

Arrad Foot Residents Contribution:

Margery Todd

Introduction

The article below is taken from a recorded interview with Margery and Mark Todd – 22 March 2024. The text in brackets is intended to provide context and clarification and was not part of the original recording.

Script Writer: Bryan Edmondson – 2 April 2024

Life in Arrad Foot: by Margery Todd

My dad used to work down Little Raim (near Canal Foot). Then he got this job at Arrad Foot so that's how we came here. I've never been out of Arrad Foot since then, so I must like it, mustn't I?

I was two years old when we moved. That morning there was no room on the wagon so my mam had to walk, with me in the pram. She said it was a long way.

A couple of years later I went to school... somebody must have taken me on the first day but I don't know who it was. I went to Penny Bridge school. I walked there (and back) on my own, it took about half an hour, I think. It's a long way up there (Arrad Hill), and at the top there was a wood, a really thick wood - it's not there now – but people used to say, 'there's somebody in there will get you one day'. I used to run as fast as I could past that wood. I would only be little but I did it - you had to do it; you couldn't do anything else.

When I left Penny Bridge school, I went to Ulverston Victoria in Hart Street. I was the only one, everybody else went to Backbarrow. I went on my own but I soon got mixing in with them.

The Racehorse

We came to the Racehorse (a combined pub and small farm named after the horse racing which used to take place on the tidal turf immediately in front of the pub). My dad worked the farm and the pub. My mam had to clean it – we had the cleaning up to do after they'd finished so she really didn't like it but my dad did, so we had to stop there. She stopped there till she died. It was very popular then, people used to come from Ulverston and all around, and people on holiday. Everybody was always made very welcome and we used to have a laugh. We used to have these hooks in the ceiling and there was one chap called Harry who when he'd had a drink, used to climb around on these hooks and everybody said 'come on Harry do it again'. My mam didn't like it 'cos he was marking the ceiling all the time so she said, 'I'll have him,' so she took the hooks down. We had some laughs though. Ken Higgs (from Glenside) used to come in every night, and sometimes Mary, his wife, came with him. Holiday people used to come to Newby Bridge, and park up then come down here at night.

If somebody came in what we called the sitting room I had to go to bed, because that was licensed to sell beer in. I couldn't stop in there, I had to go upstairs to get out of the road... that was my life... getting out of the road. That was in the early days. I used to go outside with my dad; we got on alright. I used to help out with the cows and everything, I liked the farm, but I didn't like the pub.

When I left school, I didn't go to work, they wouldn't let me. I had to stop at home to work. What did I do? What didn't I do? I worked outside doing everything. Our mam had a tiled floor in the pub and we used to scrub that in the morning. Then we would have a cup of coffee and our dad would say 'right, you're coming out with me now', so I went outside; we got wet through and everything but we never bothered. Then we got a milk round, using the milk from the cows. The round was in

Ulverston and we had to take the milk and deliver it to the doorsteps. We had all the bottles to wash when they came back. I didn't like that but we had it to do. To get there our dad bought a van but (before that) he used to use his horse and cart. One Christmas, mam said 'our dad's not home yet'. I thought he would be drunk somewhere but I didn't say anything. Then, the horse and cart appeared around the corner and our dad was lying in the bottom of the cart, drunk! I think he got a good telling off.

So, my jobs were doing the milk round, looking after the animals on the farm, mopping the floor – there was no mains water but we had a well which came up in the kitchen. There was not much time for anything else but they were good old days and we enjoyed it.

The Village

The Racehorse was a family business, we took it over from somebody else. It stopped being a pub about 30 years ago (although it stayed in the family and is now a residential property, still bearing the Racehorse name. Margery moved out when she married Ronnie Todd, nearly seventy years ago, but ended up at Kengarth, another small farm only fifty yards away from the Racehorse).



The Race Horse Inn early 20th century

We lived at Kengarth Cottage for twelve years and then moved to Holmefield, almost next door, while Ronnie rebuilt Kengarth. (The appearance of the site suggests that the cottage was rebuilt while the barn and other attached structures were retained in their original form. Margery confirms this). We lived in Holmefield rent free in return for me looking after Mrs. Thompson who lived next door. I used to make her a dinner every day. Our mam said that there used to be a sweet shop there but I can't remember it.

Someone called Miss Shuttleworth moved from Hollin Hall farm and lived in Holmefield when we moved out. I took our Diane (her daughter) as a little kiddie, round to visit. She had some big clocks and Diane wondered where all the 'tick-tocks' were coming from, her eyes were all over (other residents recall that Miss Shuttleworth owned a range of quality furniture which raised a lot of money when it was auctioned in Arrad Foot after her death). She was an old lady, she had long dresses on and everything and once when we were there, she puts her hand up on to the mantelpiece and brings this tin down and it was a chocolate tin and out comes a big bar of chocolate and Diane takes it. I said to Diane 'No, you don't do that' and Miss Shuttleworth says 'Oh yes she does, she can have that, it's for her'. I never thought Miss Shuttleworth would have had children but she made a real fuss of our Diane.

We had to use the pump when we moved here, about sixty-five years ago. (the village pump is still visible opposite the post box).

I used to carry two buckets from the pump across the road (the old A590) but there wasn't much traffic then. Brodie Kay (at Brookside) would put a bucket out when he needed water, and Ronnie used to fill it and leave it outside, because Brodie wouldn't let you in the house. One day, I remember, our mam and her friend were going to go to Kendal and they missed the bus. Brodie must have been about at the time because he said 'I'll take you', so they got into the Rolls, I don't know how, and he took them to Kendal. Our mam said it was lovely as well.

Old Robert Atkinson lived at Rock Cottage, and he used to come and stand at this corner down here, and walk about. He used to come to our mam's window and ask her 'what time is it today?' and after half an hour he'd come back and ask the same question. He'd say I'm waiting for our John coming home. He didn't bother nobody he was just a bit... you know.

The Bibbys lived here a long while (at Oakdene) - Eric and Mrs. Bibby. Eric was alright but Mrs. Bibby was a bit eccentric. She used to come round to our Mam's pub and she used to have her pinny on, and every now and again she'd fetch a bottle out and say 'can I have a drop of whisky in this, but don't tell anyone', and she'd put it back in her pinny pocket and walk back home again - that was a laugh.

Old Tom's Cottage, was the end one up here. I used to take milk to his house and his jug would be there from the day before and it would have a mouse in it, dead, but he wouldn't know because he was nearly blind. And his frying pan and what he was cooking - Oh God! - but there was no one looking after him you see, he just looked after himself. Even so he was alright, he was quite happy.

Gawthfield was a lovely house... beautiful hallway as you walked in and a massive big staircase. I remember the ceilings being really high downstairs, with big long windows. It reminds me of how I imagine Downton Abbey must be, it's the Downton Abbey house of Arrad Foot to me (the Milligan family took over Gawthfield from Captain and Lady Egerton). She wasn't snobbish or anything, none of them were, you were welcome to go in. I used to go up and help her when they were having dinner parties, lay things out and everything - she'd just come and check that you had got things right but that was it. And cleaning the silver, all of that had to be done. But she was very good really - and he was nice, her husband, Alan.

The gardens, that was Jimmy's job, he used to work for them. He lived in the cottage behind the house. (The gardening must have been quite a task given the kitchen garden and extensive grounds around the house. The Milligan family later built Arrad House on land adjacent to Gawthfield, sometime around the nineteen sixties, and eventually moved into it, leaving Gawthfield House itself to be sold to a new resident of Arrad Foot).



The road through the village - early 20th century



J Brocklebank with horses on A590 - 1954