



Tony Atkinson (Towner)

“One morning shortly after Christmas I was one of a group of boys of mixed ages playing aimlessly and it was suggested that we should go sliding on the pond near the top end of the village. Some of us, me in particular, were reluctant having been forbidden to go anywhere near the ice. Nevertheless we did and the ice turned out to be thick and took our weight without any suggestion of danger. Boredom and cold gave way to fun and warmth but when three of us fell in a heap the ice broke. The two others managed to scramble away as a hole opened up and I fell through the ice into the freezing cold water. Attempts to get me out were fruitless and here I was, my fingers slipping off the edge and unable to grip the edge and grip the ice. I went completely under and now with a heavy, wet coat, gulping pond water I was gasping for breath and unable to help myself. So I really was in trouble. Understandably the other children hastily retreated from the ice and I felt isolated. Fortunately help was on hand in the form of Vic Hardcastle, he was a friend of mine, and he ventured back onto the ice with a broken tree branch. At arms length he thrust it in my direction urging me to grab it. At first I was unable to do so, but at the second attempt I just managed to hold the branches and I just stayed there, just holding and he stayed stationary, he couldn't pull me or anything. But he urged some of the others to creep out onto the ice behind him and they did this and then sort of linking each other round the waist they dragged him and me out of the, across, out of the water and across the ice. But of course now I was out and had got to get back home and that was very difficult and very uncomfortable but they managed to get me home, basically walking, shivering, wet and cold.”