

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.46
Date of interview:	22 October 2003

Personal details pre 1953

Interviewee (complete separate form for co-interviewee if also resident in Radley pre 1953):	DAVID BUCKLE
Date of birth:	1927. Placed in Children's Home when aged 3. Difficult childhood. [David also mentioned 1924 as DOB. Headstone in Radley Lower Cemetery gives 1924.)
Date came to Radley (if different):	Evacuated from Ramsgate to Radley in 1941 to work on farm. Initially stayed in Bigwood Camp.
Address in 1930s/1940s:	Home Farm, Radley. Then farm in Blewbury. Then lodged with future wife's aunt and uncle in Lower Radley.
Other family information:	Married, December 1944. Two sons, born 1947 and 1949.

Education

Schools/colleges attended:	Didn't have much formal education; guardian in Children's Home couldn't afford it.
Other information about education:	Went to Night School (WEA) in Oxford for eight years while working at Pressed Steel.

Work

Occupation and place of work of father:	
Occupation and place of work of mother:	

Occupation and place of work of interviewee in 1930s/40s (if any):	<p>1941, Home Farm, for Stephen Drysdale; sacked for speaking back. Then worked for farmer in Blewbury for a few months. Then came back to Lower Radley, whereupon worked for Arthur Greening for 30/- a week on farm near church; worked with man called Jack Portsmouth [? spelling (~16:00)] who lived in cottage where church/school car park now is; also worked on Greening's second farm in Sunningwell. Greening was a bad employer'; he cared little for his workers and little for his animals.</p> <p>Went into Royal Marines in February 1943. When de-mobbed in 1946, worked as a storeman at Culham Naval Air Station for four years at £5/7/6 a week.</p> <p>In 1950 went to work at Pressed Steel as piece worker until 1964 — 'mind-bogglingly boring'. (Pressed Steel got union recognition long before Morris Motors because Pressed Steel had to recruit from North-East, North-West, Scotland, Wales, etc. where union recognition was already well established.)</p> <p>In 1964 became District Secretary of Transport & General Workers Union for Oxfordshire. (Was able to explain about problems in car industry to Duke of Edinburgh personally at meeting in London.)</p> <p>Joined Radley Parish Council in 1951. Left after 40 years, but re-joined again after 14–15 months, and clocked up 51 years on Parish Council altogether.</p> <p>Became magistrate (Abingdon Bench) in 1961.</p> <p>Was on Arts Council for three years, but felt out of place. (Arts Council didn't appreciate his asking about money for brass bands.)</p>
Information about farm work and farms:	<p>In early 1940s Home Farm had small milk-bottling plant, and sold milk to houses in Saxton Road.</p> <p>'Farm labourers' were actually highly skilled; some knew more than their bosses.</p>
Other information about what jobs people were doing:	
Travel	
Mode of travel to school:	
Mode of travel to work (interviewee and parents):	At end of working day, he greatly appreciated driving back to the peace and quiet of Radley.
Any comments about the station and use of the train:	
Any other comments about travel including, including car use and ownership:	
Buildings - location and characteristics	
Location of interviewee's home:	From 1949, Stonhouse Crescent; has been in house since it was built.

<p>Any comments on size, numbers of rooms, sharing, outside loos, source of water, electricity and telephone services etc of interviewee's home:</p>	<p>In Lower Radley, no mains water and no sewerage until 1950s; water from wells, waste to cess pits. Street lights arrived in early 1960s; there was some opposition to the introduction of street lighting, but those who didn't want the street lights were the first to complain if the lights failed.</p>
<p>Any comments on location and characteristics of other buildings in Radley including dwellings, shops, village hall, barns, laundries etc:</p>	<p>Used to be large tree near railway bridge with seat going all the way round. In early 1950s Radley School was in poor state; leaking roof, anthracite fire, toilets were three buckets for boys, and three buckets for girls; no proper toilets at all.</p>
<p>Services and pastimes (excluding education and travel covered above)</p>	
<p>Comments about shopping including retail deliveries:</p>	
<p>Comments on health and health services:</p>	
<p>Comments on play, pastimes and recreational activities - eg swimming in river, pub, clubs and societies, football, darts, guides:</p>	
<p>Comments on religion, church and choir:</p>	
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	
<p>Any comments about Radley people not covered elsewhere:</p>	<p>In 1951, Radley population was 1235 in 365 homes; in 2003, ~2300 people in >1000 homes. In 1940s there was no Stonhouse Crescent, no Catherine Close, no Selwyn Crescent, no St. James's Road, and many of the now-present house in Foxborough Road weren't there. In 1972 Radley College sold land (~23 acres) for Peachcroft housing estate (to prop up R College's pension fund). R Parish Council got binding oral promise from R College (Mickey Jones) not to sell field between Twelve Acre Drive and White's Lane.</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>Any information on impact of WW2 in Radley and about wartime activities:</p>	<p>David was involved in Royal Marine's securing SS Headquarters in Lübeck, Naval Headquarters in Flensburg, and submarine pens at Kiel when war was ending. Roofs of submarine pens were solid concrete 16 feet thick.</p>

Record here any other interesting items not covered above and general observations on life in those days:

In 1951 R Parish Council income was £117 cf. ~£50000 in 2003.
In 2003 David reckoned Parish Councils had managed to escape (largely) the centralism imposed on District and County Councils.