this was a hobby for you, or part of the zoo at this stage, or a bit of both?

Martin Well probably a mid life crisis. In 1991 I would be 41 years of age, my work in the zoo, which was.... a lot of hands on work in its early days, were now more office based. So having horses was an ideal way of getting hands on with animals again. Again, another painful process, of learning the hard way. Initially er.. I had acquired a pair of Shires ‘Captain’ and ‘Taffy’ which er... ‘Taffy’ especially was a good schoolmaster horse, like getting into all sorts of muddles and he kept patiently stand there whilst you untangled yourself and the horse. As I say the number of horses started to creep up, and I needed assistance.

Juliet Martin. Thank you very much for telling us about the beginning of Suffolks at Banham. Is there anything else you would like to mention, or shall we move on to talk more about horses in the zoo now.

Martin Well I think, it has been a very interesting time, we have used the horses. Personally I have got a lot of pleasure, an awful lot of pleasure out of it, especially when we then discovered Suffolk horses and the importance of those of being the iconic, or living icon of the East Anglia, and particularly of Norfolk and Suffolk. Suffolk being the home county, Norfolk my adopted county, it couldn’t be better, and we have progressed from there. So I will leave it there.

Juliet Thank you very much indeed.

Martin Thank you.