

## 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.41 <b>Recording is available for Club use only</b>
Date of interview:	12 August 2003 (mostly), and 9 March 2003 [in Park Farm House] [Uncertain spellings of names denoted [? @ hh:mm], where hh:mm is time from start of interview.]

### Personal details pre 1953

Interviewee (complete separate form for co-interviewee if also resident in Radley pre 1953):	<b>DICK DEANE</b> [Interviewer: John Homewood, Peachcroft Farm]
Date of birth:	1924, at Chandlings Farm, Bagley Wood (then in Radley Parish).
Date came to Radley (if different):	
Address in 1930s/1940s:	
Other family information:	Interviewee was second of three boys; Reg, 7 years older; John, younger. His family had farmed Chandlings Farm since ~1723, and family left farm in 1950 when the owners, Christ Church Oxford, sold it (to a Rev. Dugmore). Thereafter changed hands several times before ending up as a school. Interviewee got married in 1950; two sons.

### Education

Schools/colleges attended:	From age 5, at what is now Carswell School; then, at age 11, to Southfield School (now Oxford School) up the Cowley Road in Oxford, where stayed until age 16 in 1940. Some London grammar school evacuated to Southfield School; evacuees went to school in the morning, local pupils in afternoon; in morning, local pupils taught by their own teachers in Oxford Colleges (e.g. Christ Church College ('the coldest place in England' in winter or 1940), Corpus Christi).
Other information about education:	

### Work

Occupation and place of work of father:	Ernest George Deane (born at Beaulieu Court Farm, Sunningwell, which adjoined Chandlings Farm). Farmed Chandlings Farm from 1920; at that time all grass, and only a few cows. Delivered milk by horse and cart to Sunningwell and Bayworth. Then milk business prospered; two vans bought; delivered milk to Sunningwell, Bayworth, Wootton, Hinksey Hill, South Oxford, North Abingdon, some of Kennington, Radley. There were two bottled milk deliveries per day to 'the moneyed people' in Boar's Hill. Some of the milk sold was bought in (mainly from Wigmore's of Oxford).
Occupation and place of work of mother:	

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

Left school 1940; ~18 months at Pressed Steel Company; called up, Dec. 1942; after 6 months' training as optical instruments mechanic, posted to REME; after invasion of France, based at Caen; then to Brussels; then to Hamburg, in Blom & Voss seaplane works, 'a magnificent place'. Re-started at Chandlings Farm, which was small at 75 acres, in 1947, but after few months father died, and interviewee took over.  
In ~1948 brother Reg took on Bayworth Farm and Manor Farm, and interviewee took on Park Farm. In 1955 Bill Drysdale sold interviewee 1/4 acre [somewhere near Park End] for £100, and Hooper & Jones (local builders) built a house for interviewee for £3000. Two men employed by interviewee: Kate [? @ 40:09] and Cyril.

Information about farm work and farms:

In 1937 interviewee's father took on tenancy of Manor Farm (adjoining Chandlings Farm) from Eddie Howse [? @ 21:15]; Manor Farm was owned by Mrs Liddiard (inherited it from her father 'Squire Green' who lived in Bayworth Manor), wife of Canon Liddiard (vicar of Kennington and Radley); Manor Farm (~200 acres) bought (too cheaply!) by brother Reg in 1953 for £35 per acre (including farm house, all buildings and three farm cottages).  
In 1946, interviewee's father took on Park Farm, Radley from Ben Morley [? @ 23:53], who took it on from Charles Drysdale's father Stephen who farmed it from 1936 to 1942. Stephen Drysdale took over Park Farm from Herb Stone who had farmed it for ~15–20 years. In 1936 Bill and Honor Drysdale moved into Park End. Interviewee's father took on three workers: two old men, Frankie Pitter and Alf Franklin, and a young boy, Lew Williams.  
In 1953 or 1954 Arthur Greening retired from Church Farm House, and John Greening continued with tenancy (landlord Radley College) until he retired in 1970s.  
When interviewee took on Park Farm, it was all arable, but interviewee introduced Aberdeen Angus (a 'single suckling herd' of ~20–25). Rent at the time was 30/- an acre. Then grew sugar beet for ~7 years. Then went all arable as rents increased. Interviewee bought first self-propelled combine in 1952 (Massey-Harris 726, from King's of Chilton) (brother Reg also bought one at same time). Previously had John Deere A and International tractor-drawn combines. Interviewee used M-H 726 until 1963 when contracted with Dick Frearson to do combining while he (interviewee) bought baler and did the baling.  
Railway runs right through middle of Park Farm.  
At Bayworth, in 1945, interviewee's father got marvellous 15-acre crop of New Zealand white clover which after threshing yielded 3 tons of white clover and was sold for £3000.  
'Wild oat killer' mentioned.

Other information about what jobs people were doing:

## Travel

Mode of travel to school:	Bus, from age 5 (3d return); then from age ~8, cycled. Cycled to school in Oxford, and crossed Thames by ferry (pulled by a man using a chain) where Donnington Road Bridge is now. Not long after that a footbridge across river was opened; road bridge built ~20 years later.
Mode of travel to work (interviewee and parents):	
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:	
Any comments on size, numbers of rooms, sharing, outside loos, source of water, electricity and telephone services etc. of interviewee's home:	
Any comments on location and characteristics of other buildings in Radley including dwellings, shops, village hall, barns, laundries etc:	In 1947, interviewee set up caravan park at Bayworth, which became permanent and which he owns. During 1960s, because couldn't make enough money from small farm that couldn't be expanded, decided to give up farming and go into caravan parks; Dick Frearson took over farm; then interviewee bought three caravan parks, one in Radley, one at Pewsey (Wilts.), and one at Andover; so owned four caravan parks in all.

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

Comments about shopping including retail deliveries:	Paraffin ('in little 5-gallon tins') was sold from the back of cars around the village in the 1950s. A lot of paraffin was still used in the 1960s. Jim Brackley, roundsman for Radley bakery [not specified where], originally delivered by horse and cart, but then by red Jowett van.
Comments on health and health services:	
Comments on play, pastimes and recreational activities - e.g. swimming in river, pub, clubs and societies, football, darts, guides:	During winter of 1940, skated (and played ice hockey) on Radley College lake.
Comments on religion, church and choir:	

### **Miscellaneous**

<p>Any comments about Radley people not covered elsewhere:</p>	<p>In January/February 1947 (the 'bad winter'), Sugworth Lane was closed for several weeks by snow; could get from Chandlings Farm to Park Farm only by going into Abingdon and then out Radley Road.</p> <p>Frankie Pitter, who worked on Park Farm in 1940s and lived in one of the Park Farm cottages, was an 'absolute character'; very small, had had bad accident in youth and had glass eye and very bad limp; drove tractor with a hand clutch; every night 'without fail', used to go by bus to Bowyer Arms, indeed so regularly that he wasn't charged a bus fare and the bus would stop outside his house and blow its horn if he wasn't there waiting for it. Once his glass eye fell out into the dust, but he washed it in his beer glass and put it back in. His daughter married Alf Thatcher, the local 'thrashing [i.e. threshing] contractor', who owned 'an immaculate' steam engine, but who, when combines rendered his threshing obsolete in early 1950s, took over the village shop in Sunningwell.</p>
<p>Comments about Radley College, its way of operating and relations with the village:</p>	<p>Everything at Radley College 'more accountable' today than it was in the old days.</p>
<p>Comments on Coronation and Jubilee events:</p>	
<p>Any information on impact of WW2 in Radley and about wartime activities:</p>	<p>Father joined army in 1915, and drove lorries in France for 3 years (during the winter one out a fleet of lorries was always kept running so it could help start the others). Twenty lorries for France were assembled in Albert Park, Abingdon, and then driven to France. During WW2, some 20–25 evacuee's caravans were in field at Chandlings Farm, which gave interviewee idea of running caravan parks.</p>

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

People mentioned in passing: Jet Silvester (who was very strong, who pulled bullock single-handed up ramp into cattle lorry, who had cattle truck and Jaguar car, and who used to frequent London nightclubs); Teddy Ballard; Mickey Jones (Radley College bursar with wonderful collection of 18th- and 19th-century books); 'Tinker' Brown who was 'a bit lacking' but who said he could run a mile in less than 4 minutes 'by knowing all the short-cuts'; Bob May (who founded May's Carpets); Roy Clark who ran forge at Sunningwell; Dennis Sullivan, who was president of Abingdon Organ Preservation Society, and who was influential in getting Compton organ installed in Abbey Hall.

Always has been shoots at Park Farm (mostly Bill Drysdale's guests).

Always used to be shoot on Boxing Day in Radley Wood (before caravan park was there), including lunch at The Sign of the Painted Boat, after which shooting tended to become erratic.

In 1933, father bought eight Victorian Chippendale chairs at furniture sale from house in Boar's Hill for £40.

There used to be a brickworks at Sutton Courtenay.

'Spinney' was local roadman, dug the ditches, did the gulleys, etc; a very small man; throughout the day his cap used to gradually rotate on his head; lived in Spinney's Cottage, which had a well in the garden which was condemned as soon as Spinney died.

Corn merchants in Abingdon: Harrison Matthews (who moved to Didcot); Westbury's (Ock St.) (Lines family); Blake Bros. (bottom of Ock St.); St. Helen's Milling Co.; Langford's (Stert St.) who had mill at Upper Reaches.

Decline in malting and hops mentioned due to increasing popularity of lager beer. St. John's College mentioned as landlord of some piece of local ground.