

A Brief History of Bedhampton



Bedhampton Railway Crossing circa 1905

Special Edition to Celebrate the Election of
Councillor Ken Smith
as Mayor of the Borough of Havant
May 11, 2011



A Brief History of Bedhampton

In A.D.501 Saxons invaded Portsmouth, defeated the inhabitants and took possession of all the surrounding countryside, including Bedhampton.

During the next three hundred years development and changes took place, as records exist that in A.D.837 the Manor of Bedhampton and its land were granted to the Cathedral Church of Winchester by Egbert, King of Wessex.

During the reign of the Saxon King Alfred, Danish invasions commenced, pillaging the village and laying it to waste. Further invasions took place until all England was conquered and Canute proclaimed King. Story has it that it was at nearby Bosham where Canute demonstrated he was unable to repel the sea. Soon after his death in 1035, Bedhampton Manor was let to Alsi who held it until the Normans took possession in 1066.

In 1086 William The Conqueror ordered a census of the whole land – the Domesday Book – and under the heading “The land of St. Peter, Winchester”, Bedhampton has the distinction of a direct mention. The entry states “*Hugo de port ten. de abbatia BETAMETONE.*” (Hugo de Port holds BETAMETONE from the Abbey).

As time progressed Bedhampton’s name changed from Betametone to Bethameton and Bethametona (one source dates these uses from 1167 and 1242) to Bedhamton through to Bedhampton.

In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson’s *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* described Bedhampton like this:

“Bedhampton, a village and a parish in Havant district, Hants. The village stands on Langston harbour, adjacent to the South Coast railway, 1 mile W of Havant; and it has a post office under Havant, commands a charming sea-view, and is noted for its fine springs. The parish comprises 2,416 acres of land and 190 of water. Real property, £4,182. Pop., 576. Houses, 119. The property is divided among a few.

The manor once belonged to a dowager Countess of Kent, who took a nun's vow in grief for the death of her husband, afterwards married Sir Eustace Dabrieshes-court, founded a chantry in penance for her marriage, and died here in 1411. The living is a rectory in the diocese of Winchester. Value, £328 Patron, E. Daubeny, Esq. The church is a small, old, substantial edifice, with pointed steeple."*

Bedhampton

Bedhampton, a former village, is now a suburb located in the Borough of Havant. It is to be found at the northern end of Langstone Harbour and at the foot of the eastern end of Portsdown Hill and is close to the A27, M27 and A3(M) roads.

Modern Bedhampton has a railway station one mile west of Havant with services to Portsmouth, Brighton and London together with connections to Southampton, Bristol and South Wales.

The Havant to Portsmouth railway was opened in 1847 but Bedhampton Halt did not open until April 1, 1906. In the late 1940s it came under the control of Havant for staffing. During August 2007 the old platform surfaces were upgraded, new shelters and railway gates added in addition to Platform 1 (eastbound) being extended to make it suitable for longer trains.



Parks

Bedhampton is well served with open spaces where people can relax. The Hermitage Stream Walk runs to the north of the parish, from New Road to Purbrook Way. In the centre of Bedhampton is a large open space bounded by Hooks Lane, part of which is home to the Havant Rugby Football Club.

To the south of Bedhampton Road is Bidbury Mead, a large tree lined recreation ground, which is home to the Bedhampton Mariners Cricket Club and the Bedhampton Bowling Club. People also enjoy the space and facilities provided at Scratchface Recreation Ground situated to the north-west of the village



Bidbury Mead

Churches

There has been a church in Bedhampton since 1086. The present parish church, St. Thomas The Apostle, situated in Lower Bedhampton, dates from the 12th century. In 1953 a church centre was built and dedicated to St. Nicholas. There is also a Methodist church in Hulbert Road. A Gospel Hall built between 1901 and 1902 with funds provided by a local benefactress, Miss Isabella Dennistoun Meiklam, was closed in 2010.



Church of St. Thomas The Apostle



Lower Bedhampton

Schools

The House of Commons Education Enquiry, 1835, records that there were two 'Dame Schools' in Bedhampton in 1833. The old Bedhampton School was built in 1868 on the corner of Bedhampton Road and Kingscroft Lane to the design of Richard William Drew, a London architect. Miss Dust was the original mistress, serving at the school until 1876. On reviewing her logbook she records that she had to "reprove a boy for fighting". Further she appears to have been frequently visited by the squire, William Stone, M.P. and the rector, Revd. Edmund Daubeney, B.A.

Bedhampton School Board was formed in 1871, the land and school was leased to the Board in 1873 to be used as a school, Sunday school and public meeting rooms. Also in 1873 the school was enlarged and again in 1895 for about 180 children.

The school closed in 1985 and subsequently became the Bedhampton Arts Centre; this Grade II listed building still remains largely intact.



The Old School

After World War II, school places were at a premium and extra places were created by converting part of the former HMS Daedalus III Naval Camp into Stockheath Primary School. This was located where Tarrant Gardens has now been built.

In 1974 Hampshire County Council decided to split the primary intake. A new school, for the older children, was built on land adjacent to Hooks Lane Recreation Ground; this school was named Bidbury Middle School.

A long campaign commenced to move the newly created Bedhampton First School to the same site. This eventually took place in February 1985 when Bedhampton and Stockheath First Schools amalgamated to become Bidbury First School, renamed Bidbury Infant School in 1994.

Bedhampton is also home to a Roman Catholic Primary School, St. Thomas More's.



Bedhampton *'In Bloom'*

Village Sign

In 2002 a new village sign was erected containing an inscription from the famous poet – John Keats (1795-1821) – who is known to have stayed in Bedhampton near to St. Thomas Church in 1819.



One of a series of booklets on local history in the Borough of Havant.
See the full set at www.havant.gov.uk/havant-10979