

THE HISTORY OF YOUR AREA

The estate at Fulham Palace was owned by the Bishops of London for over thirteen hundred years and was their country retreat from the 11th century until 1975. Queen Elizabeth I was a frequent visitor to the Palace and Anne Boleyn used the woods around the estate as a hunting ground.

The riverside location attracted the aristocracy who leased land from the Bishops to build country houses of their own. Rosebank – lying roughly where Lysia Street is now – was built in 1809 and described as ‘the prettiest house in the world’ by Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. Its neighbour, Craven Cottage, was built in 1780 by the 6th Baron Craven and like Rosebank was the venue of lavish parties with Prince Louis Napoleon and the future Edward VII amongst the guests. Craven Cottage was destroyed by fire in 1888. The house was uninsured and remained derelict until acquired by Fulham Football Club in 1896.

Next to Craven Cottage was Rowberry Mead with its osier beds, which were cut and dried and used in Fulham’s famous basket making industry. Between Craven Cottage and Fulham Palace was a meadow known as ‘Fielders Piece’, used to graze cattle by a butcher of that name with a shop on Fulham High Street. Stevenage Road was no more than a dirt track between Fulham Palace and Crabtree Lane.

As the metropolis spread and transport improved this rural idyll was quickly transformed into much needed housing. The Bishops Park Estate or ‘Alphabet Streets’ as they are known – Cloncurry, Doneraile, Ellerby etc... were largely built during a ten year period between 1899 and 1908 by a firm called Allen & Norris. William Allen, a local builder and Henry Norris, a solicitor’s clerk, formed their hugely successful partnership in 1896. Henry Norris was knighted in 1917 for services to his country during the war and was Mayor of Fulham for ten years.

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