Delia’s oral history includes her memories of life in Hambleton. In this extract she describes what life in the Red Lion was like in the early 1940s.

 “I was born in 1936 and lived in the village, probably in the Red Lion. And, at that time, that was sort of the only source of any activities. It was, you know, everything went on in the Red Lion. It was used for, I think I'll tell you, first of all, about what the Red Lion was like.

We had no running water; water came from a well in the back garden and the only water supply in the house was for the hand pump in the in the kitchen. I think it came from either a well or a stream that's under the garden in the Red Lion, but I'm not really sure, it came from somewhere anyway.

We'd no electricity. Light was from paraffin lamps and candles. I used to have a Wee Willy Winkie candle to take me to bed, it was like a little metal tray with a candle in it and a little handle on it, and that used to take me to bed. But there was no health and safety in those days; nobody to say you've got to have anything protecting it and that protecting it. I just used to go to bed with a little candle.

We'd no sewage drainage at all. There was none at all in the village. Everybody had an earth closet outside and in our particular one because I was only three, I had to have a little hole made especially for my bottom in this earth closet out in the back garden. To this very day, if I'm going to the toilet, I always tell somebody that I'm going to the toilet, because when I was little me mother always used to say, "you tell me if you're going to the toilet, in case you get stuck". So, even now, I'd say to Philip, "I'm going to the toilet, Philip", not that I want him to come and get me off the seat, but I still do that. These earth closets were emptied weekly. I don't know if Irvin mentioned that but they were emptied weekly by the men that were called the ash pit men. The men used to empty the ash pit on the way up to Gateforth Hospital up the hill and empty it into a big hole there and there it remains. So, you can imagine what it were like up there, not nice.

 Laundry was a bit of a problem, we had a boiler outside, which we had to light a little fire underneath. It was like a brick-built thing with a boiler inside it, and you'd light a little fire under it to heat the water.

Washing was also a bit of a problem. To be honest, I never saw anybody get washed, except me. And they used to put me in the sink. I can remember being put in this sink and getting washed in the sink, but I never, ever saw anybody else get washed. I mean, I'm sure they did, but never actually saw anybody. But they all -- I'll tell you how they used to get washed a bit later on, but that was in the kitchen and I seemed to get washed in the kitchen.

The fires were open-fire grates. They were in every room. The kitchen had a massive black-leaded range with a boiler. I think it had two boilers on either side of the fire, and then had an extension and it had a spit on there, which they used to cook meat and a very large oven.

We had no telephones, of course. We had battery wirelesses. That was only the way of communication with the outside world and papers came later on. In the pub itself, downstairs there was a bar with stone floor and spittoons and saw dust, but I think Irvin told you about that.

There was a little snug, a cosy room, to the left of the bar and a sort of concert room with a piano and a man who came into play a concertina at weekends; I can remember that very well. That -- I think that's a billiard room (2017) now, I just see it as I go passed; they play billiards in there.

The local doctor's surgery was off the bar. I think it's now a men's toilet, but that was the doctor's surgery.

There was a club room upstairs and that was a big room sort off to the left of the pub, and that was used for football and cricket team meetings, and darts and domino competitions. It was also used for rabbit pie and pigeon suppers. My mother used to make rabbit pies and I can remember all these feathers in the kitchen, you know, plucking all these pigeons. They used to have suppers where they all used to sit round a big table. I think that also provided social events and provide revenue for the pub, I suppose. But it was more for social purposes really.

The main use of the pub seemed to be, well, to me, as a little girl, seemed to be old men with flat caps, wearing old suits, and always the same suits, with waistcoats and a pocket watch and chain, chewing tobacco and smoking, and walking with a walking stick. These old men always had names that fascinated me. They were -- you know, they were names that I'd never heard before and my favourite was Essau Wickham.”