

## Radley History Club

### Life in Radley in the 1930s and 1940s

Information extracted from interviews in the Radley Remembered series, mostly carried out in [2003 and 2004?]

Archive number:

Date of interview:

30/09/2003

#### Personal details pre 1953

Interviewee (complete separate form for co-interviewee if also resident in Radley pre 1953):

**GRAHAM TALLBOYS**

Date of birth:

1925

Date came to Radley (if different):

1933 when not quite 8 years old

Address in 1930s/1940s:

89 Foxborough Road

Other family information:

#### Education

Schools/colleges attended:

Abingdon Council School (at the bottom of Ock St) to age 14. Then went to tech in Oxford to do shorthand typing. Had to give that up when his father died at age 48 in 1940. Did courses in the air force after he was called up in 1944.

Other information about education:

Stayed to the age of 14

#### Work

Occupation and place of work of father:

Worked for Anglo American oil in Tilehurst before being made redundant. In Radley, got job at College boathouse as carpenter/boatbuilder. His family were boatbuilders in Oxford.

Occupation and place of work of mother:

Occupation and place of work of interviewee in 1930s/40s (if any):

Started work in education office in George St, Oxford, when his father died, then went to firm of accountants. Called up the air force in 1944 and put on deferred service. Mainly did courses in the air force, never served as he was found colour blind. Worked at Morris, Aldermaston, Harwell as electrician in 1947, then moved to Culham. Moved to theoretical side and worked for 40 years at Harwell/ Culham.

Information about farm work and farms:

Remembers 5 farms: Frearson, Greening, Beech, Taylor, Badcock (dairy). His wife worked in the path lab in Oxford. Badcock delivered milk as far as Abingdon. He recalls a lot of people working at MG and at Morris Works, cycling to work across Sandford Lock. Some people worked at Radley College laundry and grounds staff there.

Other information about what jobs people were doing:

## Travel

Mode of travel to school:

Cycled to school in Abingdon down the Abingdon Road with 8 others minimum. Sometimes hung on the back of a carrier. There were a lot of horse and carts about, not many cars.  
Also cycled to college/work in Oxford.

Mode of travel to work (interviewee and parents):

Any comments about the station and use of the train:

Occasionally used the Abingdon bunk going to school.  
The station was much bigger with an entrance on the LR side. The Bunk was a half-hourly service, mainly for passengers. On the LR side was station master's house, booking office, waiting room and toilet. The waiting room had a fire in winter. There was one on both sides of the line and a separate one for ladies only. There were 3 porters and a signal box. A third line to Oxford for goods.  
Coal for Abingdon unloaded at Radley. Was a non-stop train to London which took 50 minutes - originally for local MP.

Any other comments about travel including, including car use and ownership:

The bus fare to Oxford was 4 1/2d. Could put your hand up to stop a bus anywhere. Bus also took parcels for people and picked up a churn of milk from Jack Blackman, the milk man, by the beech tree on the island at the station end of Lower Radley road.

## Buildings - location and characteristics

Location of interviewee's home:

Lived then and at time of interview at 89 Foxborough, almost opposite Bowyer Arms. Was newly built when family moved there in 1933.

Any comments on size, numbers of rooms, sharing, outside loos, source of water, electricity and telephone services etc of interviewee's home:

When he first moved, there was a small shop (Bayliss) to right (from the house) and three bungalows to the left. Then they built New Road and other two bungalows in his row.

Any comments on location and characteristics of other buildings in Radley including dwellings, shops, village hall, barns, laundries etc:

Badcock lived in the big house which is now flats. In the 30s, there was a large brick barn in what is now the pub car park and a blacksmith. The barn burnt down in the late 50s. Mrs Hadland lived in the thatched cottage over the bridge. Wooden village hall in LR.

## Services and pastimes (excluding education and travel covered above)

Comments about shopping including retail deliveries:

There was a shop next to his house which sold everything and was run by someone called Bayliss. It closed in about 1960. Remembers a baker at Baker's Close in Lower Radley. The bakery later moved to Thrupp Lane, Radley Steam Bakery. Badcock delivered milk, carrying two churns on his bicycle. Poured direct into a jug at your door and would go sour very quickly in hot weather if not scalded.

Comments on health and health services:

<p>Comments on play, pastimes and recreational activities - eg swimming in river, pub, clubs and societies, football, darts, guides:</p>	<p>Recalls going down the LR a lot in summer. Swum down there opposite the old Nuneham Courtney boathouse, perhaps twice a day in summer. Long sandy beach. Mothers used to go down with young children. He recalls weeds being cleared and one case of bad poisoning from the paper mill which killed all the fish. They also used to roam around the fields and very occasionally went to a film in Abingdon. Had catapults. Was in the boys club. There were concerts in the village hall, including once a year by RC dons. Plus one by WI. Did a lot of boating (canoes and punts) [when he was older?] including courting in a punt.</p>
<p>Comments on religion, church and choir:</p>	<p>Graham was a choir boy along with Gilbert Jones, the station master's son and David Saunders. No girls. There were 3 services a day and they sang at two of them. All were well-attended. A College master played the organ. Ollie Smith from LR and Tom Pocock from Stonhouse, tenor and base. Had to pump organ occasionally.</p>
<p><b>Miscellaneous</b></p>	
<p>Any comments about Radley people not covered elsewhere:</p>	<p>Mention of Spinney the roadman who covered Sugworth Lane to Wick Hall and gritted on frosty days very early.</p>
<p>Comments about Radley College, its way of operating and relations with the village:</p>	<p>Radley College boys wore red hats and cycled at breakneck speed. Village boys used to go down and pick up their luggage, paid 5s.</p>
<p>Comments on Coronation and Jubilee events:</p>	<p>1935 silver jubilee - the jubilee queen sat on a station trolley with footman and pulled by 6 others. The procession went right up to Wick Hall who laid on a 'do'.</p>
<p>Any information on impact of WW2 in Radley and about wartime activities:</p>	<p>In the war, he remembers one air raid at Harwell, one at Abingdon airfield, but nothing at Radley. There was a beacon at the end of Sugworth Lane. Radley had a home guard.</p>
<p>Record here any other interesting items not covered above and general observations on life in those days:</p>	<p>Before he was married (1953) he was invited to serve on the Parish Council by the then Chairman, Tom Pocock. He stayed on for 41 years. The council met once every two months at the school. The issues were much the same as now. Flooding in LR came up a lot. It was worse then. Was also on district council and recalls discussion of need for council houses. Major changes over time: the village was much smaller and everyone knew everyone else; roads were not so good; there were far more trains and far fewer cars; less noise. Greatly misses the avenue of elms in Church Road, also a rookery. Now health service, education, bus services are better. More opportunities. A lot more trees in LR - magnificent elms. Used to know all the birds nests.</p>