

WALKS IN BROCKET PARK

EARLY MEMORIES

On a Sunday my sister and I would often walk through Brocket Park with our parents to visit our grandparents at Cromer Hyde. John and Lucy Cochrane lived in the old clapboard cottage at the end of Cromer Hyde Lane. We loved climbing the steps over the wall by Lemsford Mill and running across the park to the bridge overlooking Brocket Hall. There were rabbits and cows and much wildlife to investigate on the way. On one occasion we witnessed a drama on the bridge. A child had pushed his head through a gap in the stonework and was stuck! Frantic efforts to release him eventually paid off to the relief of his mother and others gathered around.

After our usual pause at the bridge to look at the waterfall and to gaze across the water at Brocket House, we would continue our walk to Cromer Hyde. I still remember the joy of clambering over the stile to cross the Wheathampstead road, peering through hedges at the noisy pigs in Cromer Hyde lane and looking down the well in one of the cottage gardens. Finally we came to the paddock and orchard where, Sandy, our grandparents pony lived. Alongside the track to Symondshyde Farm, his stable was an open hut in the corner. Sandy would slowly come over to greet us. Then off for the family gathering with John and Lucy in their cottage.

LATER MEMORIES

My walks in Brocket Park continued over the years, mostly with family and friends. I have special memories, though, of walks with our Airedale, Tigger, often on my own. Starting at Lemsford Mill, passing Brocket Hall, the stables and gardens we walked by the river to the ford at Waterend. One day we discovered the Statue of Diana with her deer amongst the undergrowth. Supposedly a Roman goddess of the oak tree, Dione was in poor shape with only iron rods for legs. According to legend she represented a virgin huntress with her bows and arrows. Nearby were the graves of the family dogs of Brocket Hall. I treasure memories of these walks over the years.

Shirley Knapp (nee Cochrane) February 2016

“ A few years ago, before Lord Brocket went to prison for fraud, we were at Brocket Hall for a business dinner and he overheard me saying my sister was born there, so he stood up and gave the history of Brocket Hall as a maternity unit. He also showed us all the Ferrarri's he had in a sort of hangar. “ She goes on to say a little more about the insurance fraud and the imprisonment of Lord Brocket which we all know and ended by saying ‘ like a novel isn't it? ‘

lesley kubalsky February 2016

Hi Shirley

That's a great piece of writing. I don't think I have anything else to add. Like you I enjoyed getting over the style and I think the mill must have been working then because I remember being fascinated by the foamy water. I likewise enjoyed the river, the bridge, looking over at Brockett house and thinking, oh yes, I was born there. It gave me a bit of an affinity with the place.

One of my happiest childhood memories is from the park. It was the day we picked up Rip from the pub at Cromer Hyde. I walked there across the park with Dad. I chose Rip from the litter and we walked back through the park with him. I mostly carried him but sometimes we put him down and he ran all over the place. i can still see him running around between the big, oak trees.

lesley kubalsky February 2016