

Some King's Heath street name origins.

Valentine Road – by Andy Bishop

The first place to start when looking at the history of places in Kings Heath is to look for any clues on the 1838 Tithe Map of the area. If we look at this map (see below) in detail where Valentine Road now stands it can be seen that at this time, the road is not marked on it and must date after 1838. However, all is not lost and it is possible to see who owned and occupied the land that the road would later be built across. This is listed in the Tithe Apportionment schedule that accompanies the map.



(Red line marking route of future Valentine Road)

The future route of the road passes across the following pieces of land:

Field number	Landowner	Occupier	Lands+premises	
3354	John Chatfield Mott	John Chatfield Mott	Meadow	M
3355	John Chatfield Mott	John Chatfield Mott	Meadow	M
3356	John Chatfield Mott	John Chatfield Mott	Shaw's leasow	P
3357	John Chatfield Mott	John Chatfield Mott	Square close	P
3358	John Chatfield Mott	John Chatfield Mott	Foredrove	M

M= meadow, P=pasture

This shows that the land at that time was owned and occupied by John Chatfield Mott.

Michael Gooley, on the internet, has investigated the history of his family tree which includes the Mott family. Here is a summary of his findings:

“John Chatfield Mott was born in London at 5 minutes before 9 o’clock in the evening of the 6th December 1773. He was named “Chatfield” after his step-mother Sarah Chatfield. By 1779 his family had moved back to Birmingham the place where his parents had married.

John followed his father’s occupation as a currier. He married Elizabeth Croughton at St Martin’s in Birmingham in 1803.

In the 1840s he is listed living in King’s Heath/Moseley at “Greenhill “. He had done well in business and was living out his retirement funded by independent means. He and his wife shared the house with his wife’s unmarried twin sister. Their daughter, Elizabeth, lived next door. She had married in 1832 to a man called **Thomas Valentine**.

John died in 1847 at Kings Heath aged 74. His wife died 2 years later”.

Therefore, living next to Greenhill was Thomas Valentine. Valentine Road is named after him.

Thomas Valentine

Thomas was baptised on March 9th 1791 in Wrexham in Wales. He was the son of William and Ann Valentine. He married Elizabeth Mott in August 1832. On the 1841 census of Kings Heath Thomas Valentine is described as a “musical composer”.

The exact date of the construction of Valentine Road is unknown, however, on later map of Birmingham from 1851 it is shown. On the census of that year Valentine Road is not listed, but Thomas is described as a “proprietor of land and composer”. The first time that Valentine Road is listed on a census is on the 1861 census.

The house Thomas Valentine lived in is widely reputed to be number 1 High Street (and not Valentine Road). This house is currently occupied by the Kinmos Charity.



Further investigation is required to find out which house he actually lived in.

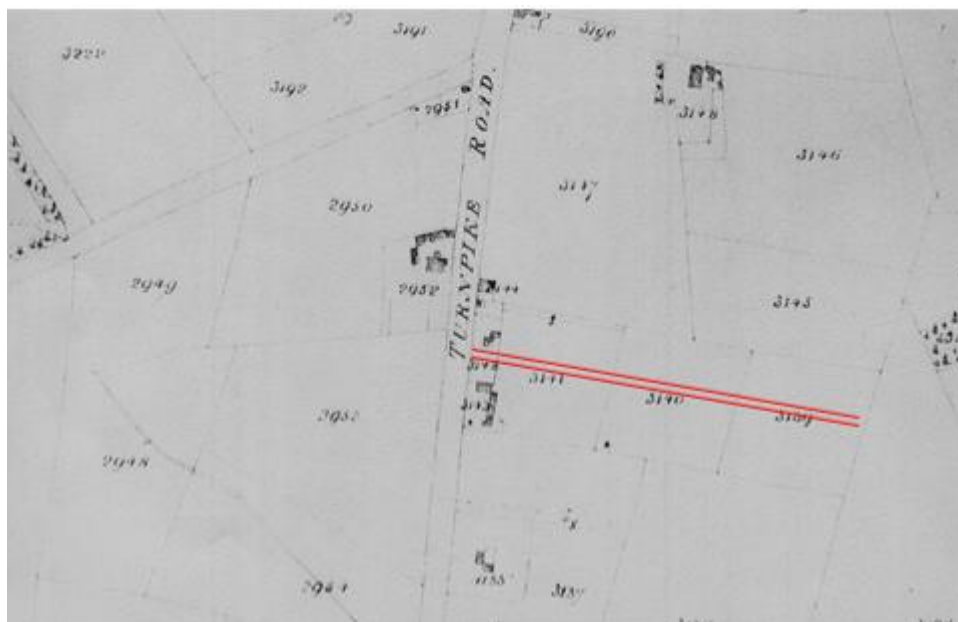
The next mention of Thomas is in newspapers of the time when his death is recorded. It was even featured in the London Times:

“On the 11th January at King’s Heath, near Birmingham, aged 87, Thomas Valentine, formerly a popular composer and teacher of music.”

Thomas may have slipped into obscurity, but the road that still bears his name still stands in Kings Heath.

Mossfield Road – by Andy Bishop

Mossfield Road is not featured on the 1838 Tithe map. However, the lines below show where it will later be built:



The land upon which the road will be built was listed as follows:

Field number	Landowner	Occupier	Lands+premises	
3139	David and Joseph Todd	Moss Todd	Close	M
3140	David and Joseph Todd	Moss Todd	Close	P
3141	David and Joseph Todd	Moss Todd	Close and foredrove	P
3142	David and Joseph Todd	Moss Todd	Tenement etc	

The topiary hedges of Heathfield Cottage and entrance to Mossfield Road are visible on the right.



Heathfield Cottage.

Moss Todd died at Heathfield Cottage on the 18th May 1848. He was 65 years old. The cottage was occupied by Diana Todd, her son Joseph Moss Todd and finally her grand daughter Anne Todd. A full list of its occupants is as follows:

1840 Moss and Diana Todd

1848-1870 Diana Todd

1861-1877 Joseph Moss and Ann Todd

1878-1885 Miss Anne Todd (Joseph Moss Todd's daughter)

1886-1893 Richard Ellis

1894-1900 George William Hardy

1901-1902 Percy Tunnicliffe

1903-1921 George William Hardy

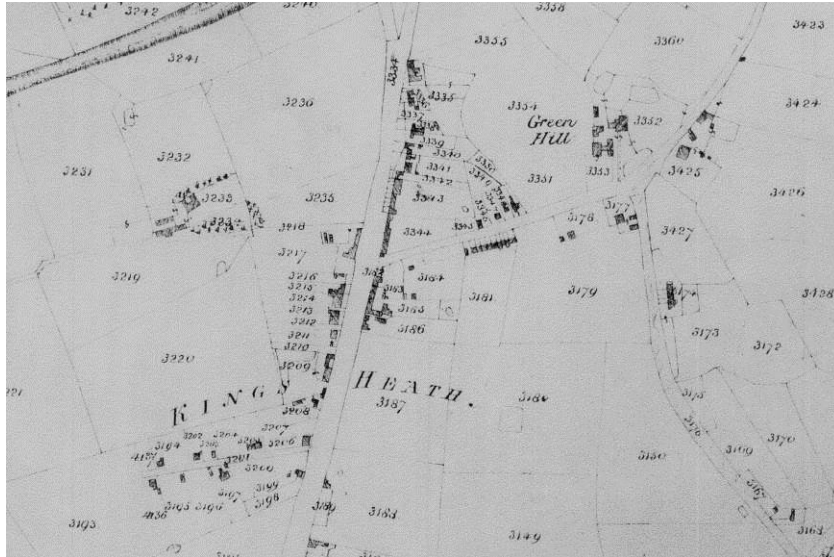
1922-1951 Mrs. Beatrice C Hardy (widow)

1952-1960 Scott A Irving

Scott Irving was the last known occupant of Heathfield Cottage which was sold and eventually knocked down. By 1965 it was replaced by the Safeway building that still stands today, now known as L.A. Fitness.

Silver Street – by Andy Bishop

Silver Street is shown on the Tithe map of 1838. It is obviously quite a new road as it appears incomplete and as a dead end at this time.



Silver Street is visible on the bottom left.

From 1815 to 1834 the parish registers of Kings Norton and Moseley list the occupants of some of the inhabitants of King's Heath before the census first occurred in 1841. During this period I have found 11 different families whose occupations are listed as "Whitesmiths". From the 1841 census onwards, the greatest density of whitesmiths in King's Heath are listed living in Silver Street.

PLACE	HOUSES	NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born
			Male	Female		
Silver St King's Heath	1	Joseph Putter	24		Shoemaker	4
		John do		24		4
		Charles do	11			4
do	1	Joseph Bennett	24		Shoemaker	4
		Charles do	16			4
		John do	11			4
do	1	Thomas Pugh	24		Shoemaker	4
		Elizabeth do		24		4
		James do	15			4
		John do	13			4
		Thomas do	10			4
		Thomas Bennett	24		Shoemaker	4
do		James do	22			4
		Edmund do	20			4
		James do	15			4
		Matilda do	11			4
		William Pugh	24		Shoemaker	4
do		Sarah do	24			4
		James do	10			4
		William Pugh	24		Shoemaker	4
do		John do	24		Shoemaker	4
		James do	20			4
		William do	20		Shoemaker	4
TOTAL in		24	13	11		

1841 census showing whitesmiths living on Silver Street

Whitesmiths

Whitesmithing is described as a form of smithing that does not require heat and hence the associated smoke and soot that gives its name to the blacksmith. Whitesmiths are described as working with soft metals that do not need heat, such as copper, tin and bronze, and in the first half of the 20th century aluminium. However, it is also described as part of the process of gunmaking. It involves the finishing processes of the gun barrels. The gun barrels, having been made elsewhere, are filed and polished to remove the blackness created by the heat from the gunsmithing. Therefore, they took black metal and turned it to a silver looking metal by filing and polishing. It appears that Silver Street describes the working with silver coloured metals that occurred in King's Heath at that time in that location. Whitesmiths only appeared to live on Silver Street and nowhere else in King's Heath.

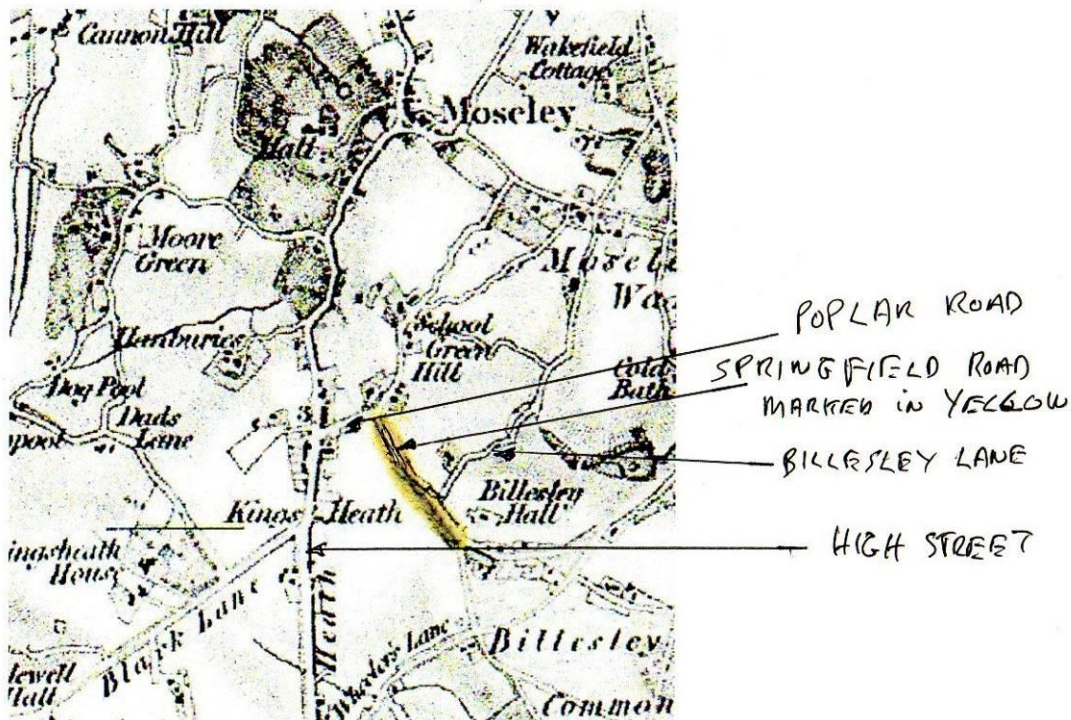
No one in King's Heath was listed as a silversmith (a different occupation). They were all whitesmiths.

In the 1990s the old site of the fire station, just opposite the Neighbourhood Office, in King's Heath was redeveloped and a new cul-de-sac was created. It was named "Whitesmiths Croft".

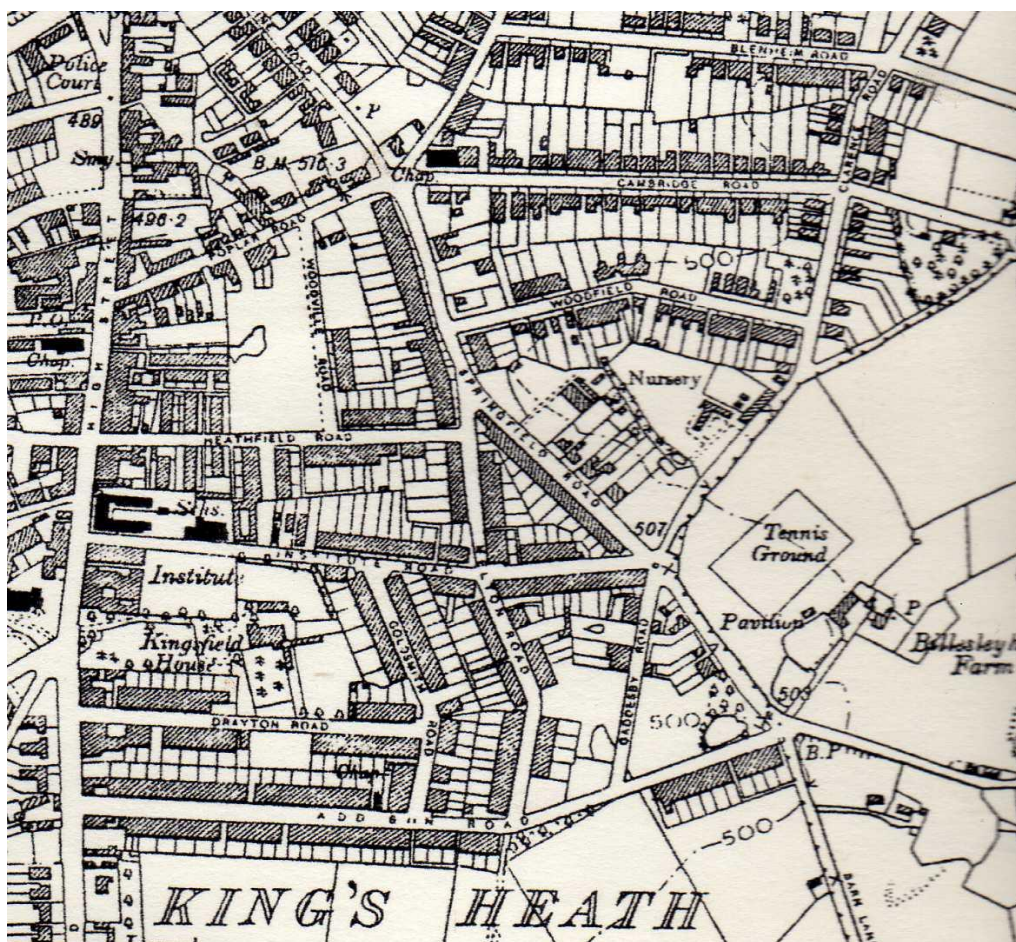
Springfield Road

By Bob Blackham

Springfield Road is probably one of the oldest roads in King's Heath, starting at Poplar Road and finishing at the junction of Brook Lane and Barn Lane. It follows the parish boundary between Moseley Parish and King's Heath Parish and most likely takes its name from a number of springs that rose in the field beside the road, some of which are still here today. It became built up in the late 19th century and early 20th century.



Map showing Springfield Road from the 1830s.



Springfield Road from around 1900, roads leading off it include Poplar Road, Cambridge Road, Woodfield Road, Billesley Lane, Brook Lane, Addison Road, Institute Road and Melton Road. Also Billesley Farm became the club house for Moseley Golf Club founded in 1892.



Looking up Springfield Road towards Poplar Road from the junction of Melton Road from the 1920s or 1930s with a gas street light in the middle of the small traffic island.



Looking down Cambridge Road from the end of Springfield Road, part of the Methodist Church buildings can be seen on the left hand side of the picture, built in 1898.



Looking down Woodfield Road from the junction with Springfield Road around 1910.



Looking up Billesley Lane towards Springfield Road from the junction with Clarence Road, around 1910. Billesley Lane could well be one of the oldest roads around King's Heath because "ley" is Old English for clearing. Therefore the road name would have meant 'Bill's clearing', Bill being the name of the person who had cleared the trees in the woodland for agricultural use at some time in the 'Dark Ages'.



Looking up the left hand side of Springfield Road from around the junction of Melton Road in the early 20th century. Next to the lamp post on the right of the picture a figure dressed in a white coat can be seen, most likely a butchers boy.



Enlarged view showing the, most likely, butcher boy with a large wicker basket on his arm, also in the road can be seen horse droppings probably left by a passing horse pulling a cart.



A modern picture of an old butcher's delivery basket.



Hollybank Road, Kings Heath by Gail Pittaway

Hollybank Road was cut in 1938. 6 blocks of flats of a design first used in Tile Hill were built on the Billesley Common side of the road with conventional housing on the opposite side where the Spinney and Haunch Brook are located.

Hollybank is an artificial bank topped with a holly hedge used to prevent livestock from escaping. The bank runs along the edge of Billesley Common, which was common grazing land until the enclosures acts of 1772 - 1774.

Hollybank Spinney, located further down the hill and on the opposite side of the road to the above flats, possibly dates back to at least 1600 and is a wood of approximately 1 hectare in size with mature Ash, Beech and Oak Trees with Haunch Brook running through it and onto Billesley Common.

Hollybank Farm, a dairy farm, also known as Hadley's Farm, was situated at the top of Hollybank Road and next to West Midlands Transport stadium. From 1840's farming began to become increasingly geared to supplying Birmingham's need for milk, butter and hay. The farm was purchased to build housing in 1954.



The Haunch 1925

Haunch Lane was very rural prior to 1920's and was open common land or moor land until the enclosures act of 1772 – 1774. It originally formed part of the highway from Alcester to Birmingham until the turnpike road was built through Kings Heath centre. The name may derive from the Haunche Ditch, which appears in records dating back to AD 972.

The largest dwelling on Haunch Lane was Haunch Farm, in the parish of Kings Norton and was owned by James Taylor, largest landowner in the Parish of Kings Norton. He was lord of the manor and owner of a number of cottages and plecks (small enclosed fields) on Haunch Lane. He was descended from a line of successful and wealthy business men who made their fortune making buttons, snuff boxes and from banking (Taylor and Lloyds) and namesakes of Taylor Road, Kings Heath.

Taylor land began to be sold off from 1913 and farming seems to have ceased at the Haunch after 1925. Between the wars the farmhouses fell one after another as the city moved in and purchased land for housing estates. Haunch Lane was developed in the 1920's and 30's as part of the Hollybank Village. The Haunch was demolished in 1994 for housing development and only some of its large old trees remain nearby to where the house once stood.

Limekiln Lane



Situated opposite the Horse Shoe pub on Millpool Hill on the south side of the Stratford Canal. The canal was completed in 1816 and provided a vital transport link between Birmingham and mid-Warwickshire for carrying coal and lime. It was also a local beauty spot and popular with trippers. Limekiln Lane may have been built when the canal was cut. Lime was brought in by the Stratford Canal Company. It was used for making mortar used the civil engineering construction industry. There is evidence that lime was probably burned on site or very nearby as there is a siding in the canal behind the Horseshoe pub.

There was also a weigh house on the corner of the lane. It was still in use in 1900 and was used to weigh cargo, possibly the coal and lime brought by canal and transferred to cart and later lorries for distribution further south. This was done using a metal plate in the road and recording weights in the weigh house. Next to the weigh house was Ivy Farm, a well-known local farm. Warstock Road was laid in 1938, shortening Limekiln Road, which once linked Millpool Hill to Warstock and making it redundant other than for access to the businesses located there.