

## 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.36
Date of interview:	06/05/2003 F

#### Personal details pre 1953

Interviewee (complete separate form for co-interviewee if also resident in Radley pre 1953):	<b>LOUISE ('LOU') CURTIS</b>
Date of birth:	1944
Date came to Radley (if different):	
Address in 1930s/1940s:	Wick Hall (where grandparents lived) for first three years (her parents having been evacuated from London (Belsize Park) during the war), then Neat's Home in Lower Radley where she still is when interviewed. Her parents moved to Neat's Home in 1947, and immediately before that Neat's Home was lived in for a time by ex-Colditz prisoner. Eastbourne College was evacuated to Wick Hall during the war. Wick Hall was the sort of 'manor house' of Radley. Grandfather had been Sheriff of Oxfordshire. His mother, Josephine Dockar-Drysdale, was 'fearsome', 'an horrendous woman' and a terror', and dominated entire household. Grandmother's Christian name Irene [Eirene]; she was daughter-in-law of Josephine D-D.
Other family information:	

#### Education

Schools/colleges attended:	Initially 'Miss Tatham's', in Northcourt House, Abingdon. Then 'The Crescent', Norham Gardens, Oxford. Then Cranbourne Chase boarding school (Capability Brown gardens) in Dorset.
Other information about education:	

#### Work

Occupation and place of work of father:	
Occupation and place of work of mother:	Mother died 1981.
Occupation and place of work of interviewee in 1930s/40s (if any):	Did secretarial course in Oxford ('boring'), then when left secretarial college, worked briefly for two companies in Oxford. After one or two more short-ish jobs in London (Sunday Times very briefly, Liberty's, Hatchards), came back and set up Oxford Aunts with Jo. Then worked for Maggs Brothers (antiquarian bookshop) in Berkeley Square.

Information about farm work and farms:	A man called Spinney Comley used to do hedges and ditches. Other members of 'old families' at the time: Steve Tubb, Stan Haynes, Dick Frearson, Mr Woodley.
Other information about what jobs people were doing:	
<b>Travel</b>	
Mode of travel to school:	
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:	Very few cars ('minimal') used to come down to Lower Radley.
<b>Buildings - location and characteristics</b>	
Location of interviewee's home:	Neat's Home, Lower Radley ['neat' = calf].
Any comments on size, numbers of rooms, sharing, outside loos, source of water, electricity and telephone services etc of interviewee's home:	Neat's Home: front half v. old, walls are wattle and daub; other half, late 18th / early 19th century. Barn dates from 1747, and is built with ship's timbers.
Any comments on location and characteristics of other buildings in Radley including dwellings, shops, village hall, barns, laundries etc:	Radley Village Hall was where 'Shaw's caravan park' now is. Nobody used to lock doors in Lower Radley. Selwyn Crescent, etc. was built on farm land, and there was an old small quarry somewhere near there. 35 Lower Radley now is on site formerly occupied by cruck cottage (one half of which was lived in by a Miss Pocock); frame of cottage now said to be in Woodstock Museum. Both halves of cottage belonged to interviewee's mother. Interviewee's parents gave interviewee and husband a piece of land 'further down village' where they built a new house (55 Lower Radley).
<b>Services and pastimes (excluding education and travel covered above)</b>	
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:	

Comments on religion,  
church and choir:

**Miscellaneous**

Any comments about Radley  
people not covered  
elsewhere:

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

Comments on Coronation  
and Jubilee events:

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

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

Local farm(er)s included a 'Mr King'.

Mother helped to organise 'Coronation Pageant', which went round village.

Double circle of elm trees used to go right round Lower Radley, but Dutch Elm disease killed them around beginning of 1970s. Used to be cattle on local farms, not wholly arable as now.