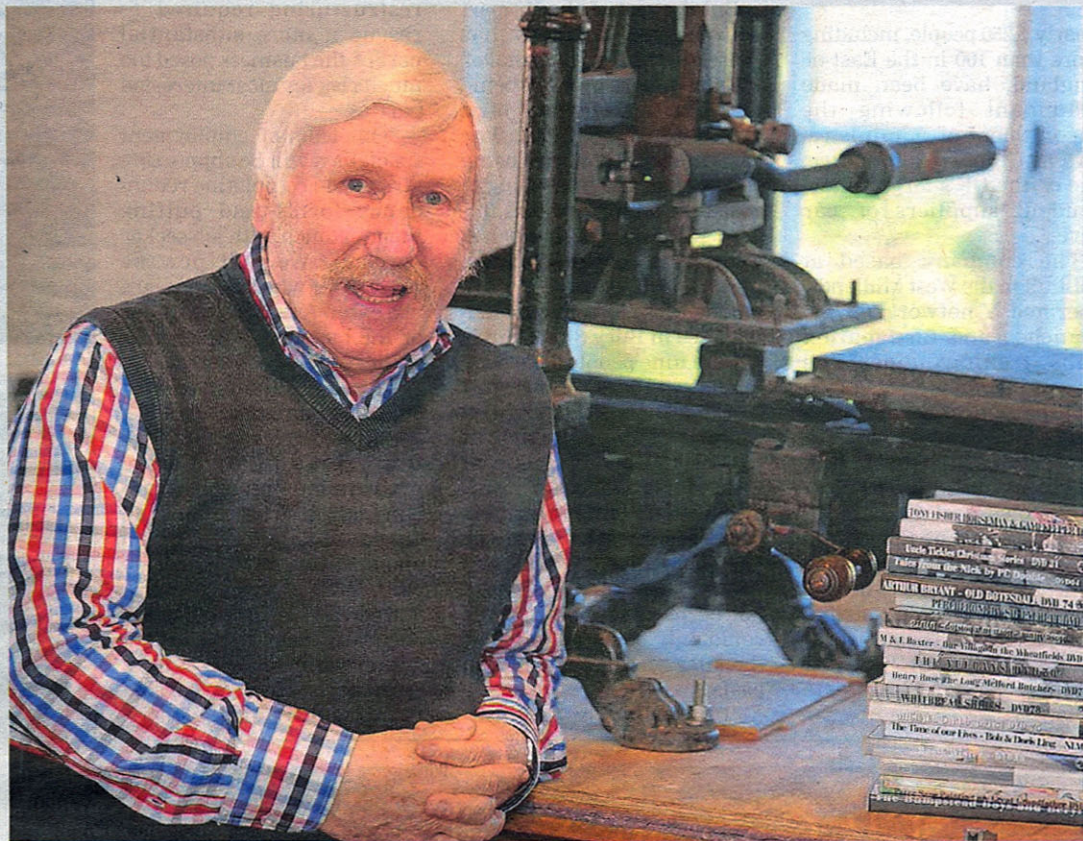


# Tales were top of Neil's birthday list



■ Neil Lanham at his home in Botesdale, whose 70th birthday request was an evening of storytelling.

Sir, - What a pleasure to read your two pages on Neil Lanham (EADT, July 12), but you have given us the tip of the iceberg as far as what he has done to report farming of the past when the great Suffolk Punch ploughed the land.

In 2008, I was invited to Neil's 70th birthday party. There were to be no birthday presents but about 30 other storytellers were invited - everybody had to tell a true story.

I lived then about 70 miles away so I was staying the night. When the party started, the first to arrive were the Storytellers Club of Cambridge followed by the Bedford Club from Ireland. As the evening progressed, I realised the others were mostly professional, but there were some wonderful stories told.

I had expected Neil to have his recording equipment set up but that was not so, he told me

those stories were his birthday present and he was not going to share them.

We had bottles of homemade wine and I believe I told the story of "The Turkey Wattles". I don't think that story has ever been recorded, but I seem to recollect everybody was clapping before I took to my four poster bed.

**WAGS ALDRED,  
Bungay.**