

Tim Edwin: Watching the Ruston Bucyrus Digging out the Water Gardens

Well, obviously the first thing that that was done was.. to remove all the embankments. and then... they started doing the water gardens and actually putting the bypass, which runs along the side of Cotterells. That started in 1961, was completed in 1962, and that was done by a company called Shepherd Hill. I can remember standing in what was...the beginnings of Waterhouse street. Because my younger sister had a boyfriend and, his parents owned a, a sort of car supplies shop? In the back of there next, where Bridge street came up, and I can remember standing there, actually with my younger sister's boyfriend, and that they'd moved all this equipment in. And at that time you could actually see the river Gade. I can remember this big bulldozer which is a Vickers Vigor 180. And it it literally was just pushing the trees down. It it had a bulldozer blade on the front and it was just.. pushing these trees down. sort of big big willow trees, big oak trees. um, so I remember that was the start of it. And they also started building the, the bypass road in as well. So, they would use that bulldozer but they also used another Ruston Bucyrus with a skimmer on it, to dig the the roadway, all the way along. And I don't actually remember it but they must have demolished all the houses along the side of Cotterells at the same time. And the properties over Bridge street all, all that was removed. So when that Vickers Vigor was not being used as a bulldozer, they would take the bulldozer blade off it and they would put a scraper, was actually made by a company called Onion, so it was always called an onion scraper. So they, they used that to level out, but also used that to dig out the base of the water gardens.

I guess the only other thing funny bit that they obviously took that big Vigor bulldozer away at the end and then um...I can remember, there must have been some deliberation because they needed to take some more trees down? So I can remember them using the Bucyrus, the big Bucyrus excavator to try and push them down with its lattice beam. Which it wasn't meant to do that so....I can remember this guy sort of using the ... the crane to sort of push these trees over, it was ..it was... madness watching that!