

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Have you ever wondered where the Suburb gets its place names? Where do Asmunds Place, Turners Wood, Holyoake Walk, Mutton Brook, Gurney Drive, Lyttelton Playing Fields come from?

There are 120 place names in the Suburb — counting every close, walk, wood, rise and square. There are no 'streets'. We have 'roads', 'avenues' and a 'lane', which are commonplace: but we also have a whole clutch of names with a distinctly medieval ring: ways, closes, walks, a chase, a rise, a croft, a mount, a garth, holms, a lea and leys. Medievalism was in fashion at the turn of the century.

Eighty-one years ago the entire area that now forms the Garden Suburb was agricultural land — fields, ditches, hedges and the occasional tree, plus four bits of woodland. A stream (called Mutton Brook because from medieval times the sheep from Sheephouse Farm, which once stood where College Farm stands today, were dipped in it) meandered through the lower lying fields; roads were rare, and only on the perimeters of the area.

The Finchley Road had run along the western edge since 1826, when it was built as a turnpike from "St Johns Chapel, St Marylebone, into the Great North Road near the eighth milestone at Finchley." A few lanes crossed or met it: Hoop Lane, leading to the Hoop Inn on what is now Golders Green Road; Temple Fortune Lane, hardly wide enough to take a single farm cart, leading to a few cottages in Wild Hatch — it formed a back entrance ('hatch' deriving from the Saxon word for a small gate or wicket) to Wyldes Farm land; Bridge and Bell Lanes wandering away from the Suburb down a small valley and up the other side to the Bell inn at Hendon.

East of the area was grandiose, tree-lined Bishops Avenue (a reminder that part of the Suburb lay within the original estate, "from time immemorial," of the Bishop of Lon-

don). On the north of Suburb land was East End Road, serving eastern parts of Finchley; on the south was North End Road, doing similarly for northern parts of Hampstead.

How did the Suburb's own names come into being, who chose them and is there a pattern in their choice? In fact they make a sort of tapestry, in which it is possible to distinguish seven separate strands. Henrietta Barnett describes four of these strands in *The Story of the Growth of the Hampstead Garden Suburb*, a pamphlet she wrote in 1928 to celebrate Suburb's coming of age:

"When it was possible Mr Unwin and I retained the names found in the old maps or deeds," she writes. "Thus is the genesis of the words Willifield, Asmunds, Temple Fortune, Wild Hatch, Bunker Hill: but when these words were exhausted we decided that the East end of the Suburb should bear the names of great lawyers such as Erskine, Denman, Chatham; the North end those of poets — Wordsworth, Coleridge; and the south end those of English artists — Turner, Linnell, Reynolds, Morland, Cotman, Raeburn, Constable and so on. I wonder if this will interest anyone. It interested us to do."

The names in the Dame's first category — old local names retained — have suffered slight changes in

their Suburb adoption. Today's 'Asmunds' comes from the first, second and third 'Assmans Fields' on James Crow's 'Plan of the Mannor and Parish of Hendon' (1756); and the three 'Willeyford Groves' of that plan become Willifield. Wellgarth Road runs across the 'Well Fields' of the 1756 map; modern Big Wood was 'Large Wood' on an Eton Survey of 1800. Stretching a point, Ossulton might be included in this category — the name of the old Hundred of the County of Middlesex in which lay Finchley.

Although the Dame was writing in 1928, she was speaking only about the 'old' Suburb, the first 243 acres bought from Eton College in 1907. No one describing the Suburb today would place Erskine Hill (called after Lord Chancellor Thomas Erskine), the Denman Drives (after Lord Chief Justice Denman) and Chatham Close (after the older Pitt) on the east of the Suburb. Nor are the Dame's artists precisely placed. Hogarth seems to have drifted northwards and ended up among the poets, and so does Thomas Creswick, a Victorian landscape painter; while Ruskin encroaches on artist territory (but perhaps he was considered artist first and writer second). What is clear is the Dame's passion for Art with a capital A. The names of artists gush out, but she and Unwin managed only three lawyers (one, Chatham, more legislator than lawyer) and not all that many poets.

One poet with local connections got lost on the way — William Blake, who once lived at Wyldes. All early references to what is today Emmott Close call it 'Blake Close'. The HGS Minutes for July 1927 record the change to Emmott Close, but not the reason. Lord Emmott had died in 1926 and presumably the Trust decided to commemorate him because he had long been a friend to the Suburb (as Alfred Emmott MP he had been Chairman of the House of Commons Committee which examined the HGS Bill in 1906) and at the time of his death he was President of the Institute Council.

Names did change while the Suburb was a-building. An example is Turners Wood, originally called Hillside Close. The architects' drawings (dated 1914) have the Close crossed out and Turners Wood inserted. Turners Wood is, in fact, a trap for any unwary placename watcher. You might expect, with all those artists around, plus JMW Turner's local connections, that Turners Wood (both the houses and the Wood itself) was named after him (as Turner Close and Turner Drive were) — but you'd be wrong. The Turner of Turners Wood was a Fleet Street tobacconist who, in 1734, took some land near the Spaniards and built The Firs.

Writers (not necessarily poets) continued to inspire place names in the 'new' Suburb — Milton, Carlyle, Kingsley. Those names must have been chosen by the Co-partners, who were responsible for developing that area. They probably chose Kingsley more as co-founder of the Christian Socialists than as author of *The Water Babies* and *Westward Ho*. Holne Chase is interesting: I haven't been able to pin down where the name comes from; but surely it can't be coincidence that it bisects Kingsley Way, and that Charles Kingsley was born at Holne, in Devon? Lytton Close may commemorate author Bulwer Lytton (*Last Days of Pompeii* and all that); or maybe the Co-partners were paying a delicate compliment to the Chairman of the HGS Trust, the second Earl of Lytton, Bulwer's grandson.

Another discernible strand in the Co-partnership pattern of road names was to honour their own people, both by Christian and surname. Their manager, Edmund James Cooper (whose signature approves so many of the Suburb's architectural drawings) gave his name to Edmunds Walk; Chalton Drive was named for Chalton Hubbard, Copart solicitor from early days. Greenhalgh Walk is so-called after John H. Greenhalgh,

on the committee of Hampstead Tenants and, with his wife, a colourful resident of the early Suburb. Hutchings Walk recalls William Hutchings, Copart's Deputy Chairman.

Gurney Drive takes its name from Sybella Gurney, of the Norfolk family ("as rich as the Gurneys," said a W S Gilbert lyric), who was Hon. Secretary of the Co-partnership Tenants Housing Council (hereafter CTHC). Brunner Close commemorates the Brunner family: Sir John (of Brunner Mond fame) was President of CTHC; his son, J F L Brunner, was on Coparts board.

Litchfield Way was named after Frederick Litchfield, who held posts in all five Hampstead Tenant societies at various times. One of the 'squares' off Hampstead Way used to be known (to residents, though not to the postman) as 'Litchfield Square' because Fred lived at No 96 and was such a Suburb character. Sutcliffe Close was a memorial to the Copartners architect, George Lister Sutcliffe, who designed many buildings in the 'old' Suburb as well as the earliest buildings in the 'new' before he died, in 1915, aged only 50.

Vivian Way commemorates Henry Vivian, Chairman of CTHC, who was also a founder member of the HGS Trust Ltd board. By trade a carpenter, he was a keen trade unionist and an MP: he introduced the HGS Bill into the House of Commons. Not only did the Co-partners give his name to a road, they even honoured his Parliamentary constituency. He held the seat of Totnes, Devon, from 1923 (before that he had sat for Birkenhead) and this fact provided, after his death in 1930, the names of Totnes Walk and Devon Rise. It may also account for other West Country touches — Widecombe Way, Blandford Close, Harford Close.

Two of the Trust's founder members have provided Suburb names. The principal roads in the final addition made to the estate in 1930 are Winnington Road and Ingram Avenue. Arthur Foley Winnington Ingram from whom these roads take their names, was Bishop of London and a member of Henrietta Barnett's syndicate ("two Earls, two lawyers, two Free Churchmen, a Bishop and a woman") which obtained and held the option on the Suburb land from 1904 until the purchase could be completed in 1907.

Alfred Lyttelton was the first President of the HGS Trust Ltd from 1906 till his death in 1913. He might not have been so keen on the Copartners choice (in 1926) of his name for the road from Market Place to the Suburb boundary near Bishops Avenue — specially if he could have foreseen the state of its traffic today; but he would have revelled in having Lyttelton Playing Fields christened for him. He was a great athlete and a first-class cricketer: W G Grace

described his batting as 'the champagne of cricket'. He would have liked to think of youngsters performing with bat and ball on 'his' fields.

The other thread in Co-partnership road names is the commemoration of people who had encouraged the early formulation of copartnership principles.

William Thomas Thornton (Thornton Way) was a civil servant (India Office), social reformer and a writer with a gargantuan range — from the mid-19c problems of the Irish peasantry to translations of Horace's Odes, taking in cooperation, copartnership and trade unionism en route. His widow instituted the Thornton Scholarships for workmen building Copartnership estates, which were competed for in the Suburb.

Neville Drive recalls Ralph Neville, barrister and Liberal politician, Chairman both of the Garden City Association and of the board of Letchworth, where the Copartners were active. He had worked with Vivian in the Labour Association (later the Labour Copartnership Association).

Christian Socialists believed firmly in copartnership, so it is no surprise to find a handful of them in the Suburb. We've already noted Charles Kingsley. Frederick Denison Maurice (Denison Close, Maurice Walk) was co-founder with Kingsley of the Movement, as well as being an adult education pioneer. Edward Vansittart Neale (Neale Close) was another Christian Socialist and was co-author (with Thomas Hughes, creator of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*) of a *Manual for Co-operators*. Neale was also first President of the Labour

Association (founded 1884), the secretary of which was Henry Vivian.

John M Ludlow (Ludlow Way) wrote many Christian Socialist tracts and was co-founder (with Maurice) of the Working Mens College. Finally, there is George Jacob Holyoake (Holyoake Walk), author of the *History of Co-operation in England*, founder of secularism and the last man to be sent to prison here for atheism. Strange that the Suburb road system should commemorate the founders of Christian Socialism (two of them clergymen) and an atheist, confessed, convicted and proud of it.

The seventh and final strand in the road-name tapestry is the most obvious: roads named for their position (e.g. Heathgate, Woodside, Church Mount — where a church was planned up to 1926, though never built); or for a natural feature (e.g. Brookland Rise, Linden Lea — lined with limes); or for their relation one to another, like Middleway, Northway and Southway.

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If you find Suburb history interesting — the above is a small example of it — and if you ever have an hour or two to spare, would you care to volunteer to help in the Suburb Archives? The Archive Room in Bigwood House, is organised entirely voluntarily and help is always needed. Just ring either Brigid Grafton Green (455 9040) or Kitty Slack (455 6914) and your offer will be warmly welcomed.

**ARTHUR GREEN**  
A.I.O.C.

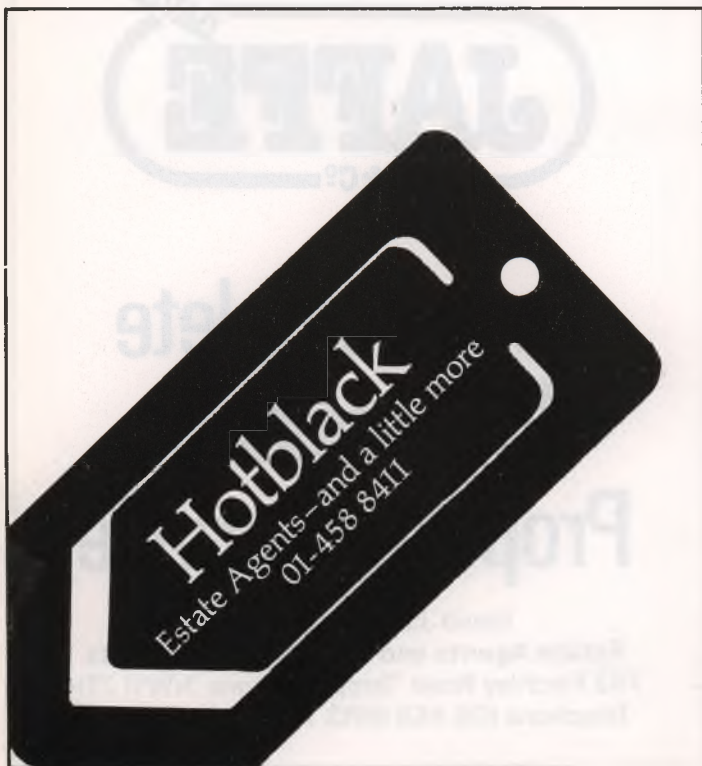


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