

Friern Barnet & District Local History Society

INTERVIEW BETWEEN DAVID BERGUER AND GILBERT DYET AT 1 PEMBROKE ROAD, MUSWELL HILL N10 ON WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2010

GD My mother was Ethel Louise Salmon, that was her maiden name, and her father was a stocktaker and valuer, public house broker, auctioneer, wine and spirit importer and art importer. He travelled greatly on to the Continent, doing the wines and spirits and the art.

DB Where was he based?

GD He was based in West Green Road and his next door neighbour was Harry Champion and his offices were in the City and he had a partner. His company was called Salmon and Hancock. Unfortunately, the Company Secretary and his partner didn't pay any accounts for twelve months, unbeknown to my grandfather, who was always out on the road doing business and they eventually ran off with all the money. He became bankrupt overnight and at that time he was living at Greenbank in Whetstone and the fields behind the shops in Whetstone running down to the stream and Totteridge Station were all his meadows. My mother used to compete as a teenager. She was at finishing school in Cliftonville and when the crash came she had to come back...

DB The crash being?

GD The bankruptcy.

DB When was that?

GD I can't tell you exactly, but it was prior to 1918. Probably 1915. So he became bankrupt and eventually he couldn't stand the stress of this and he committed suicide. But before that happened, the other Salmons had a pub *The Two Blue Posts* in Mount Pleasant – that was my great grandfather – and my mother took over that pub and ran it during the First World War. She moved to the *Alexandra Arms* in Cromwell Road in 1918 and when she applied for her licence at the Bench in Highgate they first of all refused to grant the licence to a woman, they said it was an unsuitable pub in an unsuitable area for a woman, but my mother explained that she was bringing all her own staff with her who were quite capable of looking after any drunks. At that time her name was Ethel Garrett, she had married an officer, but when he came back from the First World War due to the things that had happened to him he became a drunkard and he was drinking all her profits, so she divorced him. She remarried my father in 1930. I was born in 1931 and I am her youngest child – I had a half-brother and a half-sister from the Garrett marriage. My brother was the middle one of the three and he was born in

1918 and the locals in the pub, the *Two Blue Posts* in Mount Pleasant sai: “Why don’t you call him Armistice, missus?” My sister Poppy lived in the pub, the *Alexandra Arms*, with my grandmother and obviously my grandfather was deceased some years prior to them moving in. Going back to the pub and the licensing, this was considered to be a very tough area, because the lower end of Pembroke Road was a whole row of empty houses that had been built and they had lain empty for a number of years.

DB Do you know why they were empty?

GD I don’t know why, whether people just couldn’t afford to buy them at that time and perhaps they didn’t want to rent them.

DB These are the houses between Hampden Road and Cromwell Road?

GD Yes. With Biggs and Wall’s factory on the corner. I always remember Biggs and Walls as a child because they used to have a steam hammer that started to work at seven in the morning till seven in the evening, because they were iron foundries.

DB Did they work on Saturdays as well?

GD I think they did, but you got used to it, it was just a noise that was there. And you used to hear the railway at New Southgate from our back garden. There was bombing by Zeppelins during the First World War in the East End and they evacuated families into these empty houses so what happened in the Freehold, which was this area, was that suddenly there was these twenty or thirty or forty families moved in. There were always clashes, in fact, with the people who had been born and brought up here and we always used to say that this area was self-governing because the police would never come because it was too dangerous for them – they would never come in less than threes and fours. If there was a wedding or a funeral you could always bet that it would finish up with a big fight in the street, probably fifty or a hundred a side when somebody had mentioned somebody else’s ancestry, not realising they were speaking to a relative. The other thing I remember from my parents’ time was that when she moved in in 1918, the bit that we called the tea gardens, that was the left hand side of the *Alexandra Arms* as you look at it, bounded by the wall of the old Colney Hatch asylum, that was a cattle pound and any stray cattle were brought to my mother and she had to milk them if they were cows, otherwise she just fed them until their owners could be found and I presume if they came they had to pay for the feed. My mother met my father in quite an amusing way in the 1930s, she was shopping in Muswell Hill, now whether she was shopping in a horse drawn vehicle, because she did have one of earliest driving licences in London, she got stung on the bosom by a bee and she went into Boots the Chemist to see if the pharmacist could alleviate the pain. He treated the bite, obviously admired what he saw, and my mother in general. and said “*Would you like to come out to dinner?*” and that was the start of their romance. My mother, as licensee of the pub, was told by the magistrates at Highgate that she could have the license for three months and if there was any problem they wouldn’t renew it. She held the licence for forty years and, in fact,

the pub licence transferred to my sister and her husband, she was at that time Poppy Smallbone (she had been Poppy Garrett) and they ran the *Alex* for a number of years.

DB From 1970?

GD I would have said earlier than that, because my father suffered a heart attack and they moved out of the pub and my sister moved in with her family. They had lived in various places in London and her husband, Bob Smallbone, was one of the Bentley Boys and he was a car salesman and driving instructor and at that time my sister was a glove mannequin in Fenwick's in Bond Street. The outcome of the marriage was that my sister had three children, two were born here in the area because during the Second World War my sister and her husband both worked for Standard Telephones, he installing radios in the ships in Portsmouth and he grew a beard to fit in with the sailors, and my sister actually working in the Standard. When she had a new baby, she moved into my mother's bungalow at Crays Hill in Billericay and I also joined them because I had been evacuated to Hitchin in Hertfordshire and then come back to London and there was a period when my father was in the RAF where I used with my mother to go down into the City to collect the beer direct from Whitbread's brewery which had been bombed over the hoses and surrounded by burning buildings. My sister and her husband stayed at the pub for a short time and then my mother found that they weren't very happy, I think that it was the fact that my mother looked over their shoulder a bit, having run it for a long time.

DB So they were running it?

GD Yes. Eventually she contacted one of our ex-barmaids who had married my grandfather's ostler and during the War he had made a great deal of money in a pub in Chelsea and he had retired into west London to the stockbroker and he and his wife had hated it - it was completely foreign to their way of life. My mother spoke to him one day and he said: "I am fed up" and she said: "Well, would you like to come and run the pub?" so he came back and ran it for about five years then we lost all contact with the pub.

DB What date was this?

GD This was about 1948, I would guess. In fact, my brother and I still lived in the pub because my brother hadn't married and I hadn't married. I married in 1955 and then I moved out into Cromwell Road.

DB What number Cromwell Road?

GD Number 10 or 16, I can't quite remember because my partner in the car hire business lived at number 16. It was probably number 10, upstairs in the flat. The flat had had a bathroom but this had been taken out, that had been converted into a kitchen so there was no bathroom in the house, all the washing was done in the sink in the kitchen. And I married the girl next door, she was Madeleine Cherry

and her father was the groundsman at the LCC open air playing field on the corner of Cromwell Road and Colney Hatch Lane. And we had another connection, the two families, because we bred Irish setters, and so did he and we swapped dogs to breed. But I had a much earlier meeting with Madeleine (she was slightly older than I was only by two or three months) and I remember as a child she had been deputed to take me to Sunday School and I kicked her and I had to go and apologise to her in front of her father the next day. My mother, ever being the businesswoman, started the Alexandra Car Hire service in the pub in 1945. My father was still in the RAF at that time and she was getting her sleep disturbed in the afternoons and the reason was that she was one of the few people in this area that had a car and, as well as running the pub she liked to get her rest in the afternoons because afternoons to publicans are sacrosanct - not these days, of course, because they are open 24 hours, some of them. She realised that as she was the only one with a car the locals came and asked if she could take John Willy to hospital because he had broken his arm, because if you called an ambulance in those days you had to pay for it – no National Health Service. So she decided to call herself a car hire company and charge them, so that if she took them at least she got paid for losing her sleep in the afternoon and if she didn't take them she didn't lose a customer in the pub. So that's how the chauffeur driven car hire company started, with her Austin 10 as it was at that time. And of course the company went on for fifty-odd years.

DB When did you take over the car hire?

GD I must have taken over in 1948, because I was born in 1931 and I was 17 at the time. My father had come home from the services by that time and he took it over and ran it and the idea was that my brother and I should take it over when he came back from India with the RAF and, unfortunately, he had a heart attack so at that time I wasn't actually working full time – I was only working part time – I had transferred to Enfield Tech to do an AImMech E and I left the college and ran the business with part time drivers and one full time driver, Ron Mansfield, and he stayed with us the whole time until he retired with ill health, just a few years ago now and he unfortunately he died in the mental hospital. And I decided that, having done it for fifty years I had had enough. My brother in the meantime had come into the business and, of course, I was delayed doing my National Service – they waited until he was demobbed from the RAF so when I did do it, it was during the Cold War. My brother tells an interesting story of when he was in India, he was there when Partition was on and he was running a factory in India and at the end of it they were told to destroy all the aircraft and the engines that he had been rebuilding an I think it nearly broke his heart.

DB So, you were running the car hire company?

GD Yes, with Ron Mansfield who came in to run it and was employed by my mother.

DB Where were you based, in the *Alex*?

GD Yes. in the tea gardens.

- DB So they had been cleared?
- GD It was garages then, because during the War we had built sheds to keep chickens – used to keep 200 chickens.
- BD: We had five, of various types. It was the time when people were coming back from the Services after the War with money and getting married and sometimes one car would do three weddings on a Saturday and the other thing we were doing a lot of was taking people to the station., because they were going away on holiday and we might do, on a busy Saturday, ten runs to the stations.
- DB What kind of area were you covering?
- GD We were covering Muswell Hill, Highgate, Palmers Green (we had an agent there) and Southgate. Scott's Travel in Southgate and Pegasus Travel which was originally called Land, Sea and Air in Palmers Green. Ron Mansfield wasn't allowed to drive because he had contracted TB and had been in hospital out at Moggerhanger and before that he had been at South Mimms. The treatment then was to wheel them out in the open and put a sandbag on their chest – there were no drugs available for the treatment of TB. So he came in and ran the office after that and he was responsible for building the business up, although my brother did the maintenance and I used to do the clients and over the years the clients we had, spread, generally by word of mouth, very little advertising and by introduction, one client to another. One of my first clients in car hire was a Mrs Bliss who lived in Oakleigh Park North and her husband was the Royal Saddlers, Bliss & Co and another local client was a Mrs Cummins who was the daughter of the owner of the *Hornsey Journal* and she was a pharmacist, but we went right across the span as far as incomes were concerned. One day we would be taking a dustman to work, or taking him to his holiday at the station, and the next day you would be driving a Head of State.
- DB Were you doing funerals at that stage?
- GD We did funerals manly for Burrige & Co of Wood Green and for Nodes at Crouch End.
- DB Did you have hearses?
- GD We had hearses latterly but we started off with Austin 18s, Austin 20s and 28s and then Austin Sheerlines. which were the first new cars that we ever bought as limousines and then Austin Princesses. One of the first Princesses we bought was when the Queen became the Monarch she had a particular car a hand built Austin Princess which I was able to purchase from her.
- DB Did it have her name in the log book?

GD No, but it had a blue light on it and the mast and £7000 worth of extras inside the car and we ran that for a number of years for weddings and funerals and VIPs. In fact, it was because of that car that we had a contract with a big Japanese bank, Sanwa, in the City; I think it was the third largest bank in the world and I used to drive the Chairman whenever he visited London and the managers during their period in London.

DB And then you moved to 1-3 Pembroke Road?

GD Yes, it was my daughter's age plus a year, so it was 55 years ago. We built our garage at a site numbered 1-3 Pembroke Road which previously had been the sheds belonging to the general shop on the corner, Blewetts. Basically, you thought of him as a grocer but you could buy anything from him – nails, sand, cement, paraffin and he kept these in the sheds and the bits that were open during the war were used as a dumping place for broken glass, so if you ever dig in our garden you always find glass! The building didn't go as smoothly as might have done because halfway through the builder went bankrupt – he'd been spending the money that we had been paying him on account on the dogs and losing it and we knew this was happening because the bookmaker was one of our best clients, Hector Macdonald. He was a very good client of ours and we used to drive him to the races.

DB He had a shop round the corner.

GD It was originally a fish shop and he took it over as an office, and next door to him was Finch - they were the greengrocers - and next door to them was the haberdashers which was actually connected to Blewetts because the wife ran the haberdashers. I always remember Mr Blewett because he always had ham to be cut on the counter and he would be carving it and at the same time he would be smoking a cigarette with long ash. And Charlie Blewett came on holiday with us to Scotland, the first holiday that he had ever had and we were in a tent (we had travelled up with my mother and father and they slept in the car and we slept in this little bivouac tent) and I woke up one morning and I thought "*My goodness, Charlie's very hot*" and I went to move and suddenly all hell broke loose – it was a sheep that had come in the tent in the night and slept between us and he went out the wrong end and took the tent with him. The other amusing thing that happened on that holiday, it was prior to the War in 1936, and my father is cooking breakfast over a Primus stove and suddenly my mother said: "There's an aeroplane over there." and he was so busy looking at the aeroplane that he was pouring all the fat down his trousers.

DB So the builder went bankrupt.

GD And then we got local people in to finish it off.

DB This was the garages with the flat over the top?

GD It was supposed to have been ready for the birth of my child, Sue. She actually became the last head girl of Woodhouse School, before it became a College. She became a bit of a gadabout, she has travelled in 22 countries because she went to University and came out as a geographer but, unfortunately, there was a glut of teachers at the time, so she decided not to go into the teaching profession. First of all, she was going to work for Radio Rentals, but eventually she was amongst the first people to go straight from university to work for John Lewis. She then had some dispute with the management at John Lewis, together with six other people who had been employed at the same time and she left and went to France. Just before she went to university she had been offered a job at Readers Digest as author of a geographer. She had been trained as shorthand, accountancy and bookkeeping and to achieve a pass for this school you had to achieve 85% in every subject, before you could leave. Most of them took five years; she took a year. It was at the Readers Digest that she met a man who was an artist in oils and his wife was a watercolour artist and they had this place in France where they did teaching sessions in art. My daughter went over to the Dordogne and she stayed on and looked after this place in the winter and she also worked in a Les Routiers restaurant and she was in there one day when someone came in and said that she didn't look like the type to work in a Les Routier restaurant and they asked what she had done before and when she told them, he offered her a job as a teacher at the Atlantic College, teaching overseas students. So she went there and thought that the business wasn't doing so well so she insisted on being paid weekly instead of monthly and in fact the place closed after two years and she was the only one who got paid.

DB You ran the Alexandra Hire until when? When did you retire?

GD I retired twelve years ago – I ran it for fifty years.

DB And you had a partner?

GD Yes, Ron and my brother were all equal. My mother adopted Ron Mansfield, so he was like a brother. The business changed over the years, it was divided into three things there was the funeral side where we supplied vehicles to the local undertakers; there was the local business with people to station and small journeys – I used to drive Margaret Rutherford.

DB Did she live locally?

GD She lived in Highgate Village. And there was Yehudi Menuhin and Paul Rogers the actor. He told me an amusing story at one time. I was driving down Regent Street and some people were standing on the pavement and they looked the wrong way as they stepped off. That was alright, but they left one friend behind and he suddenly saw his friends on the other side of the road – they were obviously from overseas – and he just ran, and I tipped the car on its nose and Paul Rogers went under the dashboard and in a very loud Shakespearian voice told them what he thought of them. He told me an amusing story. When he was in the Navy at Portsmouth and when they were slipping, and he had to have an urgent journey to

the heads and his Number One was in charge of the vessel and he was going astern and he hadn't realised that there was one coming down on the stream and it chopped the stern off and he was sitting in it. And at the court martial he was asked where he was at the time when he was not in command of the vessel and he said "*On the head. Sir*" But I met all these interesting people, that's what made my life so interesting. I have driven four Lord Hoods over the years. The senior one was a widow and he lived in Eaton Square and then I drove his brother and then the two sons.

DB Is then business still going?

GD It's still going in name. I sold it to a young man who I thought was interested in running it, but he didn't want to be told and he virtually lost all our customers within a year. He tried to run it on a mobile phone instead of from an office, but he was one of these young men who wouldn't be told and knew it all and in fact he didn't pay me the second and third instalments on the business.

DB Can you tell me a bit about the Freehold? You mentioned that it was a rough area and I believe that the original inhabitants were workers on the building of Alexandra Palace. First of all let's define what the Freehold is. As I understand it is Colney Hatch Lane on one side, Alexandra Road on the other and Cromwell Road to the south and up to Wetherill Road.

GD And it takes in the old sewerage works at the end of Cromwell Road.

DB Do you remember them?

GD I can tell you a story about them. We had an Irish setter called Leaping Bess because she always jumping over our eight-foot fence in the garden and going off and she would go for swims in the sewerage works and came back stinking to high heaven and we had to put the hose on her. She had another habit. I don't know if you can remember but in the past people used to put out their joint of meat on the window sill of the kitchen to let it anneal. Well, she knew about this and she used to steal their Sunday joints and bring them back over all the fences. She was such an amazing jumper she would stand completely still behind the bar with customers standing behind the bar and someone would put their hand to open the door and she would leap over the customer's heads and was gone through the door as it opened – you could never keep her in. The other thing I remember about the Freehold was as a child they all thought I was the rich kid. Little did they know the work I had to do to earn my pocket money. Before I went to school for an hour and two hours after I worked in the pub because we imported all our wines and spirits in barrels and I used to bottle it, amongst other jobs like stoking the boiler and chopping the firewood and taking out the empties. But it didn't seem unnatural – my father was away in the RAF and I was just helping my mum.

DB Was your mum the manager?

GD No, she was a tenant. A manager is under the control of the brewery for everything he buys. A tenant pays a rent to the brewery and is responsible for ordering the beer only from the brewery, but everything else you order from wherever you like because you are actually the landlord of the pub. These days of course many of the houses are managed, which means they are completely tied in as to where they can buy their stock. My mother always used to worry when the man called the Abroad Cooper was coming from the brewery to inspect the premises, because she was responsible for the total upkeep of the building. The pub has actually been rebuilt three times. When she moved in Cromwell Road and Colney Hatch Lane were unmade. Many of the people on the Freehold, particularly the women, worked in Friern Hospital as various nurses and domestics. In fact, we had a contract with the hospital whereby if any patients went adrift, we would pick up the nurses and go and collect them from all over the country. The M1 had just opened and one of my chauffeurs is driving back with a patient and the patient woke up and the two nurses were sound asleep and he put his hands round our driver's neck and pulled him out of the seat but, fortunately the kerfuffle woke the nurses up and they took then patient to the nearest hospital to sedate him again. On another occasion I was doing one and it was in a block of flats on the second floor and we knocked on the door and the patient answered the door, saw who we were and he ran across the room and there was a man repairing his television set, he jumped over him and off the second floor balcony and was gone. The local people in the main were builders, carpenters, plumbers, plasterers - they were nearly all tradesmen and there was the greengrocery family, the Finch's their main shop was in Cromwell Road and they had a shop in Pembroke Road and they had a mobile round that they ran from the *Orange Tree* pub at the stables there – they had a horse. And horses were very much in evidence on the Freehold and many of the little houses in Cromwell Road – the cottages – had stables in the gardens. And there would be the rag and bone man, and the grind up man. So it was very much a village community until during the First World War when the new people moved in and brought all their rivalries with them. Then the area completely changed and although it was before my time I still suffered from it with the people I was allowed to play with as a child. There were certain families I was told to steer clear of, although, of course, I didn't

DB What about the schools in the area?

GD The junior school was Hollickwood which my daughter went to and is still there. The senior school was on the corner of Sydney Road and Hampden Road, where the flats are now, and that was hit by a direct hit by bombs, not rockets and it was never rebuilt. Behind the school was a field and then along Hampden Road was the Village Institute.

DB That is now the Jaystock business.

GD Quite how that was ever sold I shall never know, because it belonged to the community. I suppose members got paid out.

DB Do you remember the recreation ground?

- GD It surrounded the school and it was a public recreation ground. Going back to the locals, at one time there were seven factories in this area and that is where a lot of the women worked. There was Cambridge Instruments and they did coil winding and things like that.
- DB Where exactly was that?
- GD Their factory was on Sydney Road. If you went up Pembroke Road there used to be a scout hut right at the top before you got to the flats on the corner of Colney Hatch Lane and the Cambridge Instruments factory was there and that's where the other chapel was. It's Cambridge Gardens now.
- DB And there was a chapel in Cromwell Road wasn't there?
- GD The Bethel. It was a strange building because it was reinforced concrete, all white and they didn't have many windows – probably just as well in our area, because they would surely have broken them. And there was a little row of shop, very old shops, before the Bethel, on the lefthand side going down to the sewage works. And then there were two modern shops and at one time and one of them at one time was a doctor's surgery. And the end house was actually on the North Circular because that was one of the groundsmen's houses before the Hospital and it had been cut off by the North Circular.
- DB That was within the Hospital grounds.
- GD Yes, because the Hospital grounds came all the way along the back of Cromwell Road. And the wall in Cromwell Road was part of the Hospital. I can remember when the cows used to be driven across the North Circular into that field from the farm. Because it was all self-supporting and a lot of people don't realise that they did all the laundry for the London hospitals and it came in by rail and there is a siding that runs into the hospital. And they repaired all the sheets as well. In fact, I used to pass that as I went to Friern Barnet Grammar School, I used to walk up Colney Hatch Lane past the bad girl's home on the right – that used to be where the Repair Shop was and they built a little block of flats there.
- DB Going back to the other industries on the Freehold....
- GD There was DCMT, Die Cast Machine Tools, that was at the top of Pembroke Road on the right, that is Pembroke Studios now. And then there was the shoe and handbag factory, Priory, that was in Roman Road.
- DB That was on the south side of Roman Road, where the little block of flats is now?
- GD Yes. The *Royal Oak* was on the corner. My mother and the *Royal Oak* both had women publicans as so did the *Alexandra* at Muswell Hill. When my mother and father retired they didn't move very far away, they moved up to Cedar Court in Colney Hatch Lane, got fed up with doing nothing and then went and managed

the off licence that is now the *Maid of Muswell* in Alexandra Park Road. And then they eventually retired to where we always knew they would do, to Bracklesham Bay in Sussex. The first time I went to Bracklesham Bay was on the back seat of an Austin Seven in the wide piece of a chest of drawers – they didn't have carry cots in those days, and my daughter learned to ride there under my mother's tuition.

DB What about the other shops in the Freehold?

GD It's very strange. We never went to the shops in Sydney Road. Even now you will find that the people that go to those shops don't go to our general shop. The parade of shops here was Blewetts, which was a general grocers, next door was the butchers and he brought his meat in in large quantities and did all his butchery in the shop at the back. And then you had Newman's did newspapers, sweets and cycle accessories. If you wanted a lamp or a battery you went there – even as far back as acetylene lamps you went to Newman's. One of the Newman daughters married my mother's head barman and then they moved away. The next shop to that was the haberdashers run by Mrs Blewett and that eventually became a grocer's shop. Of course, the only one left now is the newspaper shop and the newspaper round they used to have twenty boys delivering. On the corner of Hampden Road and Pembroke Road there was a dairy and they had ten hand carts that delivered the milk. It belonged to the Pettit family. Milk came in in bulk and they then bottled it and latterly it probably came in bottles. I remember the bottles with the cardboard inserts. It was a three-wheeled cart.

DB And there were shop further up Pembroke....

GD Yes. On the corner of Stanley Road and I think there was shop next door to that at one time. There was a Co-op on the corner of Roman Road and a hairdressers, and the next corner up there were two shops, one on each side. I think they were little grocers. People round here shopped on tick, they didn't pay till Friday, when the husbands got their wages. In those days people didn't have fridges. I can remember when Madeleine and I got married and that was in '55 we didn't have a fridge to start with, we had an Osokool that's the thing that had a dish on the top that you poured water in and inside was a biscuit tin. I can remember the beer being delivered at the pub by steam lorry and the milkman coming in a two-wheel dray with a big churn and he would measure it out into your jug with a ladle. I have a friend of mine who used to dive one in Enfield and he was doing a delivery in Trent Park and the horse ran away and covered him in milk. He said the only trouble was he had to pay for the milk!

DB What about the bus garage. Do you remember anything?

GD The bus garage was very useful to us as a pub because that's where we used to go and get our change, when they were cashing up, either coppers or even ten shilling notes, not that they had many of them in those days. And, of course, our drivers in the car hire were bus drivers doing a bit of moonlighting. And fire engine drivers and ambulance drivers. They were all skilled

DB And they used to park the buses in Cromwell Road.

GD I don't really know why they did that. It was a way of turning them round but why they didn't just turn them round in the garage I shall never know. I meant that the buses used to come down here (Pembroke Road) and there was a bad bit of road outside and it the vibration took all the tiles off our kitchen wall – it is a steel framed building. I don't see the point of parking in Cromwell Road because the drivers would have had to walk to the bus garage to clock off. A lot of people round here worked for the Council on dustbins and road cleaning. The other business was the big heavy removals people in Sydney Road between the *Royal Oak* and Newton Avenue they had a big yard at the back and they were specialist heavy movers. It's called Louis Mews now. Joe Fernandes worked in Cromwell Stores (now Garip Supermarket) and he used to come round and wash our cups and saucers up in the garage because we had non-stop tea on with all the drivers coming and going and my wife was taken ill with cancer and Ron started to do the books which he wasn't very keen on and Joe said he could do them because he was a banker in Zanzibar. India took over and he was working for a Scottish bank there and the banks were nationalised and he refused to take Indian citizenship and he wouldn't so he got on a plane to England and took any job he could get. He tried to get British citizenship and they refused him, so he wrote to the Prime Minister and got it. That would be Harold Wilson. He was a great cricketer too. So that's how he came to work here, and he did the books for twenty years. And the business on paper still runs as Alexandra Chauffeur Hire. Opposite Albion Avenue in Pembroke Road there are four or six houses that we call the barracks. You will find that they have got setts on the steps and it was where the Middlesex Yeomanry housed their men and behind it, when you came in from Colney Hatch Lane, was where the stables were.

DB When did that disappear?

GD As a barracks, long before my time because the mews off Colney Hatch Lane was where the deep underground meat store is.

DB That was at the end of Bedford Close, wasn't it?

GD Bedford Close was where the stables were. The reason I know this is that we wanted to build a garage there and we wanted a petrol pump and they wouldn't do it because of the meat store. There is a building on it now, but there never used to be.

DB Who owned the meat store?

GD Reynolds, It is an emergency store and they were wholesale butchers. It must still be there because they haven't filled it in, it would cost a fortune because it was refrigerated. They have actually built a house on it now at one time it was just a tiny building and the lorries used to back up unload and it went down on the lift. It's a big one. The reason I know about it is that one of the drivers used to do a lot

of those deliveries at night during the War and they didn't want people to know where these places were. He used to come down with his lorry and get drunk in the pub and my father used to drive his lorry back up to Bedford Close and leave him there asleep and by the time he got back the bloody lorry was down again, so he was able to drive when he was drunk.