

# Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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## THE STORY OF PALMSVILLE GARAGE

*by Pauline Chandler*

My grandfather, Edward H Kearey, was born in Rotherhithe and married my grandmother at the age of 19, They opened a small general store in Hornsey and my grandfather went out daily with a handcart selling paraffin oil; later on he used a horse and cart. In 1909 they bought premises in Station Parade, Muswell Hill (where Barclays Bank is now) and ran a small café restaurant. In 1918 they sold the café and purchased 202 Colney Hatch Lane, together with the immediate land.

My father, Edward C Kearey, completed his apprenticeship as a motor mechanic at Argyle Motors in Crouch End and in 1919 persuaded my grandfather to turn an old coach house on the adjoining land into a vehicle repair shop and to build 78 lock up garages and to install three hand-operated petrol pumps, the first in North London. The business became known as E H Kearey & Son, and in 1934 my father and mother took over the business and formed Palmsville Garage Ltd.



*Palmsville in the early 1950s. The family house can be seen to the right of the petrol pumps ( photo Pauline Chandler)*

Extra land was purchased from the adjoining house (then known as Monkswell), the frontage was modernised and seven electrically operated pumps were installed and the workshops improved at the rear. In 1939 for the duration of the War the premises were used by the ARP and the Fire Service and in addition the workshops were used to make munitions. I clearly remember being allowed to use the lathes to make ridges in rings of lead – I don't know what they were used for! In 1955 my brother John E Kearey took over the management of Palmsville and we swapped houses - my brother and his family moved into 202 Colney Hatch Lane and we moved down to number 234. Incidentally, my grandparents lived at number 165. We didn't move very far in our family!

Further development took place including the erection of showrooms, offices and stores buildings. In 1966 a new modern 2 storey workshop building was erected where every sort of mechanical repair and body refinishing was undertaken. The fourth generation of Kearey's - John's son Martyn and daughter Jayne took over the business and during this time the petrol pumps were disposed of and a new showroom erected for the sale of new and secondhand cars. In 2003 Phoenix, part of the Rover Group, took over the running of the garage, but two years later the whole premises were sold and subsequently demolished and Palmsville ceased to exist after 86 years. Very sad!

*Footnote by David Berguer: On 26 January 1968 I bought my very first new car, a Hillman Imp De Luxe Mark II, from Palmsville. I traded in my eight year old Ford Anglia for £125 and paid a balance of £486.7s 9d. Those were the days, when you could get a brand new car for just over £600!*

## **A WARTIME LETTER**

We recently received an email from a Dr John Starr who now lives in Reading, but who had lived in Friern Barnet until 1966. John recalls that his grandparents Boon moved from Tottenham to Lewes Road in 1926. His grandfather had been born in Sherington, a small village in Buckinghamshire where his father had been the local blacksmith. The family moved to London in the 1880s so that the sons could get jobs.

John's uncle, Eric Boon (also known as Ernie), left Woodhouse School in 1935 and went to learn bookbinding in Leipzig where met and got engaged to a German girl, Annemie, but returned to Britain in 1939 to join Montgomery's 8th Army. They never met again. In the 1970s and 80s Eric became a leading member of the Finchley and Friern Barnet Operatic Society.

In 1942, when his father was called up, John and his mother, Betty Starr, moved from Norbury to Friern Barnet to live with the Boons. They stayed there until 1944 when his father returned badly wounded. John's claim to fame was his winning the Friern Barnet Baby Contest for 1943 and he still has the little inscribed silver cup which was presented to his mother. His mother got a free series of colour photographs taken by Amy Milner whose studio was near the Gaumont. John's father had received one of the photographs shortly before he was wounded at Monte Cassino and he wrote in his War diary "*received picture of John – Grand*"

John recalls that he was a bit of a naughty lad, knocking over all the carefully stacked tins in the greengrocer's Gobels and then squashing his granddad's prize tomato on the day before the Friern Barnet Show. John moved away from Friern Barnet but came back on two occasions, once to see the Coronation in 1953 on his

grandparents' 9 inch television and again in 1974, when he got married in St James Church.

John very kindly sent us a copy of a letter that was written to his uncle Ernie by his girlfriend and it makes interesting and poignant reading:

*42 Bellevue Road, Friern Barnet  
5 September 1940*

*My dear Ernie*

*Thank you very much indeed for a charming letter, and I must apologise for having not answered it sooner. The reason being I just haven't felt like writing since we are having air raids.*

*I was in our shelter in the garden on my own when I heard a bomb explode, never in all my life have I been so terrified since then I have been just one bundle of nerves and have lost not only weight but interest in most things. The daylight ones I don't mind but when I hear the German planes at night I just feel too ill to try and go to sleep, I hope eventually I shall get used to them. Should we get caught in an air raid in the morning, we must now work overtime to make up for it. We are also to continue work until action actually starts before we go down to the shelter. The bomb that exploded fell in St John's church, so you can imagine the noise, I felt as though it was coming straight for me.*

*I expect you are getting used to them down there, but please be careful. Last week I called and saw your parents but they were not nearly so worried as I, in fact considering your mother's health I think she was marvellous.*

*Fortunately Mick came home on a week's leave last week and took me out, he was very kind and it helped me an awful lot. He went back yesterday and I saw him off from King's Cross. On Sunday evening we went to the Orange Tree and saw Vin in there, if he isn't called up soon he will go all to pieces, he looked terribly ill.*

*Remember me also to Leefe, he is lucky having a week's leave, but I believe that Romford was also bombed last week. What a life? Civilised people running into holes in 1940. Londoners are just beginning to realise what war means. People about my age I mean, our parents have of course already witnessed it before.*

*Well, Ernie, each time I write your leave gets nearer and I will be very pleased to see you. I must close now as I am going up to Betty's until 9 o'clock and then going to bed, to get a little sleep before the sirens go.*

*Cheerio for the time being and all the best of luck.*

*Yours truly, Florrie  
XXX*

John doesn't know what became of Florrie, or even what her surname was, but according to the 1939 edition of *Kelly's Directory of Finchley & Friern Barnet* the head of household at number 42 Bellevue Road was George Ernest Wiltshire. No directories were published in the war years so that is probably the nearest we can get. The overtime work that Florrie refers to could well have been at STC.

## THE BLACKSMITHS

by C O Banks

Nowadays we hardly ever hear of a blacksmith, but many years ago they were one of the most important craftsmen in any village or hamlet. The blacksmiths have a long history in Finchley, possibly dating back long before their incorporation by Edward III in 1325. They combined the trade of makers of iron with that of dentists and clockmakers and were by Queen Elizabeth's time united with the spurriers, or makers of spurs. A clever blacksmith could make a nail red hot by hammering it, hence the term 'blacksmithing'.

Another minor company which presents features of special interest is the farrier. The farrier's guild existed in 1356 and they were incorporated to prevent inexpert and unskilled persons destroying horses by bad shoeing. They have extended their good work to the present day by devising an admirable system of examination and national registration of shoeing smiths.

The two Whetstone craftsmen who have left their records in the annals of Finchley were John Read, a smithie, and Michael Chapman, the blacksmith. John Read's forge was in the High Road, Whetstone and we may assume his muscles rivalled those of the smith immortalised by Longfellow, being '*strong as iron bands*'. He possibly did some of the iron work at Finchley church when it was repaired after the Reformation. Undoubtedly he was a strong, athletic, stalwart man who loved fighting either with backwords or cudgels or with his fists for we find that on 1 February 1593 he used either of these on Anthony Thompson, a yeoman of Finchley, to such an extent that on 29 March 1593 he appeared before John Haynes, Esq, JP with two city men, who were his surety for £10 each and himself for £20. He was bound over for his peaceful behaviour towards Anthony Thompson.

Unfortunately, the cause of the complaint is not recorded, but this very same Anthony Thompson on 9 March 1603 called on a Susan Birche, widow, and in her dwelling house with his fists struck her infant babe Robert, aged 12 months, on the head, crushing and breaking it. The little mite lingered on till 12 November. On 16 February a True Bill was returned against this brute, but he was at large. On 28 April 1605 his fellow inhabitants at the Manor Court brought a similar charge against him, though he had fled. In the following April he was defaulted at that court. According to the Session Rolls it seems as if Anthony Thompson "*came and was discharged*" and returned to Finchley. If not him, there was another man of the same name.

On 22 May 1610 an order was made for Richard Knowlton, blacksmith of Finchley (and in 1606 an ale taster) and Mary Butterfield to appear and be informed about certain blows illegally inflicted by Richard Sheppard on Sarah Butterfield, his servant. Another order was made for Richard Sheppard and Thomas Warley, a yeoman, and Anthony Thompson, all of Finchley to appear. He was bound over to his friends.

At this period men of Finchley thought little of beating girls or women but by their influence were discharged. Richard Sheppard, being one of the "husbandmen" of Finchley, had little to fear and the result of the case was, on 8 July 1610 he "*came and was discharged*." His friend Thompson did not have everything his own way for at the Manorial Court on 24 April 1611 Anthony Thompson was ordered by the Bishop's steward to avoid (*sic*) Robert Holland out of his house, having received him as an inmate and was fined £5. On 21 April 1614 he was fined 20 shillings for not

cleaning out his ditch and watercourse lying against a close called Good Robins. He failed to attend the Court and was fined fourpence. He was also at this court fined 2/6d for taking bushes out of the lord's woods to burn.

***Footnote:** The author of this piece, C O Banks, worked at the North Middlesex Gas Company and was also a keen local historian. From the 1920s to the 1950s he pored over and copied ancient documents in the various Record Offices and archives, collected newspaper cuttings and drew his own maps of the Finchley, Whetstone and Friern Barnet areas. His diligence has left us with a vast amount of material which is now safely kept at Barnet Local Studies and Archives.*

## **MY STORY – PART 2**

*by Ray Lewis*

In the RAF, dad was an Aircraft Fitter and he told me of the tales when he was stationed at Coventry during the massive pounding they took. Once he was running across a field while bombs were being dropped by the Luftwaffe. Apparently the bombs were in line with him as he dropped to the floor, only to hear bombs explode either side of him whilst he was lying face down in the mud. As well as maintaining Wellington and Lancaster bombers he helped to pull out flying crew who had been killed during sorties, sometimes having to shovel out shell cases before he could even get to them.

When I was born in Motherwell, dad was given a two day pass to see his new born. He managed to hitch a lift from a lorry and the driver made him sit in the open back of the truck, all the way from Coventry. It was November and dad was nearly frozen alive. He was helped off by a couple of people at the end of the journey as he was unable to move under his own initiative. He was apparently quite ill for a few days, but still had to go back to his station.

Dad's father had eight children and they moved to various parts of the country and to Canada. One of the sons became Chief Surveyor for Leeds Council and, as far as I know, was asked to do some important work for the war effort. Uncle Ronnie went on to set up dance halls after the war in Guelph, Ontario. We found out when we visited with my wife in the 1970s that his sons has started a big engineering works and it was funny, on coming into Guelph, to see the name Lewis on a big factory building. Many of my family, on my father's side I have never met, but one of my cousins is Matthew Lewis of Harry Potter fame – he's done OK so I hear!

Granddad had been a wonderful person, an architect, circus owner and entertainer, inventor and many other things. He lived in Cornwell Avenue, where dad used to live and he spoke about all the open fields they used to play in behind the houses leading to West Finchley and Woodside Park. My sister Jackie has a picture painted by him of those open fields. He designed Cockfosters Parade, and I was told that his original plans were used to duplicate the buildings on the other side of the road. He also designed many of the houses in Cockfosters. I used to have a brochure with his name on it and some of the large semi-detached houses were being sold off at around £2500-£3000. He also designed the Bohemia Cinema in Church End, Finchley. It was the first cinema in the country to have a reflective screen and it had columns that were painted to resemble marble, using feathers as brushes, and everything was in Arabic style. When we were young we used to go to Saturday morning pictures for sixpence. Later, when I was around fifteen, I tried to pad myself

out to look eighteen to get in to see the film *House of Wax*. I never made it. I nervously (stupidly) asked for a 9d ticket. The adult price was 1/3d! For all his success, granddad died aged eighty in Balham, blind and in poverty, staying with my aunt in an old dilapidated Victorian house with gaslight. He was blinded from a bomb that had taken the side off the house in Ballards Lane, North Finchley where he had moved during the War. After the house had been renovated, it was converted into two flats. We later moved into the upper flat in 1947 and my sister Jackie was born that year. Next door they built a couple of detached houses and during that time the builders used to have good old chats with me, occasionally buying me a Mars bar or 2oz of dolly mixture.

A deaf and dumb couple moved in next door to us. They later had a little boy who could both speak and hear and they were so excited when they found out. I remember it being a wonderful moment. Amy Milner, the photographer, moved into the next one and next to her was a redundant water reservoir we used to play in when we were kids, looking for all sorts of treasured items. We could see Amy's printing frames in the garden when she was drying out her pictures. Of course, at that age we really didn't know what it was all about, but funnily enough, I took up photography later on when I started work. Opposite Amy was the Conservative Club, and a few years later I remember a photo of a young Maggie Thatcher in her glass display cabinet at the front of her house. Mum started to work in a small factory called Petronio's, next door to the Conservative Club. They assembled hand mirrors and compacts with tapestry backs. It was really convenient as she only had to walk across the road whilst I babysat Jackie during the school holidays. Next door to that was a builder's merchants and Perry's Ford Garage. Later, when Jackie was five, she went to Moss Hall Primary School where mum became one of the cooks. It fitted in well with the school holidays

I used to walk to St Mary's School at Church End each day and often spent some time in Victoria Park on the way home. I remember going to see Bertram Mills's Circus for the first time and was overawed by the lions in the cage. I still got frightened by the clowns though. During the time at Ballards Lane I was lucky enough to help a United Dairies milkman with his round on Saturday mornings. He used to let me hold the reins of the horse for some of the time while delivering the milk around the North Finchley streets. I smile now when I see Steptoe & Son, thinking "I used to do that". It was always a great thrill and the sixpence at the end of the morning was an added bonus. Later I did a paper round near Henly's Corner. My cousin Murray used to work there as well, marking up the papers whilst I delivered papers around streets like Beech Avenue. I used to cycle from North Finchley every day, come rain or shine. Even during the 'pea soupers' which we used to have, when the trolleybuses used to have someone with a flaming torch walking in front of the bus. It was quicker to walk. Murray and I also started cleaning cars at weekends for some of the people on the paper round – it helped with the pocket money, which was scarce in those days. I remember when I was going to take my GCE in English Language; I had already failed my mock exam in the February and decided that I had to have some additional private lessons from Miss Shaw. She was our English teacher and the Deputy Head at the time. It used to cost me ten shillings for a lesson at her house, after school once a week and it was all the money that I used to make all week delivering papers. Dad gave me 2/6d as compensation for spending my earnings on something important to me. I can't imagine that happening nowadays. Anyway, it was worth it and I passed with 68%.

To be continued.....

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

At the AGM on 26 May the Committee (David Berguer, Chairman; Mel Hooper, Treasurer; Patricia Berguer, Secretary; John Holtham, Membership Secretary; Janet Liversidge, Events Secretary; Richard Testar, Publicity Secretary; Colin Barratt; Patricia Cleland and Dorrell Dressekie) were re-elected. It was decided at the meeting that there would be no increase in the annual subscription for the year 2011-2012 as the Society's finances were in a healthy state. A copy of the Report & Accounts is enclosed with this Newsletter for those who were unable to attend the meeting.

## **WORK BOOK**

The manager of Barnet Local Studies and Archives, Yasmine Webb, approached us in September 2009 with the idea for an oral history project involving residents of Friern Barnet. The idea was to find out about people's experiences of work – how they found work after leaving school; what training they received and how their career progressed. The results would be edited and compiled into a book which would be distributed to all schools in Barnet so that today's children could find out how different things were in the 50s and 60s.

Yasmine applied for and was granted funding for the project from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Society undertook to come up with 20 people who would be willing to be interviewed. The interviews, which were taped and video'd, took place in November 2009 and subsequently transcribed. The full interviews will be kept in the Archives for posterity but extracts were collected and arranged under various headings – School –The Time of Our Life; Careering Down the Road; Work Progress/Personal Development; Women – Attitude and Changes; Standard Telephones & Cables - Local Firm, Global Technology; Career Progression/Promotion and Technology Changes. The inclusion of a section on STC was because several of the interviewees had worked there and it was a very important local employer – at its height 10,000 people worked there.

The book has been printed and it has been distributed to all schools and libraries in Barnet. If you would like to have a copy please contact David Berguer on 020 8368 8314. The book is free but there will be a charge of 81p for postage.

## **FRIERN BARNET SUMMER SHOW**

This year's Summer Show was something special as it marked the Centenary of Friary Park, which owes its existence to a donation by local businessman Sydney Simmons. The Society had a large (60 feet x 40 feet) marquee which we shared with other local organisations such as The Finchley Society, Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association, The Whetstone Society, HADAS and the Incognito Theatre Group. The Incognito kindly lent some of us costumes appropriate for the Edwardian theme and we enjoyed dressing up.

In the marquee we had assembled display stands on which we had over 200 pieces of material relating the story of the Edwardian era (1901-1910), the history of Friern Barnet and the history of Friary Park as well displays of artefacts ranging from old newspapers, copies of Picture Post and the Meccano Magazine to a 1940s hand cranked adding machine.

Mel Hooper had written an excellent 44 page book on the Story of Friary Park which was very well received. Copies of this are available by post for £5.81 (£5 plus postage and packing) and are highly recommended.

Guests from Sydney Simmons' home town of Okehampton, including the mayor, were entertained and were presented with a ceramic model of the statue in the park as a memento of their visit.

### **Footnote**

*From the desk of 'El President' John Heathfield:*

*One of the privileges of being President is that I can bully my way to add paragraphs to the Newsletter whenever I want to. I am doing this to thank the members of the Committee and others who put in so much work in mounting the Summer Show. The only word for the displays is fascinating. Mel's book was there as well. And at they end they had to take it all down again. We are very lucky in having so may people prepared to give up their time to help the Society. Thank you too to those who gave the impressive amount of bric-a-brac which sold for vast sums. If I could spell in Spanish, I would say "Muchos Gracias!"*

### **PREFABS**

The 24 August 1945 issue of *Barnet Press* contained the following:

#### **"PREFABRICATED HOUSES**

Although not satisfied that the pre-fabricated houses of American type will stand up to the climate of this country Friern Barnet Council on Thursday of last week agreed to accept twenty-two of them "under protest" in view of the housing problem.

On October 1st the rents of Council houses, with the exception of those held under tenant purchase agreement, will be increased by ten per cent. The town planning and housing committee reported that the engineer and surveyor (Mr J Marshall) had expressed concern as to the suitability of American prefabricated houses, which it was proposed to allocate to a site in Roman Road. In accordance with the Council's decision, he communicated with the appropriate Government departments, mentioning his qualms about the material used for the external cladding, with a view to a different type of house being allocated to the site.

Since then, the Ministry of Health stated in a letter that the material, although somewhat similar to certain types of wall board in common use, had no exact counterpart in this country. The material was extensively used in America for external cladding and was specially impregnated with wax before shipment to make it waterproof.

After erection it was treated with boiled linseed oil and two coats of oil-bound paint. The original and subsequent treatments made it withstand the rigours of the English climate. While the material would withstand the impact as well as other types of material used in temporary houses, it was assumed that the Council would select tenants so that the structures were not subjected to exceptionally rough treatment. If a house became seriously defective, the local authority could notify the Ministry, who would replace or repair it.

The letter added that, while the supply of American temporary houses would be made during the next few months, several months must elapse before the Ministry

could offer other types of permanent houses. Referring to the committee's recommendation "that the houses be accepted under protest" Cr G F Plant moved that the last two words be deleted. Cr J E Pickering agreed, saying that the question was whether the Council accepted the houses or not. He could not imagine the Americans would erect in the United States house which did not stand up to the climate. The weather there was subject to greater extremes of cold and heat.

Supporting the Council's recommendation, Cr A C S Meynell said the question arose as to whether the Government had the material tested before having the houses erected. What was good in America might be unsuitable in this country, considering the rain we have. The motion to delete the two words was defeated.

Speaking of empty houses in the district the Chairman remarked that that the position had been watched for some time. There were, altogether, twenty-two empty houses in Friern Barnet. Work was being done to them, and they would be ready in a short time. One hundred and eighty seven war-damaged properties are still waiting repair."

The destruction of over 116,000 houses in Greater London and 1,300,000 needing repairs resulted in an acute housing shortage after the War and led to the development of factory-built prefabricated homes and over 160,000 of them were built in Britain as a whole. They were very basic, being made of metal or concrete panels covering a wooden frame and they were delivered on a lorry and only took a day to build. They usually consisted of two bedrooms, a lounge, a bathroom and a kitchen and were only designed to last for ten years at most, although many survived much longer. Surprisingly, residents came to love them and were often reluctant to move into conventional houses when the time came.



*Prefabs overlooking Bethune Park, still standing in 1956. When they were first built they had a rateable value of £19 and the rent was 19/6d a week (Photo Karl Ruge)*

In Friern Barnet, there was a large estate of prefabs in East Crescent and East Road, on the hill overlooking Bethune Park, which were completed in February 1946 after a number of complaints by Friern Barnet Council to the Director of Temporary Housing about the time taken to supply them.

## **THE NEW SOUTHGATE MASTER PLAN**

*by Colin Barratt*

Many members are aware of my interest in New Southgate. I was born and lived for many years literally in the shadow of the gas holder which still dominates the North Circular Road in Pinkham Way. I was only rehoused when the area was redeveloped in the mid-1970s, and a large part of it was demolished.

Enfield Council has decided that they now need to look at the area again, to improve it for residents and businesses. It is one of the four *Place Shaping Priority Areas* in the borough and, after much consultation and debate, a draft Masterplan was published in March. It is a weighty document of 125 pages and contains a set of worthy principles and a number of general proposals. The Masterplan Principles are that New Southgate will be a vibrant local neighbourhood, with character and identity, well connected to the rest of the borough, clean and green, with opportunities for all. Good sentiments, but what about the detail?

There are 13 specific places identified for improvement, 7 regeneration sites, 3 estates and 3 open spaces, and proposals have been put forward for each of them. One of the main parts of the plan is the demolition of most of the Ladderwood Estate, including the adjacent industrial units. This large estate will be rebuilt to provide better quality homes, new community facilities and new commercial space. The new estate will contain many more families, and the work is likely to start quite soon, but there is concern about the lack of provision of school places and health care.

Three of the regeneration sites come under the heading *Western Gateway*. These are the gas holder and the Homebase and Topps Tiles retail outlets. Although the plan shows these sites covered with new developments, Homebase and Topps Tiles have no intention of closing down, and demolition of the gas holder would be very expensive and disruptive to the North Circular Road and Homebase. There are also the issues of possible land contamination due to the former gas works activity. This part of the plan seems very speculative. They would like to build a 'landmark feature' on the gas holder site, as an entry point to the Western Gateway, so I have suggested an alternative – reusing the gas holder by constructing a contemporary design cylindrical tower block of apartments within the framework, around a central courtyard, with underground parking. This was done in Dublin in 2006, using a former gas holder, which had been built by the same company as the New Southgate one, and it is an impressive structure. What a striking landmark feature this would make!

New Southgate Station and surrounding area looks very run down, so the plan shows a new public square outside the station, in Station Road, with cycle parking, but there does not appear to be any car parking provided! It looks like they are hoping Barnet Council will arrange a car park on the western side of the station.

Arnos Grove Station also shows a new public square, which will enhance the look of this Grade 2\* heritage asset, but it is not clear how buses and cars will interact with it. Another crazy proposal here is to build houses on one of the two car parks! This will

cause more parking in local streets or discourage people from using the tube. An alternative may be to rebuild the car park at basement level under a residential area.

The High Road estate consists of the blocks of flats in Betstyle Circus, which lay between the top end of the High Road and Friern Barnet Road. The High Road used to run through here to join Friern Barnet Road, and the plan suggests creating a more direct walking and cycling route between the two roads, which would be a useful benefit.

The redevelopment in the 1970s created separate small estates, known locally as the Red Brick Estate. The intention appeared to be create small communities, but these have become isolated and subject to anti-social behaviour and crime. The plan suggests better pedestrian links and other improvements, to help the area and overcome this isolation. This may help, but could actually make the situation worse. Who knows?

Highview Gardens, off Palmers Road, were the first tower blocks to be built in the borough, opened in 1960, and are important for that alone. The plan includes improvements to the blocks and the surrounding green spaces.

In the original discussions about the Masterplan, the planners had little idea of the concept and value of the Millennium Green, and suggested building on it, with promise of another piece of land being given in exchange. This suggestion was quickly and firmly squashed by the Trustees and the Green has now been recognised as a valuable asset and open space in the area. The hope of the Trustees is that cash would be made available for improving and maintaining the Green.

Like the Millennium Green, the Grove Road Open Space, known locally as *The Bombie*, has poor subsoil, as it was created by the bombing of the houses on the land in World War II. It provides a pleasant environment, but the plan shows a new public space created within it. This space may be difficult, or even dangerous, to improve structurally, with rubble, and possibly voids, underground.

The High Road Open Space, between Springfield Road and Upper Park Road, next to Garfield Primary School, is also a pleasant area for walking, and has been the venue for community fun days in recent years. However, a new children's play area has now been built in the centre, which restricts it for other uses. The plan suggests improving the lighting, among other things. This will be necessary as, although it makes a fun place for young children, it also attracts older youths at night, for less desirable activities, such as drug dealing.

A final proposal, presumably made on the basis of the Western Gateway becoming a thriving residential area, is to narrow Station Road from two lanes each way down to one, to make it easier for pedestrians to cross it! The road is already very busy, and it would cause jams onto the North Circular Road and up Friern Barnet Road. Some cynics say the Masterplan is really all about adding more housing on the Ladderwood Estate, and the rest of it is just tinkering. The final plan will be published later this year, after comments on the draft have been considered. It may become clearer then what will be the future of this area.

## **MEMORIES OF NEW SOUTHGATE**

*by Colin Barratt*

There are a number of former residents of New Southgate, mainly ones who grew up there in the 1940s and 1950s, who got together occasionally, usually at school reunions. Last year, following such a meeting, a series of email correspondences developed, containing reminiscences and stories. One memory sparked off another, and soon there was a considerable amount of personal material, which added an interesting dimension to the local history of the district. One of these people, Colin Marr, decided to collate them and added many photos, to create a book of personal memories which covered a period when New Southgate was still an active and vibrant community. Colin thought the book would be of interest to those who contributed to it, plus a wider group of current and former residents. Our Society offered to support its publication, and it is now available for sale, at £4.50 plus £1 postage. It has 70 pages and 46 photos and can be ordered through the Publications page of our website ([www.friernbarnethistory.org.uk](http://www.friernbarnethistory.org.uk)), or directly from myself, telephone number 020 8882 2246.

## **DELL FIELD**

*by John Heathfield*

All Saints Junior School just west of All Saints Church in Oakleigh Road North occupies what was formerly Dell Field. The field got its name from a dell or spinney that lay immediately north of what is today Queens Avenue. The field measured a tenth of a mile from north to south and 220 yards from east to west and the total area was 6.85 acres. The dell was 0.32 acres and in 1865 it contained four ponds. The next field, to the east, was Chapel Field of 8.62 acres and this is now covered by All Saints Church and by Loring Road. The field to the south of the school was Great Chapel Field of 10.72 acres. This ran south to Glebe Field and then to Friern Barnet Lane.

The fields were all part of the manor of Friern Barnet and Whetstone, which was leased from 1731 to 1783 by William Strode, Stroude or Strowde. John Bacon leased the estate in 1783 and purchased it in 1800 and it was then occupied by his son, also named John. John senior borrowed money, using the estate as security but when he died on 26 February 1816, aged 78, he left a financial tangle. Manor Farm ran roughly from Friern Barnet Lane to Oakleigh Road and south as far as Bethune Park and it formed part of the estate which was purchased by John Miles in 1851 for £6,000.

## **BARNET LOCAL STUDIES AND ARCHIVES**

The Archives at Mill Hill are being relocated to Hendon Public Library in The Burroughs, NW4 4BQ and while the move takes place they will be closed to visitors. The Archives are due to re-open on 8 November 2010.

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**Friern Barnet & District  
Local History Society** ©  
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