



Enfield Museum, Local Studies
and Library Service

www.enfield.gov.uk

London Borough of Enfield Local History Sheets.

Bush Hill Park a history



This modern residential suburb straddling the former Edmonton/Enfield border conceals the remains of the earliest known settlement in the district. Extensive Roman remains have come to light especially between 1974 and 1976 when excavations took place between Lincoln Road and Main Avenue on land cleared for re-development. The settlement at Bush Hill Park appears to have been abandoned at the end of the Roman occupation and the area saw relatively little human habitation until it began to develop in the late 19th century.

The Edmonton enclosure map (1801) and the Enfield enclosure map (1803) show Bush Hill Park as almost entirely undeveloped. There were no houses along the entire length of Lincoln Road. Along the southern fringe was the remote hamlet of Bury Street. At this date the bulk of the land between Bury Street and Lincoln Road was owned by William Mellish. He lived at Bush Hill Park, a large house which stood on the slopes of Bush Hill on a site now occupied by Ringmer Place. Mellish, who came from a Nottinghamshire family, was a director of the Bank of England and Tory MP for Grimsby and later for Middlesex. He died in 1838 and was buried at All Saints Church, Edmonton.

After Mellish's death, the estate passed through several changes of ownership. After being sold in 1871, it was broken up for building. Development accelerated after 1880 when the Great Eastern Railway opened Bush Hill Park station. (The railway line had been built in 1849).

The first houses in Wellington Road and Village Road went on the market in 1878. The first inhabitants were solidly middle class, attracted by the large detached houses and the spacious, tree-lined roads. In the east of the railway development took place on very different lines. Plans were submitted for The Avenues in 1880. The Cardigan Estate was developed in two phases in 1889 and 1892. The area was developed with small terraced houses and the newcomers were predominantly working class. The early inhabitants included many railway employees: drivers, firemen and guards based at Enfield Town depot.

The children needed educational facilities. A Church of England school, St Mark's in Main Avenue, had been opened by 1882. (The building survives as the Bush Hill Park Library). This facility proved to be totally inadequate and the resulting shortfall in school places was one of the key factors that led to the Board of Education ordering the setting up of the Enfield School Board in 1894. The newly established school board opened the Bush Hill Park School in Main Avenue in 1896. The Edmonton part of Bush Hill Park had to wait until 1928 when a school was built in Raglan Road.

The new suburb was initially without any place of worship. The Church of England built St Mark's Church in 1893, followed by St Stephen's in 1907. A Congregational Church (now United Reformed) opened in Main Avenue in 1910 and a Primitive Methodist Church was built in 1905 in Wellington Road.

Development continued uninterrupted until World War I. Extra transport facilities arrived in 1909 with the opening of a tramway along Village Road and Park Avenue. (This route was chosen because the trams could not manage the gradients on the old main road over Bush Hill). By 1914 Bush Hill

park (east of the railway) was more or less fully developed. On the west side the area to the north of Park Avenue was fully built up and development had started to the south (Edenbridge Road, Bagshot Road etc.). Building resumed after the war with the development of the New River Estate; the first houses in Sittingbourne Avenue and Faversham Avenue were occupied by 1926. By 1935 Bush Hill Park was fully developed. Further improvement in transport facilities came with the construction of the Great Cambridge Road which was largely complete by 1924.

After World War II the gaps caused by bombing were filled. (One of the largest gaps was caused by a V2 rocket which fell in Abbey Road). The Village Road/Wellington Road area saw a process of gradual redevelopment. Large detached houses were demolished one by one, giving way to blocks of flats. To the east of the railway, change was much more drastic. A large area between Main Avenue and Lincoln Road was compulsorily purchased and redeveloped.

Today the two halves of Bush Hill Park retain their essentially different characteristics. The communities remain largely self-contained, the only shared facility being the railway station. On Bush Hill the house that gave its name to the district (Bush Hill Park, later called Clock House) was demolished in 1927. However, two of its neighbours have been more fortunate. Old Park survives as the Bush Hill Park Golf Club. Bush Hill House (Halliwick), shorn of most of its grounds and drastically altered, survives as a residential school for disabled children.

Further Reading

Ford, John Walker - A sketch towards a history of the neighbourhood: being some particulars of Bush Hill Park. Enfield. 1904.

Haigh, Douglas - Old Park in the Manor of Enfield. Enfield. 1977

Hoy, Denis - From fields to flats: a history of Bush Hill Park and St Stephen's Church. Enfield. 1985

Gentry, Anne. - Excavations at Lincoln Road....November 1974/March 1976 In London and Middlesex Archaeological Transactions, Vol.28, 1977, pp.101/89.

Ivens, John - Finds and excavations in Roman Enfield. Enfield. 1977. Reprinted article from London Archaeologist, Summer 1977.