

W.J.Wager Dairies



The Limes, 3 Rectory Road, Pitsea, Essex.

7 Pages

£1.50

Registered Charity no. 1176037

Alan Cox 2021

Registered address: The Green Centre, Wat Tyler County Park, Pitsea Hall Lane, Pitsea, Essex, SS16 4UH



A brief history of Wager's Dairy; by John Wager.

Our Grandfather William Joseph Wager (1886-1958) was born and grew up in East London, and as a young man he worked for J. Hitchman and sons Dairy in Walthamstow, delivering milk door to door with a handcart.

With a young family of three children, he made the decision to move his family to the Essex countryside and start his own dairy business.

Around 1923 they settled in Northlands Drive in Pitsea and from there he would collect milk from local farms and sell it door to door using a horse and cart.

As soon as his sons Billy and John (They also had a sister Lily and a younger brother Eric) were old enough they too were working with him.

By 1930 the business was doing well and he bought a property in Rectory Road that had an attached shop and enough land to erect outbuildings to house a bottling plant and cold store. He bought the property from Mr A Reddington for the grand sum of £650.

It was from these premises that Wager's Dairy is best remembered by locals, although he did open a depot in Benfleet High Road, but that was short lived.

Memories of an Era

Known for more than 40 years as a dairyman in Pitsea, Mr William Joseph Wager who lived in Brackendale Avenue, Pitsea, Essex.

He has operated a milk delivery service in the district for more than forty years. When he and his father started the business in Pitsea. At that time Pitsea was an undeveloped backwater with the muddy unmade roads to hamper the progress of a horse and drawn milk cart. He meet his wife, Irene in Pitsea. Thirty Years ago the business was expanded to incorporate a shop at The Limes, 3 Rectory Road, Pitsea. At that time Mr Wager collected milk from Wilson's Farm in Nevendon.

Mr Wager's great love was music, and for many years ran a band which became to be known as "The Cuban Blues," he played the drums .

Mrs Wager said this week no doubt many people will remember him for his music. The band became very well known to the resident's of Pitsea because it is such a sleepy little place then.

The band played at many local events, fetes and carnivals and such it gave a little life to the place.



The Cuban Blues

Wager's had 4 Van's and about 1800 customers, and would leave a trade bike in one the house at the top of Crest Avenue, and load the bike with two crates of milk and cycle up the unmade part of Crest Avenue and then into Crown Avenue, as van's etc could not cope with the unmade roads of the area.

He died in 1958 and the business was continued by the family until 1968 when the Basildon Development Corporation wanted to compulsory purchase the property for redevelopment (which didn't happen)

The decision was made by the family to sell out to Howards Dairy/Unigate rather than re-locate.



William Joseph Wager approx.
1944 with covered head lights

As it turns out that was a wise decision as when milk was deregulated and supermarkets were then able to sell milk cheaply the door to door deliveries declined rapidly to the point that they are now almost extinct.

Unfortunately very few photos exist of the business, and none of the vans, but I've attached a few that I have.

But don't forget...You can whip our cream but you can't beat our milk!



William Joseph with John about 1954



Johnny Wager and Len? 1938 Riverview Estate,
Vange, Essex.



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2021

*Basildon Heritage would
like to thank John Wager
for his history of the family
business & family photo's.*

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Basildon Heritage

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