

Past and Present

Ralph William Edginton

Early days

Ralph was born in September 1911 and came to live at High Lodge Farm with his father, William Henry, mother Alice and his older brother Henry Bryan on 19th September 1914. They had moved from Hyde Farm, Temple Guiting, Glos; the stock came on foot, people and furniture transported by horses and carts. The farm, one of several on the Sarsden Estate was built by A. Groves for 'Squire' James Langston. It became available for rent along with 312 acres, farm buildings and cottages.

Outbreak of war

Soon after their arrival, the First World War broke out and many farm workers left to join the fighting. Ralph's parents worked very hard to build up a herd of dairy cows, flock of sheep, pigs and poultry. In 1926 they were able to purchase the farm when the Sarsden Estate was split up. Ralph's first memory, at the age of three, was of the enormous bath upstairs. He recalls going to the Infants' School in Milton, (by the Baptist Chapel), being taken there by his nursemaid. He later attended the Church School and, at the age of 11, went to Burford Grammar School as a boarder. He excelled at sport and played cricket for the school team. He continued to play tennis, badminton, golf and football throughout his life,



Ralph and Drucilla

interests he has shared with his wife, Drucilla.

Farming

At sixteen he began work; sowing, cultivating, harvesting, threshing, rickbuilding and thatching, milking, hedging, ditching, and animal husbandry were the skills needed to run a mixed farm in those days; all gradually replaced by mechanisation. Ralph recalls laying a hedge

alongside the Burford-Stow road; a passing farmer, over

from Tasmania to purchase new stock, was so impressed with his work that he asked him to go back and teach his men the art. He had 30 miles of hedges!

Romance in the air

Ralph often played tennis with his old schoolfriends George and Arthur Badger at Crown Farm, Ascott. Ralph was attracted by their younger sister and determined to marry her one day. In 1942 Ralph and Drucilla were married at Ascott Church. They travelled by train to Aberystwyth for their honeymoon but were unable to go near the beach because of the barbed wire coastal defences. They moved into the farmhouse, sharing it with Ralph's parents, until in 1950 a new bungalow was built on the orchard. Ralph's father died before they moved into their new home, but his mother lived there until her death at 92. Ralph had been running High Lodge for some time while his older brother Bryan was at

Crows Castle , with his wife Daphne (nee Rose) and their young family.

At war again

During the Second War Ralph joined the Home Guard and took his turn on night guard at Rissington Aerodrome, returning home to milk the cows at 5:30am as usual. It was hard work for everyone in those days; they were left with just two herdsmen and two men for tractor work. Milk was taken by cart, in churns to Shipton station; corn went to Shipton Mill and stock was sold at market in Kingham or Stratford. Electricity arrived at High Lodge in 1954 revolutionising both the farm and the house.

Family life

Ralph and Drucilla have two surviving children. Patrick is married to Mary; they have two sons, Simon who is now working on the farm and Alex. Pauline married Graham Evans and lives in Dorset; they have 2 daughters and 4 grandchildren. Ralph and Drucilla have had a long and hard-working life and during their 'retirement' have continued to enjoy sport and holidays. Ralph still does a bit of hedging and makes rustic birdboxes and tables. In 2002 they celebrated Ralph's 91st birthday, Drucilla's 80th birthday and their Diamond Wedding. Congratulations to this very special couple.

Janet Wallace

Thanks to Don and Joyce Ward

Joyce and Don Ward have distributed the Wychwood Magazine in The Sands for at least 20 years!

They have stoically continued until recently when they reluctantly had to stop

for health reasons. Don is at present recovering in Chipping Norton Hospital and we wish him well. Readers may remember the item in the magazine at the



time of their Diamond Wedding reminding us of Don's amazing war record and of Joyce's artistic talents. Above all they are a wonderful community minded couple, as people will remember from their St.

John Ambulance days. Our thanks for all their help go to Joyce and Don in this their 65th year of marriage.

British Red Cross-Caring for people in crisis

Red Cross Medical Loan Volunteer

Volunteers are needed for Witney and Churchill Hospital. Can you give a few hours to provide short-term loans of wheelchairs and other aid? Telephone:

Marian Faulkner on 01235 552660

Red Cross Fire Victim Support

Volunteers are needed for our support vehicle, which arrives at a fire or flood soon after the Fire Fighters, and provides for homeless families. Telephone:

Kerry Blunt on 01235 552660