

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.60 Recording restricted to Club use only

Date of interview:

1984

Personal details pre 1953

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

GEORGE BADCOCK

[? hh:mm denotes uncertainties in names mentioned at time hh:mm in interview]

Date of birth:

[Not specified, but from correlating ages and dates, must have been within one year or so of 1900.]

Date came to Radley (if different):

In early 1900s, lived in Abingdon, but spent most holidays with grandfather at Gooseacre Farm.

Address in 1930s/1940s:

Other family information:

[Family member most mentioned is his grandfather, who farmed Gooseacre Farm.] Great-great-grandfather came to Wick Farm in 1796 (and took 21-year lease), when great-grandfather was 6 weeks old. When grandfather and grandmother married, they lived at 'old Thrupp' which was on the south side of what would become the railway line.

Education

Schools/colleges attended:

Little private school run by a Miss Cox in Ock Street, Abingdon (from age 6); building was flanked by sweet factory and Leach's printers.

Other information about education:

In early 1900s, headmistress of Radley School was Miss Broughton. 'Later' [prob. ~1910–1915] Miss Welch was headmistress, and also church organist.

Work

Occupation and place of work of father:

[Father hardly mentioned.]

Occupation and place of work of mother:

[Mother hardly mentioned.]

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

<p>Information about farm work and farms:</p>	<p>In early 1900s, Mr Betteridge farmed Lower Farm. A Mr Hewer farmed Park Farm. Then farmed by a Mr Stone. Several mentions of shepherds, and 'foggers' [? spelling] (slang for cowmen). Church Farm, ~400 acres, farmed by Fred Taylor, and then by Charlie Taylor, extended as far as Rush Common. Church Farm was sold to Greenings in 1930s, but in view of long-standing relationship with Radley College (e.g. supplied 80–90 gallons of milk a day to Rad. Coll.), R.C. bought land from Church Farm to create Peachcroft Farm, and built Peachcroft Farm House. (Jack Portsmouth, cowman for Peachcroft F., lived in one of the cottages opposite the Church.) Gooseacre Farm, 60 acres, was not on land owned by Dockar-Drysdale. Home Farm used to be called Old Farm; farmed by Mr Topp, who was bailiff for Old Mrs D-D. 'Further on', was Thrupp Farm, farmed by Mr Lewis. Grandfather remembered oxen being used for ploughing at Wick.</p>
<p>Other information about what jobs people were doing:</p>	
<p>Travel</p>	
<p>Mode of travel to school:</p>	
<p>Mode of travel to work (interviewee and parents):</p>	
<p>Any comments about the station and use of the train:</p>	<p>In those days, there were two signalmen working at Radley Station (12-hour shifts), one called Mr Povey</p>
<p>Any other comments about travel including, including car use and ownership:</p>	
<p>Buildings - location and characteristics</p>	
<p>Location of interviewee's home:</p>	
<p>Any comments on size, numbers of rooms, sharing, outside loos, source of water, electricity and telephone services etc. of interviewee's home:</p>	

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

In early 1900s, apart from Radley station, only telephone (from Nuneham Courtenay exchange, not Abingdon exchange) was in Post Office [at what is now #25 Lower Radley]. Later, ~1920s, another line brought over the river for Mr Frearson.

Two cottages (since pulled down) opposite church: Bert James, Mr Champ [? 10:45], Mr Woodward.

On pond side, just below pond, a brick cottage, tiled roof: Mr and Mrs Godden [Godding] [? 11:43], Mr G was cowman, Mrs G (always wore a man's cap) cleaned church and school.

Then another cottage: Mr & Mrs Leach [? 12:11] (with daughter Priscilla).

In those times, Church Road wasn't called Church Road [but couldn't remember what it was called]. And what is now Foxborough Road was called 'The Lane'.

Stationmaster's house (built ~1882): Mr Parkins, stationmaster.

Then pub: Jethro Silverstone [Silvester] [? 13:15].

Then two big semi-detached houses [now #75 Foxborough Rd.]: people by name of Hayes [Haines] [? 13:32] in eastern half [prob. Badcocks in other half from 1881]. Mentioned Norfolk Cottage [prob. east of Gooseacre]. Then Gooseacre Farm's carter's cottage; carter was a Mr Denton.

Just east of railway bridge: on north side, two cottages, one lived in by Hills (who was first Radley signalman along with Mr Ambridge), other perhaps Villebois; then two cottages that were burnt down ~late 1920s, one lived in by 'old Mrs Villebois'. Next cottage went with Gooseacre Farm, but for a time the village policeman, PC Wakefield, lived there.

The next cottage (old two-room cottage) lived in by Jimmy Woodley.

Then the Post Office [now #25], run by Mr & Mrs Machin (whose niece was Mrs Broad).

Across road, was 'The Old Cabin', in which [prob. <1900] Mr 'Waxer' Walters may have lived, and which was only place where village meetings could be held. Land just north of old Post Office was known as 'Waxer's Park'.

Where caravan park now is, was 'the brick field', making use of the pond there. Neat's Home lived in by Mr & Mrs Walker, and Agnes Frearson lived there [not clear when].

At 'triangle' outside Neat's Home, past 'Walker's Yard' for stabling horses, two cottages, Mrs Gibbons (+ daughter) lived in one, William Pocock + wife and four sons and daughter lived in the other (daughter lived in cottage until pulled down) [where #33 and #35 now are]. [Rest of this section is going clockwise around loop.]

Further on, three cottages [now #40-#44], lived in by Mrs Woodley [whose daughter-in-law is present Mrs Woodley], Mr and Mrs Comley (parents of Spinney Comley), Walter Grace (carter for old Mrs D-D) with two sisters.

Then three more cottages, one (in front) lived in by Mr & Mrs Gibbons, second (in front) by Villeboises, third (at back) by Jobey Villebois.

Dawson's cottage: Mr Dawson was killed by 3 o'clock express in the cutting just south of the railway bridge over the river.

In early 1900s, Mr Mattingley's bungalow at start of road to boathouse [where #75 LR now is] hadn't been built.

Just after village green, 'Walsh's Farm'. Also mention of a 'Minchin's Farm' [? 42:23] near there.

Two cottages more or less on the green: a William Grimes in one nearer the railway, Bannisters in the other.

Then another pair of cottages: John Smewin (Mr Betteridge's shepherd) + wife in one, Mr Foster (grandfather of wife of Brian Ford who had market garden) in the

other.

Then Baker's Close, where Sir Geoffrey Mean [? 42:38] + wife lived; had been the old bakehouse; in 1908, baker was either a Mr Welford or a Mr Smith; Mr Dunsdan [Dunsdon] [? 43:35] took over ~1910 (with a baker called Bannister working for them). Baker's Close also incorporated a shop.

Across road from Baker's Close, six cottages, names of inhabitants Tubb, Dunsdan [Dunsdon], Weston, Gibbons, Mattingley (Tom Mattingley worked as second coachman at Wick Hall).

Then, on same side as Baker's Close, two cottages lived in by a Mrs Bateman and a Mrs Villebois.

Then two more cottages lived in by Mrs Ambridge (stationmaster's widow) and Dick Bennett ('where Miss Deller was').

Then two more cottages, lived in by Frank Stimpson (head porter at station) and Jack Grimes.

Then two more cottages (one was subsequently burnt down) lived in by George Comley and a Mr 'Ratty' Weston.

In Neat's Home Cottage lived Daniel Weston, fogger for Mrs Walker.

Much alteration, amalgamation and extension of cottages, and new building, has taken place over the years.

Comments about shopping including retail deliveries:

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:

<p>Comments on religion, church and choir:</p>	<p>Mentioned Mr Longland as vicar. Also, at the time, there was a curate, Mr Rees. During early 1900s, Radley and Kennington were run as one parish; curate used to travel in brougham or cycle between churches. Grandfather was churchwarden or sidesman. 'Old Mrs Dockar-Drysdale', 'Madam', used to arrive in style at church, late, looking around with a feudal eye ('they were all frightened to death of her'), and driven in a big coach ('the bus') drawn by pair with coachman (Mr Matthews) in top hat and cockade. Joined choir around 1911 when was aged 10 or 11.</p>
<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>Any comments about Radley people not covered elsewhere:</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>Record here any other interesting items not covered above and general observations on life in those days:</p>	<p></p> <p>Remembers Rev Dr Field, warden.</p> <p></p> <p>'Old Mrs Dockar-Drysdale' marked the boundary of her estate with boundary stones, two near the railway, some 'on way to Abingdon'. Was only in 1930s that things started to change in Radley. In the old days, if you wanted to contact someone quickly, you ran to the Radley Station signalbox and got the signalman to phone. Sale 'when Radley Hall went down the spout': 1889. Remembers the footpath going directly from Wick to half-way along White's Lane being in use (and mentioned a 'twenty acres' field round about there).</p>