

# A HISTORY OF NEW ROAD ELSENHAM



The Bell From Gold's Nursery New Road

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# How New Road Developed

Some of the facts and stories are repeated within this account, partly to credit the sources and partly to give the narrative chronology. I hope it isn't irritating.  
H.S. May 2018

I became interested in finding out how New Road developed because the house we live in - Four Gables, 20 New Road - was very influential in how the pattern of housing came about, both along the road and off it. Until New Road was constructed it was a farm track of some sort and Ugley Green was also connected to Elsenham Station by a footpath, which ran to the north of the current road and had a footbridge over the railway by what is called 'The Bell House'. Also it was in the parish of Stansted and remained so until 1946.



Ordnance Survey Map of 1897 Showing the Position before The "New Road" was Constructed Until New Road was Constructed only a footpath just North of This Map and a farm track existed Between Elsenham Station and Ugley Green

Some time in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mr William Fuller Maitland, who had land in Ugley Green and was an influential Chairman of Stansted Parish Council, proposed that there should be two new roads constructed to make the Green better connected; one should go down Fieldgate Lane and across Waytemoor Common to link with St Peter's Church, Ugley and the other should go to

Elsenham Station (still called that after its move from Fullers End in 1847 although the down platform, to Cambridge, was in Stansted and the up platform in Henham.) He was told that there was not enough money for two roads and the road to the Station was chosen. The road was built some time before 1902 when it is recorded on maps and most likely in 1898 when it is referred to in the deeds for the bungalow now numbered 41. and quite a while before 1913, when the bungalow "Lyndon" (now 56 New Road) was built.

There appears to have been some activity on the site which became known as Gold's Nurseries from before 1890 when the row of cottages then known as Gold's Cottages, today odd nos. 67 to 77, were built. Gordon Barker has records that it was used for making terra cotta objects, associated with the Nursery trade. It was run by a firm called 'Pulham and Son. Est 1874 specialists in rock formation and manufactures of Pulhamite Stone'. This company had their main premises at Broxbourne, also near a station. The 1911 census records a Herbert Pulham, nurseryman aged 34, living in Elsenham High Street with his wife, aged 30 and two small children. The original plot for Gold's appears on a map illustrating the purchase of a parcel of land outright in 1893 from the Elsenham Hall estate by the then tenant, Sir Walter Gilbey. This land (5 acres 0 rods and 16 perches ) abutted the farm track in the south and joined up with land owned by Charles Gold junior to the north who, presumably, had bought it from Pulham. The Golds may already have had some access to the station and Station Road from the east end of their site and so might not have needed other access to function but this was an improvement. This Charles Gold was Sir Walter's nephew and son of the Saffron Walden M.P. Charles Gold. In September 1898 Sir Walter sold this parcel of land to Gold Bros. Ltd for £255 and it is in the record of this transaction where we have the reference to 'the new Road' as being the southern boundary. Its boundaries being described as land to the west owned by William Fuller Maitland, to the north by land owned by Charles Gold Jnr, to the east by Sir Walter Gilbey ( his land went down to the station) and to the south "by the new Road". In 1897 Gold's Nurseries had expanded when the glasshouses were put up by Charlie Martin of Bishop's Stortford who also built the pump house memorial to Lady Gilbey. So by 1898 the Golds owned a large chunk of land from the station to what is now the start of Bedwell Road. The Manager's house for Gold's Nurseries, now no. 5 New Road, down the track beside the Station Master's house was built in 1901 originally, so Di Suckling says, for a Gold family member planning to get married but the marriage did not take place (see below).

I have yet to find out when it was given the official name of New Road as even in the 1930s people who lived here called it Ugley Road and it was in the parish of Stansted.

In 1900, Harry Mallet Butters came to be Stationmaster at Elsenham, all the way down from Isleham in Cambridgeshire, to live in the semi-detached stationmaster's house, now no. 3 New Road, (which has been vacant for

some years up to the time of writing ) adjoining the shop at the station. In preparation for retiring, he purchased a plot of land from the Gilbey Estate in 1918. This land was part of the Broom Farm holding and stretched along part of the south side of New Road. The east end of the plot started on the west side of the current no. 10 New Road. The western boundary extended to the west side of what is now the access road to a block of Alsa Gardens garages and the new bungalow, now 24 New Road. I think that at that time, the southern boundary of the plot purchased was the stream, the one that flows east, under Station Road and the level crossing to join the Cam as it comes down from Little Henham. The purchase price was £100 and Mr Butters was permitted by the conveyance to erect "one house and offices and outbuildings or glass houses for flowers or propagation". More land was acquired in 1933 but that's another part of the story.

In 1919, Harry Mallet Butters' two eldest sons, Reginald Gooby Butters and Henry Robert Butters bought another plot of land from Broom Farm. It joined the western boundary of their father's plot and ended at the bungalow "Lyndon", then owned by Mr Stephens, and stretched back to the stream. The cost was £125 plus a proportion of the tithes due on the parcel of land. Lyndon had been built in 1913 by Mr Hiscocks who subsequently built the bungalow next door, which became known as no.60.

In 1920, Harry Mallet Butters started building "Four Gables"- see photos- on his plot of land. He also acquired a redundant railway carriage, which was stationed on the plot and was to serve as the bath house until the beginning of the 1970s. Alas he died in February 1921 aged only 55, before completion and so never moved in. Harry's wife Kate did, his daughter Kate and his sons Reg, Henry, and (William) Edgar, AKA Buff . In 1922 the restrictive covenant limiting building on the plot to one house was declared void, perhaps when the rest of the Gilbey Estate was sold.



Four Gables Under Construction 1921



South Face of Four Gables

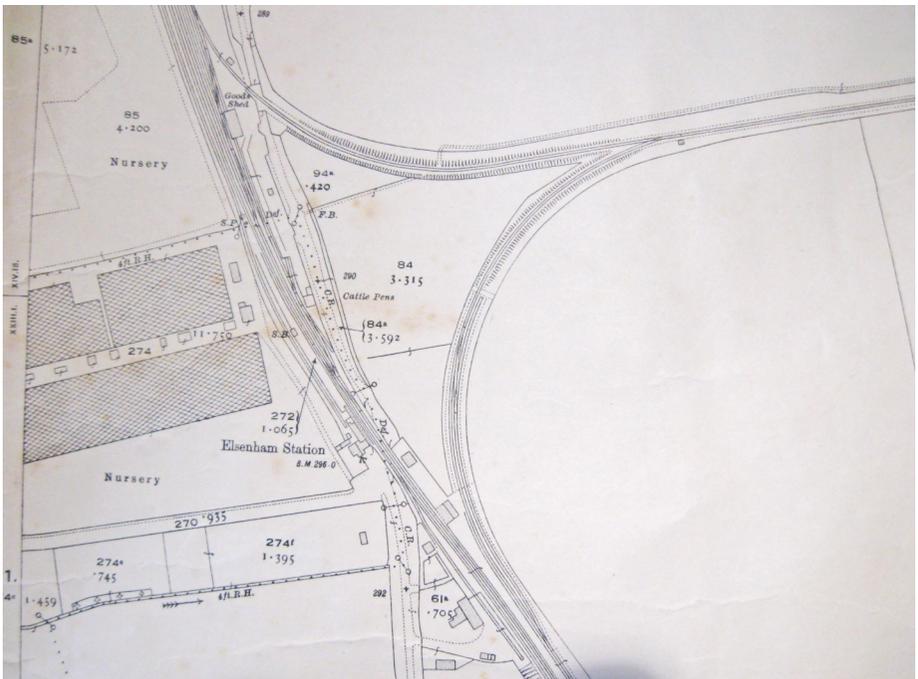
In 1926, the younger son, Edgar (Buff) married Gladys Marion Turner from Henham and had a two-bedroomed cottage built on the family plot, called Broom Cottage (now 26 New Road), to the west of "Four Gables". In 1928, fed up with being a railway clerk, he decided to start his own nursery and called it Broom Nursery. Edgar and Gladys had a son, Reginald, born in 1929, to whom I am indebted for much family information see below.



Property Viewed From The West Showing Railway Carriage



Property Viewed From The East



Ordnance Survey Map of 1920 – The Elsenham to Thaxted Line now Shown (Since 1913)  
Gold's Nurseries with their own railway sidings and New Road

## *Broom Nursery, Elsenham*

I got to know Mrs Gladys Butters who lived at Broom Cottage, 26 New Road when in October 1975 my husband Paul and I moved into Four Gables, 20 New Road. In the course of conversation Gladys told me about herself and a bit about her family. She was, she told me, three months younger than the Queen Mother so had been born in October 1900 in Henham as Gladys Marion Turner. She and her husband Edgar had had their 2-bedroomed cottage built on part of the site of Edgar's family house, Four Gables, in 1926.

Of course when these two properties were built they had names not house numbers and were in what was known locally as Ugley Road and were in a different parish - Stansted.



**The Site of Broom Nursery Early 1920s – Notice The Stream – And Gold's Nurseries to The North**

Gladys also told me about the stream; she remembered that it flowed strongly, had a gravel bottom with watercress growing in it and provided the water for the nursery. The water for some of the trains that called at the station, not the main line ones but the local traffic and shunters, came from a water tower, always called 'the water column'. A tall edifice, it had the tank on top to which the water was pumped up by hand. It was sited in the small car park area now opposite Hunters Court and stood by an artificial pond that held the water supply. Gordon Barker reckons that the soil excavated to make the pond may well account for the hillock on which the bungalow 'Tyrone' and 'The House' now stand. The pond water came from a spring or a diversion of "our stream" (it forms the south boundary for

Hunters Court) then flowed (via an outlet?) and still does under the level crossing and joins the Cam or Granta as it comes down from Little Henham at the 90 degree bend where the road straightens up for the 'toot toot' bridge. There was much more water in the stream then, fed by the springs in the Alsa Gardens/Leys site. Because of the subsequent building on these springs the flow is now much reduced and has lost a lot of the wildlife associated with it.

I met her son Reg when he came on his visits to her and so I wrote and asked him if he could let me know what he remembered of the nursery to go into the records of The Elsenham Village History Society. In his reply Reg said that as he hadn't been our way for about 25 years some of his recollections were by now a bit hazy. He wrote :-

### *Broom Nursery, Ugley Road (New Road) Elsenham*

*The story of the nursery should start with Harry Mallett Butters, appointed Stationmaster at Elsenham Railway Station in 1900 when he moved from Isleham (Cambs.) Station, into the Station House at Elsenham with his family. He had 3 sons who all became clerks on the railway. My father, (William) Edgar was the youngest, Henry a bit older and Reg the eldest. Reg and Edgar served in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War (Henry was rejected on medical grounds).*

*After about 10 years as a clerk my father decided to have a change, and I think after contact with staff at Gold's nurseries (on the north side of Ugley Road) started his own nursery in 1928. His father, the Stationmaster, had decided to prepare for his retirement, and bought the plot of land from Sir Walter Gilbey, which had been part of Broom Farm and had been run by Alan Joyce from the big old house along Station Road. So, the nursery was called Broom Nursery and the house my father had built was called Broom Cottage. It was built by my mother's brother from Henham, Ralph Turner from Henham.*

*My grandfather had a house built on the plot too (now known as Four Gables) but he didn't live to move in there, dying in 1921 at the age of 55.*

*Some years after Edgar (always known as Buff), started the nursery, his two brothers Reg and Henry left the railway to join him, and the business became known as Butters Bros. That is how I remember it, as I grew up in Broom Cottage, having been born there in 1929. My grandfather's grave is in Elsenham cemetery (next to the railway line !) and his three sons are next to each other further over in the centre.*



*Broom Nursery Looking East Showing The Water Tower (See Below)*

*The plot of land to the south of Ugley Road had a nursery on the end nearest to Station Road and adjoining the garden of 'Four Gables'. I never saw this nursery in my time as only the foundations of the buildings were visible then. Beyond Broom Cottage was the drive in to Broom Nursery, and then the ½ acre of glasshouses, followed by the orchards planted by the brothers right up to the houses of Butterfields and Hiscocks which were opposite to Gold's cottages. We also owned two pieces of land behind 'Four Gables' and the nursery. The field behind 'Four Gables' and Broom Cottage ran right up to Scholes' land on the hill and alongside the gardens of the properties along Station Road. Behind our orchard was the 'Marsh' where there were springs which fed the stream which ran along behind the glasshouse and was dammed there to supply water for the crops. That was pumped to an overhead tank to supply the pressure. Further down, that stream passed 'Four Gables' garden down to Station Road, under the railway line to become the R. Cam.*

*N.B. The plot to the east of your garden at 'Four Gables' was always just a field of grass in my time, with no buildings on it.*

*We grew mainly tomatoes in the glasshouses, and not cucumbers. Also some flowers were grown and all the products were sent to the wholesale markets in London and Manchester. We also sold some retail to local customers from the packing shed which was behind the old railway carriage which my grandfather had 'acquired' from the old disused stock somewhere.*

*Coal was used in the boilers to heat the glasshouses through 4" hot water pipes. The coal was anthracite from S. Wales, transported in trucks, which came into the goods yard at the station. In the early days, produce was sent to market on the trains, but later on, road transport was organised. During the war, no flowers were allowed to be grown, and we concentrated on food crops both in the glasshouses and outside.*

*My uncle Reg died in 1953 and after that the nursery was sold to Mr. Rowley, who planned to grow cucumbers, but I never saw the results on the site after that.*

*Reg Butters*

*January 2015*

The Butters brothers acquired more land to the south, from Robinsons the Builders of Stansted, beyond the stream including an area now Alsa Gardens and a smaller part of Alsa Leys. To the west of the brothers' plot were the houses of the Butterfields (Lyndon) and the Hiscocks ( the adjacent bungalow recently demolished to make way for a pair of semi-detached houses and one detached house which were occupied in around 2009/10 now numbers 58,60 and 62.) Opposite these were the terrace of Gold's Nursery cottages built in 1890. Butterfields, it seems, were another orchard, renting land from the Butters.

So Butters Bros Nursery continued through World War II, changing what they grew to meet wartime needs. In 1953, Reg senior died and subsequently most of the nursery land was sold to a Mr Rowley to grow cucumbers. The Butters kept large garden plots for "Four Gables" and "Broom Cottage" incorporating the sites of what are now nos. 18 and 22, the stream and beyond. They also, I understand, kept the land now no. 12 and 14 New Road as individual building plots. Henry Butters lived in Four Gables until his death in 1972 supported by Miss Aylett as his housekeeper until her death in 1963. Her family were known to the Butters as her parents lived at Barnard's Coal Yard in Station Road close to the station water tank. Jim Aylett was in charge there and was involved with the Butters' anthracite supplies.

In 1957, Mr Rowley got planning permission to build a house at the western end of the plot (now No 54 New Road and much enlarged.)

In 1957/8, the plot for no 12 New Road was sold and a house built for Mr and Mrs Gent, the date on the septic tank reads 17<sup>th</sup> May 1958. He was retiring from his main career in the oil industry where he had been working in Haditha, west of Baghdad in Iraq and with his wife ran the shop by the station selling newspapers etc.

They moved in 1969, and Mr and Mrs Haslam plus son Alex moved into the property. The back gardens of 10, 12 and 14 were enlarged southwards in the early '70's when Jean Searle who lived in Quindon, Station Road, wished to downsize her garden and each of these three New Road properties bought the parcel of land beyond the stream from the top of her plot. Mrs Barbara Haslam organised the transaction

Of the parcel of land at the east end of New Road that Henry Mallett Butters did not buy (it was owned in 1898 by Mr. E. Ward and then by the Great Eastern Railway I understand) there is general agreement that for some time it remained as a grassed area. It was sometimes used as the site for travelling village fairs – the usual rides and stalls which Gordon Barker remembers riding on – and for a while as grazing for donkeys which were used in the goods' yard for shunting.

There is a well in the garden of Bumbles (no. 10) which was sunk to provide water for the animals. I am indebted to Jenny Ingrey, who lives in 'Bumbles', for much of this information. Her mother was the crossing keeper for the overpass at the 'toot toot' bridge before they moved to Henham so she has lived in the neighbourhood for quite a while. I have been told that sometime in the 1930's the Great Eastern Railway sold this field to a Mr Duisschitot (best guess at spelling). He was a business man from Belgium and at the time was the Manager of Old Mead Farm in Old Mead Road before the Van Dreissche family. The garage with fuel pumps was already built in the 1950's according to Mrs Betty Francis who remembers it being there although it is not shown on a 1960 Ordnance Survey map. This was subsequently sold to Mr Fred Naylor who had a garage further up Station Road at what is now Ambrose Corner. Mr Naylor sold the New Road garage to Arnold Willis for his two nephews Steve and Tony to run. Steve moved into the first detached bungalow on the north side of New Road (now no.7) and in the cold winter of 1962/63 using part of the site opposite, the house (now Bumbles) was built and Tony moved in to it. The Willis brothers ran the garage until late 1969. Then the Burchetts, father and son took over (no fuel pumps by now) and when they moved on around the late '70's, John Milczarek and a business partner ran it until the business closed in around 1983/4. (Sorry if these dates are vague/incorrect) Planning permission for a block of flats was granted and an early resident who moved in sometime in 1986 to the now named Hunters Court was Mrs Gladys May Palmer, formerly of South View, Stansted Road.

Some time in the 1960's, Mr Rowley had given up growing cucumbers and, at a precise date I have yet to determine, sold his land for building development to Federated Homes but the company may not have started immediately except for demolition of greenhouses etc. but by late 1967/68 things were moving. Federated's purchase included of course Broom Nursery House, (now no.54) the new dwelling put up by Mr Rowley. Mr David King the site Manager for Federated and his wife Brenda moved in and applied to have a detached garage built.

Also, to gain the access they needed for a block of garages, Federated bought a strip of land at the western edge of Buff and Gladys Butters' plot of land. The Butters applied for planning permission to build a dwelling on their back land but were refused! So Gladys told me.

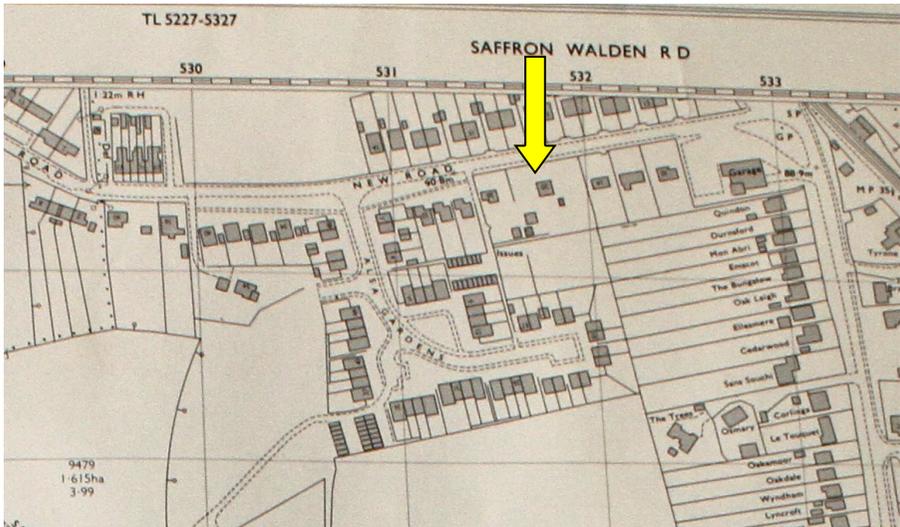
Phase I of this development started with the three detached houses, now nos 28, 30 and 32 New Road which were ready to be occupied in 1968/9 and a few of the houses in what is now Alsa Gardens plus the New Road bungalows nos 34 to 40.

Phase II saw the completion of Alsa Gardens with Chris and Diane Bush settled in no 18 Alsa Gardens in August 1969 and both the Tulleys and the Haggerwoods arriving in October of that year to No 40 and 16 respectively.



Alsa Gardens Under Construction – Behind Martin Driver on his Tricycle can be Seen the Caravan/Site Office Where Gill Burgess Dispensed Keys at Weekends. Alsa Wood in The Background

When, having bought their new house from Federated, Peter and Gill Burgess were ready to move in, they found to their dismay that there was a telegraph pole sited right in the middle of their access drive! It was removed. As one of the first occupants of the Phase I houses on New Road, Gill assisted with weekend sales. She would be stationed in the caravan by the entrance road and would have the keys either to show people round or to let purchasers have access to their properties.



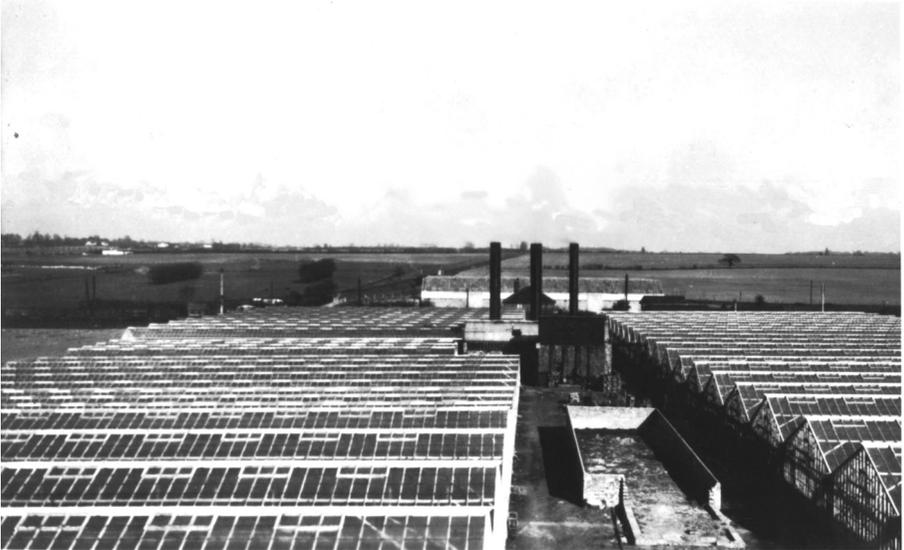
Ordnance Survey Map of 1969 Showing Alsa Gardens relationship to New Road  
Four Gables Highlighted

At first, sewage disposal was a temporary arrangement. There was a sewer running around the Alsa Gardens site which also took in the houses and bungalows being built on the New Road frontage. Sewage was collected via septic tanks and pumped to a sewage works in a field behind the development. The pumping gizmo was in a green tank sited at the end of the block of garages behind nos. 28 and 30 New Road. The tank had a flashing light on top which flashed red if there were a blockage. Heather and Dick Haggerwood could see this light from their house so it often fell to them to 'phone the engineer and report the problem. The permanent sewer came to New Road in early 1974 which fits nicely with the building of the early part of Jenkins Drive and Gold Close in that year. Alsa Leys phase I followed in the 1980's, phase II in 1999 and phase III, now called Lancaster Close, was occupied in 2017. The sewage works stood unused until demolished to make way for the first extension to Alsa Leys.

After Henry Butters died in 1972, Four Gables and adjacent plots of land, but not that for Broom Cottage where Gladys Butters still lived, were sold to local builder, Mr Pratt of Duton Hill. He enlarged Four Gables and made internal alterations and sold it to the Ryan family in 1973. He also sold off the plots for what are now 18 and 22 both going to people who arranged self-build. No.18 was built by Gordon Capser a plasterer with a good line in Artex and his family, wife Sylvia and children Mark and Debbie and

no. 22 by Peter Dowson, who did shuttering for sewage works, and his wife Margaret and daughters Sue and Lesley. This was still being finished when we moved in in October 1975. A condition of our mortgage was that we had to connect to the sewer within 6 months, which we did. Daughter Kaye was born in February 1980.

Crossing back over the road once again we pick up the Gold's Nurseries story. It was Henry Boyd who gave me the photo of Gold's Nurseries looking east towards the railway and packing sheds and showing the boiler house placed 'centre stage' but it was Michael Ellis who told me about Henry.



Gold's Nurseries looking east towards the railway and packing sheds  
and showing the boiler house placed 'centre stage'

Henry had worked in the boiler house, crucial of course for keeping the hot houses heated. Michael also told me that among the flowers grown were, in winter, cyclamen. Cucumbers were grown using manure in hot beds – Sewells did 'the manure run' to keep up the supplies. Tomatoes were another glasshouse crop. Tomatoes and cucumbers were collected twice a week from the packing sheds by Bywaters for the Nottingham market. I think that this was the time when Christopher and Donald Gold were the owners.

As a boy, Henry Boyd and another, Jim Power, were orphans and were brought up by Mr Freshwater who was then, in around the 1930's, the Manager at Gold's and lived in the Manager's House. Henry went on to work at Gold's and Jim became a mechanic and one time worked for Lotus.

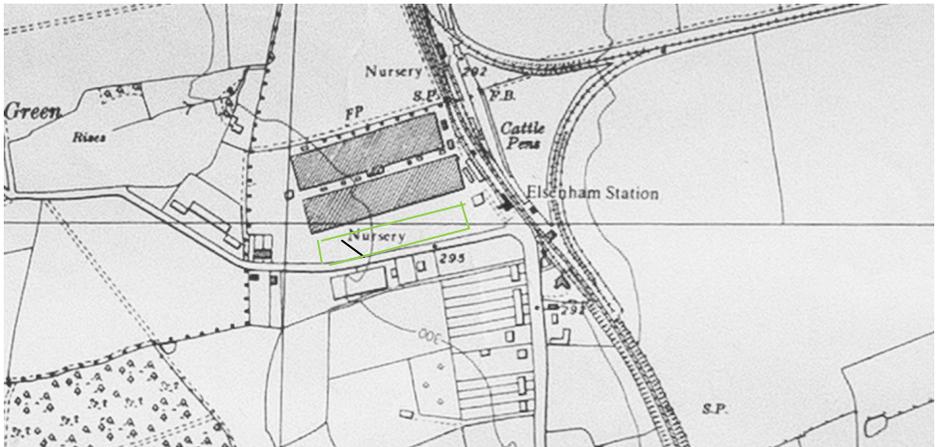
In the late 1940's Henry married Marjorie Ellis a war widow whose husband Charlie Ellis had been shot down when their little boy, Michael was only six weeks old. Killed in the same crash was another crew member who was Mr Ellis's close friend and Michael's godfather. Donald Gold of Gold Bros. Ltd. became his guardian.

The enlarged Boyd family lived in Gold's Cottages in what is now no. 67. Then they moved to one of the new council houses, 1 Mill Close. Later Marjorie and Henry were the first occupants of one of the new bungalows, 45 New Road, built in 1974 by the UDC along the first bit of Jenkins Drive and round the corner into New Road on what had been Gold's land. This is when Michael moved to Park Road. Another couple who were the first occupants of the new Jenkins Drive bungalows were Beatrice and Eustace Frank Todd of the Todd family of Ugley and Elsenham. They were both in their 80's when I got to know them and Frank, as he was known, used some of his retirement by selling cucumbers and tomatoes and home-made bread to the locals. He was also a citizens' band enthusiast and when I asked him what his handle was, he replied with a broad grin, " Why, Sweeny of course". Beatrice had a talent for poetry and some was broadcast on local radio.

Donald Gold and his sister, Madge, lived in Stansted at the 'Ravens' at the top of Grove Hill and he was involved in the Scouts. Michael's father had been a Queen's Scout and Mr Gold, as Michael's guardian, continued to take an interest in him and would ask him to visit to talk about his welfare and progress. When Michael left school and went to work for Clement Joscelyne's in Bishop's Stortford, Donald, who was a regular client there, would arrive to make sure he was behaving himself. Later Michael and his business partner set up their own company for Interior Design and Soft Furnishing taking them as far afield as all over Europe and to Long Island, U.S.A. He had another 'international' contract, this time in Scotland for the Earl of Linlithgow. He was there to furnish the breakfast room and guest bedroom including the four-poster bed. Staying at the house, he was given another guest bedroom that also had a four-poster to sleep in. More locally Michael did the kitchen and blinds throughout the House for Audley End and other work for Historic England at Dover Castle.

At some point the Gold's Manager's house had been adapted as two flats for the use of Gold's staff and in late 1961 was sold to Pip and Di Suckling. They lived in the ground floor apartment and let the upper floor to Jenny and Peter Ingre (see more below). When the Ingreys moved to Bishop's Stortford in 1965, the Sucklings used the whole house and in mid 1969 the Ingreys moved back to New Road, this time to Bumbles, no.10.

In 1959 Gold's Nurseries ceased trading and the strip of land on the south side of the site fronting on to New Road -see map below - was sold to builders, the Claydon Brothers. They built the bungalows there, two detached, then 7 pairs of semi-detached and two more detached.



1960 Ordnance Survey Map – With Area of Claydon's Bungalows Highlighted in Green

They were numbered 1 to 18. Many have since been adapted as two-storey. The first one was occupied in 1959. One of the semis, now 23 New Road was ready in April 1960. The Drivers moved in to what was no.18 in June of that year. The original asking prices for the new bungalows were; semi-detached £2,200, detached either £2,450 or £2,650 and I'm indebted to Mrs Dot Driver and Martin and Nicky for a copy of the original deeds and these vintage family photos.



New Road Claydon Bungalows Under Construction



### The Driver Archive

Top To Bottom: Nicky and Martin Driver showing wide open space; The Back Gardens of the Bungalows Before fences with Passing Steam Train; Starting the Garden Dot Driver Supervising Gold's Glass houses Before Demolition; Finally Settled In ! ; Peter's Pride and Joy – No Pavement on North side of New Road.

When Mr and Mrs Bohan moved in to, now, no.13 in October 1968, the nursery buildings had been demolished and there were still heaps of brick and glass. Di Suckling says this was so even in 1965. Mrs Bohan further recalls that there were no pavements, just a wide grass strip over a piped ditch as there still is on the south side, and so little traffic that her neighbour's cat used to sleep peacefully in the road.

All these older dwellings had been serviced by septic tanks until the sewer came through. In 1965 there had been a New Road tragedy associated with these arrangements. A three-year old boy had wandered off and couldn't be found. A search party started to look for him and Peter Driver joined in as soon as he got home from work. Alas the searchers found the little boy in his own back garden, drowned in the septic tank where he had fallen through the broken cover.

Gold's Nurseries' Business Park commenced construction in 1985/6 followed later by Jenkins Drive extension and Spencer Close where the first occupants moved in to numbers 19, 20, 21 and Colin Smith into 22 in 1987. Maytree Gardens arrived in 1988 and the original households were Barbara and Dave Broad, Ann Morton, Aileen Steele, Fred Phillips and in no.5, Emmy Glasscock. Moving into the present century, the garden of no. 77 New Road now supports no.79, Holly House, and opposite it, number 60 was demolished and has been replaced by a pair of semis plus one detached house, nos. 58, 60 and 62.

At first houses on the south side of New Road were not numbered but had names, starting at the east end with Bumbles, then Haditha, Silverdale, Four Gables, Broom Cottage then a long gap to Lyndon. In August 1968 New Road was renumbered, presumably in advance of the Alsa Gardens development. South side had some gaps in the numbering and my best guess is that there was outline planning permission for pairs of semis which did not come to fruition so that could be why we start at 10 and go on to 12, 14, 18, 20, 22, 26 (and now 24 down the alley), 28 up to 40 then 54, 56 (was Lyndon) and 60. On the north side the shop became no.1, the semi-detached Stationmaster's house no. 3 (later occupied by railway staff, the last family being the Swains) the Manager's House, no. 5, then the bungalows no. 7 to 49, Gold's Cottages 67 to 77 and no 79. For some years, Elsenham Scouts met in the Scout Hut sited down the track leading to the Manager's House at the back of the Cambridge platform. Gordon Barker remembers Mr. Philip Truswell as the Scoutmaster.

In 2014 the shop became the Railside Cafe run by Clare and Carolyn, both of whom have local connections. No.3 remains empty, seeking a tenant.

This brings us up to just about the end of May 2018 so I'll return to some more memories by residents, past and present.

## *The Development of New Road – a talk with Mr and Mrs Purcell*

On 8<sup>th</sup> April 2015 I went to have a chat about New Road with Ellen and (Carlyle) Mick Purcell of No. 49. Ellen was born in Ugley Green in 1922. She remembers Saturday visits to Bishop's Stortford with her mother Mrs Rodgers (nee Levey), going to the pictures, having tea in Long's (a cafe which had a 'ballroom' at the back for dances and functions. H.S.) They caught the last train home, arriving at about 9:30 p.m. and then walked back up from the station at Elsenham, hoping that the bull kept at Gilder's farm ( now Braeckman's) was safely penned in. Ellen's mother could remember when the road to Ugley Green from the main road (old A11, currently B1383 H.S.) finished at Ugley Green and did not connect with what we know as New Road. When people who lived at Ugley Green wanted to get to the station they used the footpath across the fields which came out on Old Mead Road by "The Bell House" ( currently Network Rail wish to close this foot crossing as, under modern conditions, it is, in their view, dangerous. H.S.) Better-off people who owned a pony and trap would drive to Stansted Station. Ellen's mother could also remember that some time in the late 1800's Mr. Maitland who had land in Ugley Green proposed the creation of two new roads to link The Green to St. Peter's church, the parish church for Ugley and the other to Elsenham Station. This was by then established on its present site having been moved up from the original one at Fuller's End in about 1847. (Ellen says that at night you could hear all the trains shunting in the goods' yard ) Mr Maitland was told by the relevant authority that there were sufficient funds for only one highway so the road to Elsenham Station was chosen. There is still a public footpath from The Green to St. Peter's. The road was first called Ugley Road but changed to New Road later.

Ellen can recall many of the people who lived in Gold's Cottages (now nos. 67 to 77 ) and so called because of their association with Gold's Nurseries which opened in 1897. With its glass houses and water tower it occupied the land that is now Gold's Business Park, ( built in mid 1980's ) the bungalows on the north side of New Road starting at No. 7, Jenkins Drive, Gold Close, Maytree Gardens and Spencer Close. Number 5, the house down the driveway, was the Manager's House for the nursery. The Gold's Cottages' residents were, starting at the top, the Dixons, Mr. Bush and Jim, there were the Snows, - Ken and Dotty who moved – the Parfitts & the Guyvers. Ellen's dad used to cut hair as a sideline & did this for people in the cottages. *[Later Barry Samuels who lives in the cottages told me that the cottages were built in 1890 and used to have a piece of land at the back for growing things. They were on septic tanks for sewage and the run-off was piped under the fields down to the 'Cam'.*

*The middle cottage in the row had a pump for water and the other cottages had a gate to access it. In 1969, the cottages cost £3,800 to buy]*

Opposite these, in what is now No. 56 which was built in 1913, was Mr Butterfield and next to them in what is now 54 were the Hiscocks who had an orchard – so perhaps it is a very few of the original trees that survive in the garden of 54. These businesses were in addition to the Butters's Nursery based on Four Gables, now No. 20, further down the hill. I knew Gladys Butters ( nee Turner of Henham) who lived in No. 26, the then two-bedroomed cottage built in the grounds of Four Gables in 1926, on her marriage to Edgar Butters.

The manager at Gold's Nurseries was Mr Freshwater who brought up two boys, Henry Boyd and Jim Power. Ellen is not sure whether they were fostered or adopted but they – certainly Henry – went on to work at Gold's. When he retired, Henry and his wife lived in one of the modern bungalows, No. 45 New Road.

(Thanks to Pauline & Vic Dowsett for 'adjusting' one or two facts as recalled by Ellen)

**P. S.**

Both Ellen & Mick have since died, Ellen in January 2017 and Mick in that May.

**P.P.S.** Mick worked for Miss Paget in the stables where his brother (Leslie) Noel Purcell was head man. But it was Mick who, on entering Golden Miller's box one morning, found this famous racehorse cast in his box!

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## The Foreman's House – a mini history of 5 New Road

When my friend Linda and I were 18 we cycled across the fields from Henham every day down what we called ' the station path' (still a footpath) to Elsenham station. The station was very different then. It had a signal box which was manned at all times, porters who worked shifts covering from 6am to 10pm and the ticket office was manned all day. We were always late and Harry, the porter, used to hold the train, waiting door open, for us to rush on.

I had no idea then that in a few years I would be living right by Elsenham Station (or that 60 steam goods trains would be passing through every night!)

Pip and I bought our house (now 5 New Road) at the end of 1961 and moved in in February 1962. It had been built in 1901 and there was a lot to do to it. We were told it was originally built for one of the Gold family, but the expected wedding didn't happen and it became the nursery foreman's

house. Subsequently it was divided into two flats for workers.

When we were proudly showing Pip's sister our 'new' house, she was in tears saying "You can't possibly buy this old house!" It was covered in green and brown railway paint and we had to take up the cobbled kitchen floor, leaving only soil. There was a bath in the old washing (i.e. laundry) room and a toilet in the old coal shed. They were attached to the house and, luckily, they did have brick walls but left a lot to be desired.

As Jenny Ingrey explained, she and Peter were already living in the top flat. (They had a nice toilet at the top of the stairs and their flat was beautifully decorated, by them, of course!) When they left in 1965 we returned it to a single house. At this point all the nursery houses had been taken down and we seemed to be living in the middle of fields and from upstairs could see wonderful views all round (obviously ignoring the railway lines).

Over the years we gradually made many improvements and bought extra land from the council, who by then owned the rest of the nursery site land, Firstly the piece forming the main square of lawn at the side of the house and later the strip along the drive up to the walkway, which goes through the Business Park.

The nursery site land was put up for auction and building of the first phase of the Business Park began in the mid 1980s. Companies were moving into the second phase in 1991.

Since then, for us, not that much has changed yet . . . . .

Di Suckling

2015

P.S. Di added a family connection with the house; Pip's grandfather, Thomas Suckling, was the carpenter who made all the doors and windows for the house. It's not everyone who knows who put the woodwork in their house!

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*This contribution is from Cate Scott who lives in no. 9 / 27. She started 'The Nightbirds' when she used to work at the Airport in the catering department which included nightshift work.*

## The Nightbirds Local Charity.

How we were created.

10 to 12 Women worked in catering both day and nightshifts. This was in the old terminal at Stansted Airport where we catered for and served way less than a million passengers a year. One busy Sunday afternoon the large catering dishwasher broke down which caused no end of problems for the catering staff.

I called out the airport engineer and electrician who came to fix the machine. After a while the engineers were talking about their favourite subject 'football' in passing I said to them "Football? That's a girls game compared to Rugby which is a real man's game" this of course was like a red rag to a bull and after another hour of sarcasm and teasing the dishwasher was fixed and we were challenged to a 'Men against the catering ladies football match' but no date was set as we had not taken their challenge too seriously.

A few weeks went by when one of engineers reminded me about the challenge. I thought about it and at the end of another busy shift I sat down with my staff around 0300hrs in the morning asking them if they were up for the challenge, the majority said yes and after further discussion I said " well we are not playing for nothing maybe we could raise some money for Charity? With this in mind we all said goodnight, locked up the unit and went home to our beds.

A few months passed and in that time I had many discussions with different Airport sections to see how I could progress with the challenge and raise funds at the same time.

I asked one of the Airfield Operations Managers if he would manage and train the ladies as he knew a great deal about football, even though I had a completely different type of football game in mind.

I asked Derek Winter who was in Airport Public Relations among other things if he would do press coverage and take pictures. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise as Derek's son Keith was a member of a well-known group called 'Shakatak' and they had just released a record called Nightbirds. I thought that would also be a brilliant name for us ladies, so in 1982 "The Nightbirds Local Charity" was born. Derek and Shakatak sponsored us and provided us with tee and sweatshirts. One of the Airport Policemen designed our logo and had it printed onto our shirts. Now as "The Nightbirds" we were all set to take up any challenge and ready to spend many more years of Fun, Laughter and Naughtiness whilst raising lots and lots of money for local charity.

I gained permission from the Airports GM to hold the Airports first ever Fun Day which was open to the public. I organised a funday committee and the rest is history. In the 20 years that the Nightbirds were in operation we raised thousands of pounds to buy and to present to some of the following worthwhile causes and below is also some of the things we did and who we did them for : -

Dunmow Community Mini Bus      Helicopter flights for disabled children  
Pulse oximeters for Ambulance and Baby units      Flying Doctors kits for cars.

High Rise Automatic chairs, beds and hoists for many hospitals and hospices.

Crazy Highest Pancake Race, taking pancakes and sweets to children's homes in Amsterdam.

Crazy Football and Darts matches.      Cooked BBQs and fed the children from Chernobyl.

Climbed the North Face of Gt Dunmow      Entertained with one of the Nolan Sisters.

Danced the Can Can on the Airfield for New Airline.      Sludge Wrestling

Tug o War challenge      Entertained and visited many OAP Homes

Kitted out Clacton Lifeboat men.

Bought and presented life-saving equipment to baby units at PA hospital

Took 500 + OAPs to Seaside yearly      Equipment for H&E Hospital Rehab Unit

In actual fact there is much more but too much to mention.

In 2004 I retired from the Airport and although most of us ladies still keep in touch and see each other now and then, I think we are all a bit too old in the tooth now to be called 'The Nightbirds' as most of our nights are sadly for bed and sleep.

We officially folded the Nightbirds in 2005. Mrs Jane Steele who also lived in Elsenham had always been our treasurer so we gave our last few hundred pounds to buy a 'easy learning computer' for a young lad who had severe Downs Syndrome and that emptied the Nightbirds account. Over the years we have raised thousands of pounds for local charity causes.

Where possible we never gave money. We always tried to establish what was needed and then we purchased and presented it to those in need.

Our very first Fun Day way back in 1982 raised £1000 which was given to Dr Eaton of Saffron Walden to kit out a 'Flying Doctors Car'. We of course took up the challenge of the football game and won hands down due to cheating and playing dirty, very very dirty.

The Nightbirds thoroughly enjoyed their fund raising and challenges, we usually dressed in very short skirts or tutu, fishnet stockings and suspenders and I guess our poor male opponents never really stood a chance. We do still have many photos of our fund raising events to keep, the memories going.

Kind Regards

Cate.

March 2018

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## *From a chat with Brigitta Clarke who moved into 10 / 31 in 1978*

### Airport Life

A near neighbour of Cate Scott's, for about 30 years Brigitta also worked in the catering department at the airport. This was in the days of the old terminal which stood to the north of the present one and was accessed off Bury Lodge Lane and much less "modern". Because of pressing family commitments, Brigitta could not always join in the Nightbirds's fund raising escapades but when possible Cate pulled her in to be in the darts team and one or two other activities. The length of catering shifts could be unpredictable: if the team had to wait for late or delayed flights they could last for 9 – 18 hours and, having finished a shift and got home late at night or early in the morning, you could be called back to open up to cater for a planeload of disgruntled passengers whose flight had been returned to base.

Airport life was very different then: for instance on ordinary days security was far more "relaxed". If called in late to do a shift, Brigitta could drive up and park her car outside the old terminal and leave it there all night with no fuss. The airport police knew her registration number – so no problem. Security on flights was a different matter; the food provided for Israeli flights was treble checked for security.

Brigitta experienced two highjacks. One, the more serious, was when the plane taxied so close to the restaurant that the nose was practically touching the windows. That incident went on for more than 48 hours and the airport was sealed off. The electricity was turned off, so no lights and 250 police officers were drafted in. They had to be fed of course as did the passengers who were stranded inside the terminal. All in the dark you had to be careful when stepping over sleeping policemen and would-be passengers.

It had its lighter side too: catering for the events surrounding the Space Shuttle landing and V.I.P.'s such as Nicholas Lyndhurst, Joan Collins and Nat 'King' Cole. On one occasion a Zeppelin was based at the airport and flew half-hour trips for groups of 6 people who booked in advance. The pilot came in to collect his next group and found one had failed to turn up. He asked if anyone wanted the spare seat. 'Yes please' said Brigitta and took off her apron and went for a wonderful trip even if the landing mode was rather alarming!

All very different now.

## *From a chat with John Irish*

*March 2018*

Number 2 / 9 New Road

I got to know Mrs Lucy Wells a little bit shortly after we moved here and better later when I was an 'at home' Mum. I also knew she had a son John Irish, who left early for work and got back quite late. Lucy's first husband, John's father, had been killed in the war while serving in the Royal Artillery and she had remarried Sam Wells a regular churchgoer but he had died before Paul and I arrived here. The family moved to the then no. 2 in 1963 and John remembers his arrival quite clearly as he had not been to the house before and had ridden up from north London on his motor cycle. Adopting the same technique that he used in London, he pushed open the gate with the front wheel of the bike but, unlike London, the gate swung back on its spring and caught the cable of the throttle pulling it open wide, causing the bike to shoot forward with a loud roar. John braked and the bike performed a 180 degree turn, ending up frontwards in the hedge. New Road knew he had arrived.

Lucy herself was a staunch supporter of the W.I. and held fund-raising garden parties for the branch in her garden twice a year. She also held coffee mornings to support the Christian Mission to Rwanda on some Thursday mornings and I went when I could, having been issued with something close to a 'Royal Command'. When she was 60 she learned to drive and acquired first, a Vauxhall Victor and later a yellow Ford car described by John as a 'boy racer type of vehicle' which got her the soubriquet 'The flying Granny' from the Burchetts at the garage. Lucy died in 1992 .

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## *From John Beeston*

*March 2018*

Number 4 / 13 New Road

John's Mum died when he was young and later his Dad remarried a lady called Nellie Claydon whose brothers were in the building trade. Both John and his older brother Robin went on to work in Fleet Street in the printing side but by this time their father, too, had died. When John was 18, Nellie offered the boys the chance of moving to this place called Elsenham where her brothers were building bungalows - or would they prefer a flat in London? They chose Elsenham and leaving home in Surrey they boarded a train for London, took a tube to Liverpool Street station and sallied forth to Elsenham. It

seemed to take forever and the boys wondered how on earth they would get to work. Arriving at Elsenham Station they easily found no. 4 and so became the first of the new residents, together with step-Mum Nellie, in the bungalows on the north side. The brothers eased their way into Elsenham society via the football club, Robin becoming Secretary. John married Sue Sewell from Stansted Road and they still live in the village.

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*Many thanks to Ruth Calder for information about many of the later staff names.*

## The Shop

Some of the Tenants & other staff of “The Shop” by the station , as far back as my 'research' goes were :

1950's The Ayletts – still trading in Thaxted ; 1959 The Gents ; early 1960's Tom and Mary Whitley who first commuted from Bishop's Stortford then settled in Station Road in 1966. The papers arrived at 5 a.m. and were delivered to Henham, Molehill Green and Broxted, driven there by either Tom, Mary or later when he had a driving licence, son David. Other staff were Sylvia Bishop and Ronnie Wheeler and others including Barbara Haslam for a while. At that time the Howell family were in The Station House. Tom and Mary had to retire early in July 1977 when his treatment as a Japanese POW affected his eyes. Tom told me of one regular commuter who was so late for his train who, having grabbed his paper, chucked his car keys at Tom and said "Park her for me, could you, Tom" and shot off to the platform. Then Sylvia Bishop assumed the reins, and Ronnie Wheeler continued. Then came Rosemary Alterman assisted by Ronnie, Elaine Isaac and later Steve Hawkins. After Rosemary, Mrs Julia Smith took on the lease but the shop was staffed by Ruth Calder who remembers other staff as Marion Kaye, Ruth Tew, Rebecca, Chrissie, Jo, Hannah, Laura and Helen de Cleene. There followed a closure of three months until Clare and Carolyn took over in March 2014, assisted by Ruth Calder, Helen De Cleene and later by Jacky Mason and renamed it 'The Railside Cafe' eventually giving up the papers' trade to concentrate on the Cafe.

At first I thought that this little exercise would take a couple of months but it's now 2018 so I'm now going to call a halt, except to say that if you know something is incorrect, would you please let the Village History Society know. Equally if you have some information about a New Road anecdote or a family who lived here, let us know, please. It's all very different from the days when the Haslam's cats would leave the house at the same time of day and walk to the station to meet Barbara off her train!

Now all that remains before I hand over to Chris Bush to add the necessary IT is to thank all the people who put up with my enquiries and gave me time and information and lent me documents.

### *Many thanks to : -*

Gladys Butters for talking to me when I was new here, Reg Butters, David Verlander – boundaries, Ellen and Mick Purcell, Eustace Frank Todd, John Todd, Peter Stewart, Judith and Robin Nettle, Betty Francis, Gordon Barker, the Driver family (Dorothy, son Martin and daughter Nicky Hall), Di Suckling, Jenny Ingrey, Barbara and Dennis Haslam, Vic and Pauline Dowsett, Heather and Dick Haggerwood, Ivan van Dreissche, Peter and Gill Burgess, Audrey Hearn, Henry Boyd, Michael Ellis, John Irish, Ruth Calder, Betty Bohan, Barbara Broad, Colin Smith, Jean Neve, Barry Samuels, Cate Scott, Brigitta Clarke, Jacky Mason, John Minor, Ray Franklin, my husband Paul and especially Chris Bush for some of the research and the IT, but for whom this would never have been on the EVHS website.

I hope I have recorded you all, but if I have missed you out, many apologies.

Heather Salvidge  
May 2018

20 New Road Elsenham



New Road in The Winter of 2008 Photograph Taken From The Station Footbridge

Photo Courtesy of Chris Bush

