

## 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:	A.45
Date of interview:	20 October 2003

#### Personal details pre 1953

Interviewee (complete separate form for co-interviewee if also resident in Radley pre 1953):	<b>BERYL BUCKLE</b>
Date of birth:	February 1927
Date came to Radley (if different):	When 2 weeks old.
Address in 1930s/1940s:	Thatched cottage, Lower Radley, now 46-48.
Other family information:	Surnames: maternal grandfather, Villebois; maternal grandmother, Grace; paternal grandfather, Stimpson; paternal grandmother dead before interviewee born.

#### Education

Schools/colleges attended:	Radley School (where mother and father had also gone to school, and where her children subsequently went to school); two rooms, infants in one, 'big children' in other; 'donkey stoves' for heat. Miss Middleton taught infants; Mrs Smith (strict!) taught older children.
Other information about education:	In 1950s a Mr Osborne taught the boys in Radley School.

#### Work

Occupation and place of work of father:	Father worked on railway (Foreman Checker at Abingdon Station). Killed in 1941 in accident with big crane while loading wagon with heavy tree for war effort.
Occupation and place of work of mother:	Once interviewee was at school, some cleaning work at Radley College. Mother got £300 at rate of £1 a week from GWR union after husband killed. Then worked as cook in Radley College tuck shop, and took in occasional lodger.
Occupation and place of work of interviewee in 1930s/40s (if any):	Went to work at age 14. First job at Bottrell's ironmongers in Abingdon, but left after two years. Then got job at Oxonian Bakery at Thrupp for four years, where she was 'the jam tart queen'. From early 1950s work part time at Radley College tuck shop (shared role with mother).
Information about farm work and farms:	
Other information about what jobs people were doing:	

#### Travel

Mode of travel to school:	Walked.
Mode of travel to work (interviewee and parents):	
Any comments about the station and use of the train:	Abingdon Bunk was very convenient (e.g. to go to Saturday morning cinema in Abingdon for children). When Radley College boys arrived at station, village boys used to go 'gents' luggage-ing' (e.g. carrying luggage on old trucks or prams) for a few coppers. Since father worked on railway, father got two free family passes a year; used to go to Blackpool.
Any other comments about travel including, including car use and ownership:	Rarely went to Oxford; not many buses. Pre-war, only Mr Tubb had car in Lower Radley. Interviewee's father always had motor bike and side car.

### Buildings - location and characteristics

Location of interviewee's home:	Lower Radley until 1950, when moved to Stonhouse Crescent.
Any comments on size, numbers of rooms, sharing, outside loos, source of water, electricity and telephone services etc of interviewee's home:	Brought up in thatched cottage; tiny little windows; no inside lavatory; water from well; no electricity; no gas. Mother cooked on 3-burner oil stove (also Primus). Grandmother cooked on open range. After got married, continued to live in mother's cottage for a few years. Electricity reached LR in late 1930s. Until then, batteries for radio recharged in bungalow opposite Bowyer Arms. No street lighting until 1950s/60s.
Any comments on location and characteristics of other buildings in Radley including dwellings, shops, village hall, barns, laundries etc:	When built in 1949, Stonhouse Crescent had field between it and Foxborough Road; houses between Stonhouse Crescent and Foxborough Road filled in later. Some notable floods in Lower Radley. People called Bint in R College Boat House used to punt up the road. 1947 particularly bad; deep cuttings through snow between LR and railway bridge. Remembers seeing swans swimming in back garden. But water never quite got into cottage. Used to be library in Village Hall. Mentioned Bayliss's shop.

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

Comments about shopping including retail deliveries:	Shopping: most everyday items of delivered by 'vans that came round'. Most of the LR villagers kept the odd pig, chickens and ducks. Milk from local farms. Everybody made home-made wine; some quite potent (one woman had to be taken home in a wheelbarrow!).
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>When child, played with two Tubb boys (Steve and George) and Jean James 'on our side of the village'. Could play on the road; no traffic.          Learned to swim in the river (from 'The Shallows'). Used old car tyre inner tubes as flotation rings.          Publicans at Bowyer Arms: Mr Duncan (pre-war), Mr &amp; Mrs Edwards (through war years), Walter Long [? but recording not clear].          Dances in Village Hall run with record player.          Interviewee's uncles did a lot of river fishing.          Children played in fields rather than on village green.          Mentioned 'Common Lane', now the lane to the Fisheries; people kept ducks and chickens there.</p>
<p>Comments on religion, church and choir:</p>	<p>Interviewee married 30 Dec.1944 in Radley Church, by Rev. Pixell. Had 'proper' wedding cake (with real icing!) made in Bakery in spite of wartime privations.</p>
<p><b>Miscellaneous</b></p>	
<p>Any comments about Radley people not covered elsewhere:</p>	<p>In 1941, when interviewee was 14, headmistress of Radley School organised a 'Girls Club'; there was also a 'Boys Club' (prob. run by vicar); together they helped to raise money for the war effort.</p>
<p>Comments about Radley College, its way of operating and relations with the village:</p>	
<p>Comments on Coronation and Jubilee events:</p>	<p>1935 Jubilee celebrated; children dressed up as different Commonwealth countries (interviewee represented Cyprus).</p>
<p>Any information on impact of WW2 in Radley and about wartime activities:</p>	<p>Many people in LR dug and put up air raid shelters.          Quite a few people in LR took in evacuees. Uncles' cottage requisitioned for evacuees when uncles called up.          Rationed food supplemented by 'fresh produce' from village.          Were ack-ack guns up Sugworth Lane; Culham was Naval Air Station; RAF at Abingdon.          Street parties held to celebrate VE and VJ.</p>
<p>Record here any other interesting items not covered above and general observations on life in those days:</p>	<p>In 1943 (probably) several thousand people passed through LR to observed Boat Race.          Used to be women-only coach outings (e.g. to the coast).          Interviewee mentioned 'water meadows' once or twice [presumably fields adjacent to river].          Life felt safe then; used to go out without locking doors.</p>