



Fresh milk from a dairy right on the High Road

By Jane Marsh

Last summer one of our *Archer* distributors asked me whether I knew anything about a dairy in East Finchley. He had seen an old map in an atlas of North London railways that showed a siding coming off the southbound railway track, just north of East Finchley station, leading into buildings on the west side of the High Road. It was labelled 'East Finchley Dairy'.



Delivered fresh: Early donkey-drawn milk delivery cart with signage emphasising "pasteurised" and "pure new milk". Photo courtesy of The Finchley Society.



Diploma Dairy: An old view of the High Road looking south, showing Diploma House on the right, situated about where Diploma Court now stands. The name can just be seen on the side of the building. Photo courtesy of Barnet Local Studies <https://boroughphotos.org/barnet/>

I thought it would be interesting to try and find out more about this and my first search produced, amongst other items, this snippet from the September/October 1999 edition of this newspaper. The late Noel Lynch wrote in his Out and About column:

"Whilst reading the Shell Book of Firsts recently, I came across the following entry – 'It was not until 1906 that fresh milk, untreated except for pasteurisation, began to be sold in bottles in Britain. The pioneer in this case being Ernest Lane, of the Manor Farm Dairy, East Finchley.'"

Sadly, I have been unable to find any more information about Ernest Lane himself but

it is known that the pasteurisation process he used was not widespread in the UK at least until 1922, when the Milk and Dairies Act was passed, so he truly was a pioneer and well ahead of his time.

Daily milk by donkey cart

There is a bit more information to be found regarding the dairy itself, which eventually became part of United Dairies, I think after the First World War, and operated until about 1960.

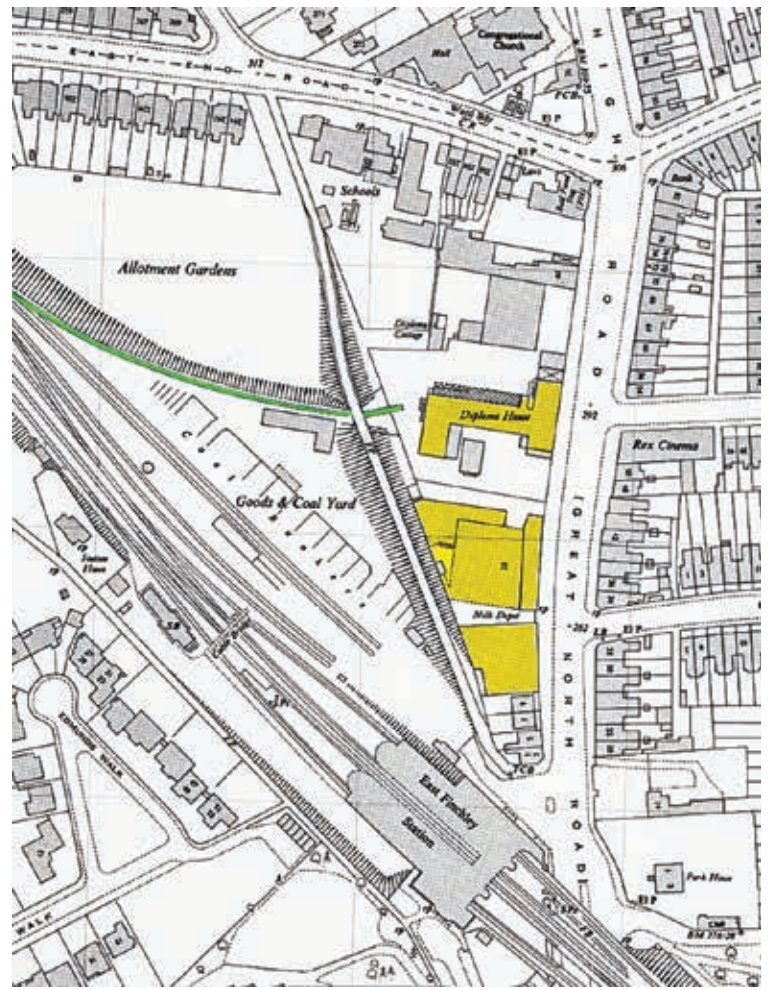
Bulk milk came into East Finchley daily in glass lined tankers by train from Staffordshire and was processed and bottled in the milk depot. It was then distributed around the area, initially in donkey carts and later by electric milk floats. By the

1940s about 12,000 bottles were being distributed daily.

A map of East Finchley station from about 1950 clearly shows the milk depot and the Manor Farm Dairy offices, which were located in Diploma House, 39 High Road, just downhill from the Bald Faced Stag pub, where Diploma Court now stands. It may have taken its name from Diploma Cottage, which was situated nearby. The depot site is now occupied by the headquarters of McDonald's.

Do you know anything about the dairy and its history?

If so please contact us at news@the-archer.co.uk or Freephone 0800 612 0748, and we'd be happy to publish more information.



1950 map of EF station: This map from about 1950 shows the extent of Manor Farm Dairy, comprising the milk depot and associated offices. At top left you can clearly see the siding from the main line coming into the dairy behind Diploma House.



Modernisation: After carts came the electric milk float, also emphasising the benefits of Manor Farm Dairy's pasteurised milk. Note its designated maximum speed of 12mph. Photo courtesy of The Finchley Society.

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