

**Daisy Murcott (1907-2005),  
Long-time Moseley Resident, Pioneer Businesswoman and  
Animal Welfare Champion  
An Introduction**

*This article describes the life and circumstances of a remarkable woman who lived most of her long life in Moseley. The information to prepare this account was obtained from a large collection of papers, letters and other materials preserved by Vinod Bhatia, the co-executor of the late Miss (Lilian) Daisy Murcott's will and his wife Anjie who came to know her through her care for animals – materials that they donated to The Moseley Society, Local History Group because of their historical interest. The materials were stowed in several large boxes and two suitcases. Some items were organised into folders, but the majority was randomly mixed. After many weeks of dedicated work, the story was organised adequately to prepare this article.*

Lilian Daisy Murcott (1907-2005) (known as Daisy) and her brother George Alfred Murcott (1908-1983) were born at 45 Beaufort Road, Ladywood near Monument Road, Birmingham, to Alfred Abraham Murcott (1853-1942) and Lilian Grace Murcott (1884-1980). They all moved from a large urban terraced house to Hawkesley, a detached house in a spacious developing area at 14 Moor Green Lane Moseley in 1911. Alfred Murcott had made money in export and import trading in India and the Far East. He established his own firm A. Murcott & Company in 1878 and opened offices at 1& 2 Helena Street, Parade, Ladywood, Birmingham, in 1882. He also traded as the East India Produce Company and Murcott Price & Co. In 1914 Alfred had twenty-seven agencies in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Karachi, Rangoon, Colombo, Singapore, Shanghai and Osaka and connections with India, Burma, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, China, Japan and Australia. Business success allowed them to move in 1924 to a new house built next door, Dorincourt, 12, Moor Green Lane, where Daisy lived for the rest of her life.



**Daisy Murcott**



**Daisy and George Murcott and parents**



**Dorincourt, the rear**



**Alfred Murcott**

Daisy attended St John's Convent, 21 Park Road, Moseley, founded in about 1906. She did well there academically and in music. George attended Edgbaston Preparatory School, Hallfield, established in 1879, from about the age of 11 to 16 years. The headmaster described him as 'always very willing and hardworking'. He also attended West House School, Edgbaston, a day and boarding Preparatory School for boys founded in 1895.



**Daisy Murcott, 1937 and 1959**

Daisy Murcott entered her father's firm in the late 1920s, at first, driving him to his appointments for £1 a week and doing shorthand and typing. Business had been very successful but suffered severely in the 'Great Depression' and failure of the rubber crop in Ceylon resulted in near bankruptcy due to unpaid accounts. Albert who was nearing eighty was very low mortgaging the house, the business and considered selling up. Daisy was appointed Managing Director (an unusual role for a woman at that time) in 1931, taking over completely at the age of thirty-five in 1942 when her father died. The firm's annual turnover was £1,750,000 in 1959 and it was exporting motor accessories, electrical goods, textiles, iron and steel and consumer goods to the Far East. She remained in the post until aged sixty-four in 1971, when A. Murcott & Co. was acquired by Rabone Peterson Co. Ltd., Holloway Head, but its identity as a separate company was maintained with Daisy remaining on the Board of Directors.

Daisy managed other businesses, including Murcott Investments Ltd., East Ward Agencies, Atlantic, Eastern Ltd., and Murcott-India Ltd. It was unusual in the 1930s and 1940s for a woman to run such companies and even in 1960 she was one of only two women export merchants in Britain. Daisy also had interests in various properties with the aim of developing decent housing standards for single people, a group neglected at the time.

George had his own business which failed and he suffered ill health. He married a friend of Daisy's – Edith Maud Mary Jordison (1908 - 1984) of 1 Valentine Road, Kings Heath, in 1941 and they lived at Ashmartin, Cherry Pit Lane, Beoley near Redditch. The failure of his business enterprise, a mystery financial problem, Daisy's role in the Murcott firm and dissatisfaction with his father's will soured George's relationship with the family.

At Dorincourt in the 1930s, Jack Day, twenty-nine, was the resident chauffeur, handyman and gardener. He lived there from when he was demobbed until his death in 1987 aged 77. In the 1950s and 1960s Daisy had a housekeeper, Alice Day,

Jack's sister-in-law, and 'Day' was still Daisy's chauffeur, handyman and gardener. Alice's husband, Timothy worked for the family in the 1930s. Alice worked for Daisy up until her death aged 80 in 1985. 'Day' would collect her in the motor and take her off to Dorincourt. Alice's son, Michael, called Daisy 'Membie' and Michael's children went with their Nanny Alice to Dorincourt and remember Daisy well.



**Michael Day and his Mum, Alice**



**Timothy and Alice Day, 1947**

Daisy maintained close relations with a large circle of friends, family and charitable organisations. She was especially concerned with animal welfare. She was chairman of the AAA, (The Animal Aid Association) based in Leicester, devoting much time to their work and supporting them financially and with her business skills. She set up and helped fund a number of other animal welfare charities.

Daisy's health deteriorated as she aged. In 1998 aged ninety-one, she had an operation, and was registered as blind in 2001. She had a NHS Patient Care Plan under the District Nursing Team at Percy Road Health Centre in 2003 when she was almost 96 years. Carers were struggling to look after her at that time – she was frail and bed ridden and died the following year. Her funeral took place at St Anne's Church, Park Hill, Moseley and she was buried at Brandwood End Cemetery, Kings Heath. Vinod Bhatia was co-executor of her will along with her accountant at the time, Adrian McKeown of Trevor Jones & Co.

**Jan Berry and Roy Cocker**