

Extract from the Journal Newspaper Friday June 2nd 1978
Regarding Seletar Garage being part of Mundford History.
Also some of the advertisements which accompanied the article

SELETAR GARAGE LTD., of Mundford, which celebrates its 20th birthday next Easter, has passed another milestone in history.

From June its Leyland franchise has been increased to include Rover and Triumph cars and it will be shortly opening a new showroom and M.O.T. testing bay.

But behind the modern façade of a busy garage and workshop there is a wealth of local history – emphasising its position in the picturesque village of Mundford.

It was as far back as 1926 when Mr. Lawrence Ollett, after serving an eight-year apprenticeship in motor cycles and general engineering, opened a cycle shop and petrol filling station in the village itself on the Old A1065, at East Hall Mundford. The petrol pumps were some of the first to be seen in the district.

He also ran a taxi service, and once drove H.R.H the Crown Prince Olaf of Norway. In 1926 when unemployment was rife and money in short supply Mr Ollett had to work long, hard hours to make the business survive and gradually it expanded to take in motor and motor cycle repairs, radios etc. Everyone was buying bicycles – good one cost £3 19s.9d. or 2s.6d a week.

When war broke out in 1939 the War office requisitioned the petrol pumps and storage tanks for an armoured brigade encamped all around the area.

The new road – known as the bypass – was built by the Army for their tanks and armoured vehicles, and when war finished the County council took over the road. Mr Ollett successfully applied for a new garage and filling station site and it was held in abeyance until his son John, serving his National service, decided what his future would be.

John Ollett and Geoff Pavey were friends training as mechanics in the R.A.F and were stationed at R.A.F. Seletar in Singapore, for about three years. They were demobbed in 1956.

Negotiations began with the Church Commissioners for a site near the crossroads (now a roundabout) while the partners started to expand the business in the village. When permission was given this site was relinquished.

Mr Pavey explained how he and John Ollett and two others dug out a hole by hand for a 9000 gallon storage tank. Last December two new tanks were added and the garage can hold 19,000 gallons of fuel.

Seletar Garage – the name a reminder of Singapore days – opened and became a limited company with the three directors at Easter 1959. They have always sold shell petrol and have been an M.O.T. Test Station since the test was introduced.

Mr John Ollett and Mr Pavey as both skilled fitters they were the only mechanics in 1959, with the aid of a boy on the pumps. Gradually their staff increased. Mr Ted Finch joined them, but went blind during his time there.

They were later joined by Mr Ernest Vine and Mr Dennis Vincent, the later now being the workshop foreman.

Mr Peter Fox, the body shop foreman has been with the firm for some time. Seletar employ six in the repair shop, three in the body shop and three office girls.

The two hard working directors – Mr Lawrence Ollett retired in 1974 – have one and a half days off a fortnight and also drive the taxis they run.

“It has been continual expansion, right through.” said Mr Pavey.

They now sell over a quarter of a million gallons of petrol, do a tremendous amount of car repairs, have four hydraraulic lifts, hold a comprehensive range of Unipart spares which cover most vehicles, are flymo dealers, an A.A. three star garage (the top rating) R.A.C. appointed, a member of the motor Agents’ Association, do a 24 hour recovery service, run a taxi and minibus service. And are also stockists of I.C.I.Selco cellulose. They are also insurance agents.

The present expansion programme includes a new showroom because of the Rover Triumph franchise. An extension to the workshop has been built for an M.O.T. bay which will have a roller brake tester, lift, in fact all the necessary equipment.

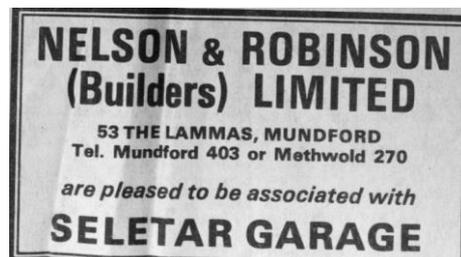
There will be an extended forecourt to display more cars Seletar covers over an acre of ground next to the main A1065 at the crossroads to Swaffham, Downham market, King’s Lynn and Brandon

They service vehicles belonging to the police, Department of the Environment, Forestry commission and farmers, as well as the general public.

They were the only garage of any size for several miles around said Mr Pavey.

And the emphasised that although others may have lost faith in British Leyland, Seletar had not, as evidenced by their investment in a new showroom and taking up the Rover-Triumph franchise.

In fact they began building the skeleton of the showroom a few years back at the time of the Middle East oil crisis. It was left unfinished to see how the motor trade and petrol sales stood up to the increased prices. Seletar began completing it at the middle of last year.



THE ARTICLE ALSO INCLUDED AS SECTION

GROWN INTO A LOCAL STORE

Seletar's connection with the village is amply shown by the range of goods it sells.

"Basically we are in the area where there are no other facilities to buy these things. Over the years we have just grown up to be a local store to a certain degree", commented Mr Pavey.

"The majority of goods are basically, what motorists would require" he continued.

Seletar hold an exhaustive range of motor accessories, as well as spare parts, from nuts and bolts to maps, tow ropes, car sat covers, radios, gloves, sandpaper and spray paint.

But they also sell a large selection of garden equipment such as flymo lawn mowers as well as bicycles.

The garage is open from 7a.m. to 7p.m. Monday to Saturday and 8.30a.m. to 7p.m. on Sundays. The workshop is open five and a half days a week.

The village has changed over the years as new housing estates have been built around the edge, but its centre remains a charming reminder of the past with flint walled cottages and one or two thatched houses. It has a quiet rural air, but underneath there is plenty of hustle and bustle.

Mundford Cricket Club is in division one of the Norfolk Alliance and has played a prominent part in county competitions over the years, and the football club plays in the Bury and District league.

There is also an extremely active bowls club. Away from the sport the village boasts an over 60's club, a Women's Institute and a primary school.

The one public house, the Crown is situated in the heart of the village near the village sign.

The D.I.Y. shop run by Mr A. K. Whiting used to be a pub at one time. The other main businesses in the village are T. S. Mulley's General Stores, T Smith, the butchers, J. Maling antiques, Post office, two driving schools, Merit and D. A Claydon. The main employer is T. W Downs, meat processors who employ about 80 men and women.

MERIT
Professional Instruction
by PETER SAGE
D.O.E.A.D.I.
MEMBER OF INSTITUTE OF
ADVANCED MOTORISTS
THETFORD AREA
TELEPHONE
MUNDFORD 335

D.C. DRIVING SCHOOL
● MUNDFORD, THETFORD, BRANDON
AREA
● DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE.
● DUAL CONTROL CAR.
● REASONABLE RATES.
D. A. CLAYDON, D.O.E.A.D.I.
FIR CLOSE, MUNDFORD
TEL. MUNDFORD 382

WAVY LINE
YOUR COMMUNITY GROCER
GLEN LYON STORES
and Post Office. Tel. Mundford 272
Wavy Line has frozen the prices of at
least 100 brand items and is cutting
the price of over 50 of these at least
until the end of July.
★
YOUR LOCAL STORE FOR ALL YOUR GROCERY NEEDS
● CIGARETTES ● SWEETS ● ICE CREAM
OPEN SUNDAYS 9 to 1

Spend an Evening
at the
CROWN HOTEL
Mundford's 17th century Coaching Inn,
complete with Old Stables
New Lounge and Public Bars
Full of Olde Worlde charm
Facing the Village Green
MUNDFORD

CONGRATULATIONS to Seletar Garage
on their expansion from Terry and Lesley at
MULLEYS
YOUR LOCAL SPAR STORES
visit us for
★ Savings ★ Service ★ Selection
★ Home cooked bacon and ham
★ Confectionery and Cigarettes
★ Fully off-licensed ★ Corn Merchants
FREEZER CENTRE
SAME DAY DELIVERY
LATE NIGHT SHOPPING THURSDAY, TILL 7 p.m.
CALOR Gas
Facing the Village Green. Tel. MUNDFORD 225

CONGRATULATIONS
to Seletar Garage from
T. SMITH & SON
BUTCHERS, MUNDFORD. Tel. 287
for
**QUALITY MEATS for
HOME FREEZERS**
FRESH FRUIT & VEGETABLES
GENERAL GROCERIES, Etc.

At the risk of sounding like every one's favourite airline — "I'm Tony Whiting of KING'S HEAD HARDWARE at Mundford. Try me."

For at the heart of a village which sits on roads to four major towns is a hardware, garden and gift business that's unusual if not entirely unique.

For it seeks to offer you what you want. Not just the things we think you ought to need. But all the things in the hardware and garden fields which so many other shops will tell you are quite unprofitable lines so they don't stock them.

The business seeks to offer you not only what you want, but all of it. For it's no good building a new greenhouse if you have cement for the floor, timber for the frames and screws to put it all together — and then have to go somewhere else for the glass. We have it where you want it. All in one place at the same time.

And time is important too. Find me any builders' merchant around where the hours are to suit your convenience rather than his. Every night open to 6 p.m. except Wednesday half-day, so you can get prepared at short notice for a spot of work after tea. And open every Saturday afternoon, the prime time when the weekend gardener or do-it-yourself enthusiast sets sail into his major schemes, only to find that he can't get the supplies.

It's all part of the secret of keeping you, the customer, happy. It's a secret I learned a long while ago when, as a jobbing builder, I was happy to help out people by selling them the odd pound of nails or pot of paint.

That grew and grew. And by the time my wife

Margaret and I had bought and restored the King's Head public-house, the idea of running our own business and widening the service we could offer really came true.

A showroom packed with a huge range of hardware. A yard where you can draw in all but the largest lorry to take on the supplies of builders' materials which will take you from the start of any job to its end. And, thrown in for nothing, the benefit of the knowledge gleaned through years in the building trade. Advice to customers comes for free. And if the price of our goods can't come in the same fashion, it can undercut wide areas of the trade, to your benefit and ours.

Deliveries now go out to around ten miles, taking in much larger places than Mundford, where people are happy to get the kind of service from us that they value.

Certainly you may think, at first glance, that a village of 700 souls may be an odd spot for an enterprise like this where, along with hardware and gardening and builders' materials, we have a whole showroom floor devoted to gifts and toys. But given the situation of equal distance to local major centres and the ease which you can reach us and we can get to you; bearing in mind the hours we keep to suit you and the prices to which we do likewise — then you will find there's nothing unusual about us at all. Except, that is, that we are giving the kind of service that you increasingly cannot find. Try us.

SOME OF OUR MANY SPECIAL OFFERS . . .

D.I.Y.

OUR PRICE

TETRION. 97p Small	59p
TETRION. £1.49 Large	£1.00
SANDEX. 5 litres. £10.65	£6.59

ABRU STEPS — 20% OFF R.S.P.	
NETTLE 13-amp PLUGS. 50p	33p
ROVER POINT EXT. LEAD. £7.43	£5.75

GARDENING

OUR PRICE

EVERGREEN 80 (100 sq. yds.)	
WATER BUTTS (37 gall.) £3.02	£2.27
WEEDOL. £15.83	£12.83
PHOSTROGEN. 73p	49p
TOMORITE. 79p	59p
HAGO HOSE REEL AND STAND	
£5.86	£3.99

LIMITED PERIOD ONLY