

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. 51
Date of interview:	27-Jan-04

Personal details pre 1953

Interviewee (complete separate form for co-interviewee if also resident in Radley pre 1953):	DEREK COOK - interviewed with Maureen Cook, see separate summary
Date of birth:	1935
Date came to Radley (if different):	
Address in 1930s/1940s:	67 Foxborough Road. Lived there until he got married
Other family information:	Married Maureen in 1958

Education

Schools/colleges attended:	Radley primary school. Also had a spell at Lechlade school in the war as father went back there to work. Two or three terms at the convent and then finished up at the council school. Left age 15.
Other information about education:	

Work

Occupation and place of work of father:	Bricklayer. Worked for the Colleges in Oxford. Went back to Lechlade where he originally came from during war as no work around here and worked at [Vickers place] near Highworth.
Occupation and place of work of mother:	
Occupation and place of work of interviewee in 1930s/40s (if any):	Served apprenticeship at Morris' garage until 21. Then national service in army. Blandford, then Hong Kong, then Tidworth. Enjoyed being abroad. Strange at first. Then went to Pressed Steel in Cowley. Better paid than Morris Garage. £15/£16 a week. Was there for 37/38 years. Changed hands many times.
Information about farm work and farms:	
Other information about what jobs people were doing:	

Travel

Mode of travel to school:	
Mode of travel to work (interviewee and parents):	

Any comments about the station and use of the train:	Mr [Povey?], the signalman, was grandfather to Derek's friend, John Porter, and they used to spend a bit of time at the station. Used to take the mail across the line from one platform to the other, then take it into Abingdon on the bunk. There was a station master, porters, signalman. Waiting room on both sides, fires in waiting rooms, coalyards, sidings.
Any other comments about travel including, including car use and ownership:	

Buildings - location and characteristics

Location of interviewee's home:	
Any comments on size, numbers of rooms, sharing, outside loos, source of water, electricity and telephone services etc of interviewee's home:	Father built house in 1935. A bit more modern than Maureen's family house but still had a well in the garden but with pump indoors by sink. All the houses around there had wells. No sewerage even when married. Had to put septic tank in the garden. Always had electricity.
Any comments on location and characteristics of other buildings in Radley including dwellings, shops, village hall, barns, laundries etc:	Far fewer houses in his childhood. Open fields out the back. Open fields out the front where Stonhouse Crescent is now. When father bought his house (57) there was just Badcocks big double house next door, one more next door, and two more up the road. Only the laundry on the other side of the road where Badgers Copse is now. Stonhouse Crescent outer ring built in 50s. Filled in the centre part later, after they were married 1958). Derek and Maureen bought 'the last plot of land' on Foxborough Road in 1956 and built their house there. This is number 67 where they were still living at time of interview.

Services and pastimes (excluding education and travel covered above)

Comments about shopping including retail deliveries:	
Comments on health and health services:	
Comments on play, pastimes and recreational activities - eg swimming in river, pub, clubs and societies, football, darts, guides:	Played football 'out the front here' where Stonhouse Crescent is now. Mad on football and cricket as a boy. Played for Radley and also for Abingdon Town at one stage. Radley won the league a couple of times. Captain of cricket for quite a few seasons. Always played up the College. Most players came out the village then. Radio - listened to Dick Barton, Tommy Handley, Wilfred Pickles. Listening to boxing was a big thing. Only went to the pub to pick the cricket team. In the war, used to queue up at the pub because the publican let the children have a packet of crisps each.
Comments on religion, church and choir:	Only time he went to church was when the school was there and his job was to pump the organ.

Miscellaneous

Any comments about Radley people not covered elsewhere:

Remembers Spinney Comley - used to keep the roads and ditches clear. Keep the place tidy.
Rag and bone man used to come round once a week. Used to hang on the back of his cart, a bit of a state he used to get in.

Comments about Radley College, its way of operating and relations with the village:

Played cricket on Radley College pitch. They was pretty good at letting us use it. Used to go down to the station with trolleys when the College boys were coming back to school and take their luggage up to the school. Got a few pence for that.

Comments on Coronation and Jubilee events:

Derek won the fancy dress at the Coronation party.

Any information on impact of WW2 in Radley and about wartime activities:

Once found a bomb in a field on Mr Blackman's farm with his mate John Porter. It was a stray. They came and detonated it. Heard planes going overhead at night. Parents had two lodgers from Coventry. They were trimmers who worked at Abingdon airfield, fixing the canvas on bombers. Everything was blacked out.

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

Years ago, used to know everyone in the village. Has grown. Could go anywhere. No graffiti, no violence (used to do a bit of apple scrumping but that was all). Years ago knew everybody but nowadays hardly know anyone. Used to be a nice place. Now a bit of a disgrace.