

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.1 Recording is restricted to Club use only

Date of interview:

Some time in early 1970s [Sound quality not ideal]

Personal details pre 1953

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

MAY WADSWORTH

Date of birth:

Date came to Radley (if different):

Came to Radley in 1912. Lived at that time somewhere close to corner of White's Lane and Church Road. Later on, when married, moved to Little Wittenham for ~18 months, but then returned to Radley.

Address in 1930s/1940s:

Other family information:

Interviewee's parents were the last people to be buried in the churchyard.

Education

Schools/colleges attended:

Other information about education:

At that time, all children went to Radley School until they were 14.

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):

[In 1920s?] interviewee used to clean both Radley Church and Radley School; was paid a bit over £2 a quarter to clean church; church used to become dirty from coke-stove heating.

Information about farm work and farms:

When village was sold, Mr Silvester (who used to run the pub) bought Sugworth Farm.
Farms mentioned by interviewee: Sugworth Farm, Church Farm, Neat's Farm, Lower Farm, Pumney Farm, Thrupp Farm.
A Mr Taylor used to breed shire horses.

Other information about what jobs people were doing:

During ~1910–1920, everyone worked either on farms or at Radley College.

Travel

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:

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Buildings - location and characteristics

Location of interviewee's home:

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Any comments on size, numbers of rooms, sharing, outside loos, source of water, electricity and telephone services etc. of interviewee's home:

Radley cottages all had wells in the garden; water was pulled up in bucket and boiled. All candles and oil. No gas until 1920s at very least.
Foxborough Road was just a farm track leading to Thrupp Farm; was made into proper road only when bungalows began to be built.

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

Remembers White's Lane with elms and no houses, except 'Braeside' (in 1912 lived in by the Nortons).
There were two cottages just east of the pond outside Radley School; the pond had a stone wall at that time.
There were no council houses until 'after the war' [WW1]; Mr Silvester bought The Cornfield; built 'Fairfield' for himself; then sold part of the land to the Council to build council houses. One of these council houses was lived in by Machins, who transferred to that house the Post Office formerly in 'Hadland's cottage' in Lower Radley.
Some 'old houses had to be pulled down to widen the road' [not clear where, @ 11:01].
There used to be two cottages just on the east side of the railway bridge where 'Mrs Hill's bungalow' now is.
There were two old houses in 'this orchard', lived in by [? 'Gorins', name not clear, @12:33] and Portsmouths (the Portsmouth 'mother' worked at Radley College Laundry in Bagley Woods); both houses were burnt down through Portsmouth boys playing with matches.
Two cottages (actually one building) opposite Neat's Home: one lived in by Pockets; Tom Pockock bought these two cottages when 'village was sold up' [presumably 1930], and it was his land that was sold to build the present #35.
Spinney's Cottage: lived in by Gorins [? @14:42], Comleys, Woodleys.
When village was sold up, George Woodley bought 'those two' [?, not clear, @15:38], and built himself a bungalow in the grounds. A 'Mr Woodley' was killed on the railway.
Dawson's Cottage: Mr Dawson was killed on the railway.
Baker's Close was bakery until the Wranches bought it; last baker was Stan Dunsdan [Dunsdon]; thereafter it became a residence.
'We' [interviewee et al.] were three years in Nora's [? @19:00] cottage near Baker's Close before went to Little Wittenham.

Services and pastimes (excluding education and travel covered above)

Comments about shopping including retail deliveries:

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Comments on health and health services:

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<p>Comments on play, pastimes and recreational activities - e.g. swimming in river, pub, clubs and societies, football, darts, guides:</p>	<p>At time of Rev. Phillips [1916–1921], interviewee was member of Girls Friendly Society ('GFS') run by Rev. Phillips' mother; included doing needlework.</p>
<p>Comments on religion, church and choir:</p>	<p>Old Mr Grimes ("Mrs Shirley's father") was vergger for years', and also used to dig the graves. Radley Church and Radley College were completely separate 'in those days'. Everyone used to have his own seat in the church; farmers 'and people with money' always sat on left-hand side of church; interviewee's family always sat on right-hand side. Church was always well attended, particularly Evensong. When Rev. Longland left in 1916, he gave meal to all ~100 adult parishioners. In Rev. Longland's time, Radley and Kennington were one parish; going north, after the Park Farm Cottages there were very few buildings until Kennington Church.</p>
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	
<p>Any comments about Radley people not covered elsewhere:</p>	<p>Remembers the maypole, and remembers the fête held in 'The Cornfield' which was the land just north of New Road and just west of the railway bridge where bungalows are now. The Cornfield used to flood, as did the land where the allotments are next to Spinney's Close. Lower Radley used to flood up to Neat's Home; 1947 flood was particularly bad, and use of a boat was necessary in order to come up from Lower Radley. Edie Ambridge was stewardess on liners; Nora's mother was Edie's sister; Bill Deller's mother was another sister.</p>
<p>Comments about Radley College, its way of operating and relations with the village:</p>	<p>Gaudy Day used to be 'a marvellous do' at Radley College; boys' parents came by special train, all in 'their Ascot clothes'; a military band always played. A special train delivered boys to Radley at the beginning of each term; local boys used to carry Radley boys' luggage from the station, sometimes well tipped. At end of term, college boys used to fling old clothes to the village boys. Radley College kitchen garden used to be where playing field now is.</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>Old Mrs Drysdale used to give a Christmas box to everyone in the village. 'Little London' was Bagley Woods. Names of fields: Pagister's (where Radley School is/was); Ferny's (where Ferny Close now is); Hound's (opposite Braeside). Selwyn Crescent named after Radley College warden. Used to be allotments at 'bottom of Foxborough Road'.</p>