

Typed notes of meeting with the Chairman of the Deeping Show Society

I was the Chairman of the Deeping Show Society from 1987 until 2013 .

I have known the Site at Millfield Road since the 1950's and have always taken notice of it since that time. The Deeping Show Society moved to the Site in the mid-1960's and used the whole of the south field prior to the bypass being built.

Prior to the by-pass the south field was grass and used for hay and grazing bullocks but the north field was arable. Neither were used for recreational purposes but there were sometimes trespassers – dog walkers – who went where they liked.

The bypass was built in the mid-1990's and the field was used by LCC. I can't remember the public footpath being there prior to the bypass but it must have been there. The Show used the south field and the footpath is in the north but I don't think many people use the whole footpath as it goes straight to the bypass via an overgrown gateway and you need to climb over the barriers on the bypass to use the whole route.

Soon after I took over the Site in 1997 I erected a post and wire fence at the southern boundary of the site next to Stamford Road.

I used the site to grow hay, I recall that the grass was left on the ground to dry before it was baled, and that it was left in rows. I do not recall seeing the hay being scattered over the land. I would visit the site most week on my way to Stamford or when I was passing. I do recall that we would cut the grass in April to May and that it would take a day to mow with one machine.

Before the housing estate was built I didn't see any recreational walking on the Site. Problems have occurred since the estate was built.

The Show tenancy started at the time of the bypass in 1997 – prior to that it was half Mr Simpson and half Mr Smith who gave up their tenancies and it was then tenanted to the Show.

The Show was a very successful event with cattle, sheep, horse jumping, trade stands and exhibitors. From the mid-1960's the Show used the south field and the north was kept arable with wheat and barley. After the bypass we used the north field as a public car park. The animals were in the south field and the public in the north field so that they were separate but the public could go through to the animal field. The Show carried on being held whilst the bypass was being built. However during the foot and mouth outbreak of 2001 the Show was not held due to the ban on transporting animals and the public footpath should have been closed at this time.

The Show was held on a Saturday and a Sunday over the first weekend in June and charged an entry fee of £6 per person charged. The north field was the main show ring and other entertainment and 6 marques. The south field was used as show jumping ring, animal pens were erected and both agricultural vehicles, and animal transporters and horse boxes were parked in this area. The Public Footpath was closed, I am aware that the secretary applied for this each year by contacting the Council.

Whilst the Show was busy getting ready and being set up the public still used the site - mainly the dog walkers using the north field. Ten days before the show we would erect the cattle pens in the south field, this often took a few nights to complete, they were erected near to the entrance gate C on Millfield Road. They thought they had a right because of the Public Footpath but they don't keep to the Public Footpath. We talked about putting a fence along the edge of the Public Footpath but it would have been broken down.

Entry to the show was by Gate A for the general public, B for disabled and traders and C for the cattle, sheep and horses. All the gates were marshalled and entry money collected.

The Show was open to the public on both days – Saturday and Sunday. A few traders stayed overnight - about a dozen but the livestock used to go at night.

The last Show was held on the Site in 2013.

The Show used to hold a summer dance on the Site in the 1960's and 70's.

There has been grazing on the land since 1997 for anyone that wanted it at no rent as LCC would not let the Show sub-let the Site – the tenancy was very restrictive. No other events were held as LCC wanted half the profits. The Site was not sub-let but was used by anyone who wanted it for grazing animals– basically to eat the grass off and keep the land tidy. It was grazed for several years into the 2000's sometimes with cattle and sometimes with sheep but mainly in the south field as it was safer and better fenced.

In 2006 I contacted the Council and informed them that the public were using the site for dog walking, mainly in the north field by walking a circuit around the edge of the field. The Council purchased and erected signs at the gates to the Site. I recall that I did notice that the signs had been removed.

The public get into the Site by climbing over the gates. When stock was on the land there was electric fencing across the boundary over the dyke off the Public Footpath and the remaining boundaries were either post and rail fence or hedges. The gates off Millfield Road were kept locked

although there was a gap left for the public footpath. There was a 'Private Farm' sign but this was knocked down at the wooden gates (A) at the top end of the north field. There were no physical gates in the middle boundary just a bridge over.

I saw people mainly using the north field as the stock was in the south field and 90% went around the field but some just wandered all over it and some used all of the Site. I tried to stop them but was just verbally abused – they thought it was their right as it was only a grass field. I even put up signs saying that the land had been sprayed with chemicals which were a danger to dogs.

When the land was grazed the grass was not taken at any time for silage as the cattle were on it. Later on a local man used to take the hay as it saved us mowing it. The Site was never closed for maintenance but even that would not have stopped dog walkers using it.

I can remember that I phoned LCC to let them know that the signs had been taken down but realised that funds were tight to get them replaced. I can't say when it happened but I did let them know. Also I did warn LCC that when the path around the field had been formed that a right could be claimed after so many years. Prior to the signs I told people it was private but they were abusive to me and it was generally from the dog walkers.

Other committee members experienced the same abuse from the people but it's only occurred since the bypass and the estate were built. People cut through from the estate and some properties have gates out on to Millfield Lane.

At Gate A on the attached plan people just climbed over the gate – or squeezed through by the dyke at the side of the gate post. The sign which was there in 2009 has now been removed but said 'Private Farm'. The people even came in via the next field – Mr Purlant's field.

Gate C was always locked when the Show had the tenancy but the public always climbed over.

Gate D used to be a metal gate but the trees and bushes have crowded it out and it was never used as an entrance. From 1997 onwards as it was a struggle to get in – young lads could but not grown-ups.

At E I believed there was a gate so people could access the Public Footpath.

The Army Cadets used to meet on the Site on a Wednesday evening for a couple of hours and they asked if they could use the field occasionally for exercise but not often. We gave them permission in 2010 but not to any other groups.

Fly tipping was not a problem during the Show Society's tenancy but I know it is getting worse. We had no problem with travellers but I am aware that some used the Site for the first time last year.

I used to inspect the Site occasionally during the year – about once a fortnight I would go to Stamford so go by the Site and check it.

The Show had to replace the gates two or three times during its tenancy as they were pinched although not by the dog-walkers. It was mainly A & B but once reported to us we replaced them and they were locked.

Even when there were cattle and sheep in the south field during April – May dog walkers still used it.

In 2010 the grazing stopped but it had been used for two months a year and had had electric fencing during that time just across the mid –way boundary between the two fields – the rest was stock proof. However the local farmers got fed up with the electric fence batteries being pinched.

The grazing stopped when no-one wanted it so the Show mowed it two or three times a year.

Even when we put up the Spraying notices at each gate the dog walkers still used it – however we never actually used any chemicals but the signs were there to try and deter people from using the Site.

When the Deeping Show Society took over the tenancy of the Site in 1997 the north field was arable. Wheat and barley were grown- prior to the bypass and there were no problems with dog walkers. It was 1997 when the ploughing stopped and the grass was sown. The land was ploughed and worked down to enable the grass to be sown in autumn 1997 and it has been permanent pasture ever since then.

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