

John Pickett recalls coming to the area

In the early 1940's aged eight I was evacuated from Tottenham, London, to Rhos –y-Coed farm, Trevor, to stay with my Aunty, Hilda Glascott Archer and my Uncle Ernest Glascott Archer. Also at the farm were Mrs Ada Glascott Archer, her sister Eleanor and her other son John. Ernest was about five foot four and John was over six foot tall.

Opposite the farm house was the iron foundry owned by the Diggory family. You could hear the clanging of metal on metal all day but you got used to it.

The reason why our family lived in the area was because my grandfather was from Rhos – y- Medre. He was a professional footballer playing for the Druids, then Wrexham, then Everton and finally for Tottenham Hotspur. He played nineteen times for Wales, usually at centre- half.

The Archers had a milk round selling to houses in Trevor and Cefn. Ernest had a full time teaching job in Cefn School. John worked in the office in Monsanto. He played hockey for the works team in winter and cricket in the summer. It is said he hit a magnificent six OVER the Aqueduct.

Later in the war we moved to Bridge-End farm just opposite Scotch Hall. I attended Cefn School with my Uncle Ernest. He was the organist at Ruabon Parish Church, where the Vicar was The Rev. Jones-Perrott. I would attend the services with my Aunt Ada. The Vicar always gave good sermons and would direct questions to what appeared to me to be individual members of his congregation. If he looked at me I would duck down and pretend to pick up a hymn book until he seemed to be talking to someone else. We would walk there calling in Cefn for Mrs Thomas on the way. Her son became Sir Miles Thomas. He was involved with the motor trade in the Midlands. On our return from church at Mrs Thomas's house I was allowed a glass of orange and a biscuit. I seem to remember the two ladies had something a little stronger!

One cold February evening my friend and I were playing by the canal floating a long piece of ice which was our battle ship. I poked it with a stick and fell in. My friend pulled me out, frozen and frightened I ran home only to be met at the farmhouse door by my mother who had come up from London to stay. I was given a good hiding, a hot bath, and then put to bed in that order.

All dealings with the farm animals were done through Oswestry market. If my uncle bought a milking cow it was always brought home by Harry Jackson who lived in Bro Gwylm. It was sometimes midnight when he arrived at the cowshed

but he always turned up. We always took our cows to the bull at Plas-y- Pentre where Roy Bailey was the farmer. Our corn was ground into flour at the local mill.

The Archer family were friendly with the Roberts family who farmed Ty Ucha near the Golf Course in Llangollen. I was able to buy a hen and chicks from Mrs Roberts, five shillings for the hen and one shilling each for the chicks.

It was Francis Roberts that found us our first farm - Bwlch Mawr in Pentredwr on the Horse Shoe Pass. As we were fairly new to farming my father did joinery jobs and in return we were helped by some very kind locals. We left Bwlch Mawr in 1950 and moved down the valley to Pentredwr Farm where we have been ever since.