

SUTTON PARK PEDESTRIAN GATES 2020



Crown Lane Gate



French Gate



Gum Slade Gate



Thorney Hill Gate



White House Gate



Milking Gate

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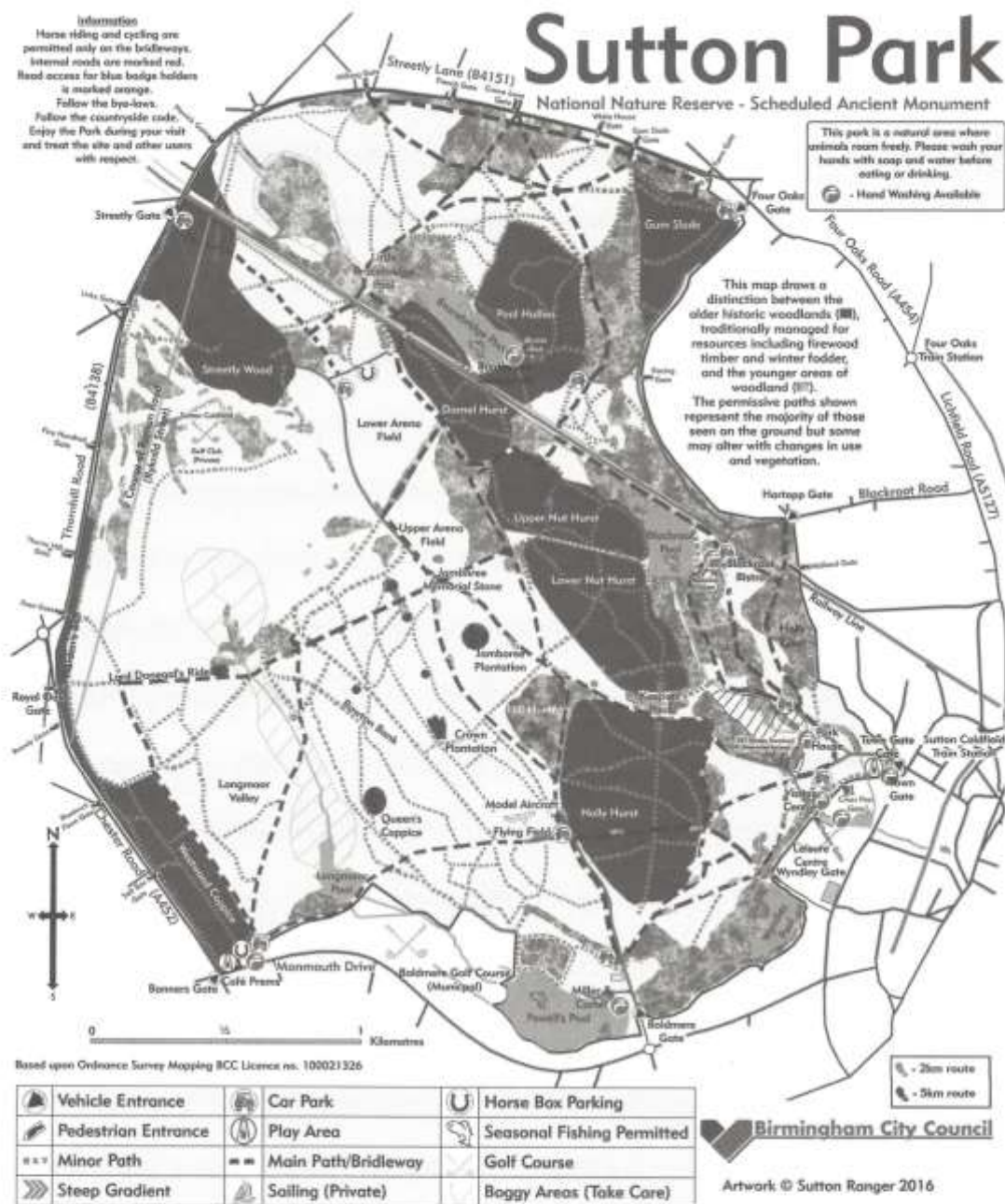
You may have made your way into the park via one of the Pedestrian Gates in recent times and noticed that some have been given names. Some also have a board giving a description of how and why these names were chosen.

In 2016, one of the Ranger Guide Leaflets contained a full list and details of these Pedestrian Gates in Sutton Park and we are fortunate to be able to make this available here with the approval of the Park Ranger.

Many thanks to the following people who contributed to this article.

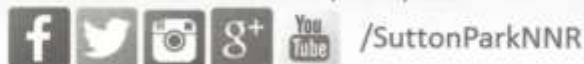
- Jackie Sheppard, for the photographs
- Roy Billingham, for information
- Matthew Osland-Barker the Park Ranger and Mike Hodder who, together, devised the list and details.

**Janet Jordan
July, 2020**



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Vehicle Entrance	Post Code
Town Gate	B73 6BU
Bullbrook Gate	B73 6LH
Barnes Gate	B73 6SD
Smethley Gate	B74 3EW
Four Oaks Gate	B74 2XU
Redditch Gate	B74 2QR

Sutton Park Map showing Pedestrian Gates
 (Taken from [www.birmingham.gov.uk/Sutton Park](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/SuttonPark))

1 - MILKING GATE

The Milking Gate appears on the 1779 Plan and Measurement Map of Sutton Park making it one of the oldest gate names still in use. The name itself comes from the fact that cattle were moved through the gate into the milking parlours attached to Park Side Farm which stood on what is today Bennett Road. Park Side Farm was located within the common land that ran along the northern boundary of the park and stretched north towards the Walsall Road/Rosemary Hill Road Junction.

2 - FRENCH GATE

The French Gate is named after the area of the park into which it opens. The 1779 Plan and Measurement Map names a large open field covering around 80 acres in the north of the park as the “French Field”. The French Field ran between the Milking Gate and the Gum Slade and stretched south from the northern boundary of the park towards Pool Hollies Wood.

3 - CROWN LANE GATE

Crown Lane Gate is named after the road that still leads today from the park towards the location of the Crown Inn. The Crown stands today on the Walsall Road which until around 1817 marked the boundary between Sutton Common and the Coldfield. The Coldfield stretched north from the Walsall Road towards Watford Gap and east towards an area known as Bradnook Hayes where Springhill Farm stands today.

4 - WHITEHOUSE GATE

White House Gate is named after a group of houses that still stand on Four Oaks Common Road and would have once been visible over the common land adjacent to the park. Commoners rights allowed the free grazing of land by local inhabitants unlike grazing within the

park which until 1528 was the sole preserve of the land owner. Between 1126 and 1489 the Earls of Warwick maintained a deer park and set out many of the boundaries still evident. In 1489 Sutton became a royal manor which paved the way for the Royal Charter of 1528. After this date local inhabitants were, with permission and payment, able to access the park for grazing.

5 - GUMSLADE GATE

Gum Slade Gate is named after the shallow valley into which it opens. The 1779 Plan and Measurement Map of Sutton Park names the area as “Gumslade Hill” and shows a wooded area running along the eastern slope called “Gumslade Valley Wood”. The name Gumslade is comprised of the Anglo-Saxon word “slade” meaning an open space, a valley and “gum” which may derive from the Anglo-Saxon prefix for excellence or eminence.

6 - FARM GATE

Farm Gate is named after Four Oaks farm which stood on what is today Clarence Road; on land now occupied by Hermes Court. Four Oaks farm was originally located within Four Oaks common, one of several once interconnected areas of common land that constituted the Coldfield. The Coldfield was an open area of land stretching northeast towards Bradnook Hays. The 1779 Plan and Measurement Map of Sutton Park shows the gate opening onto a triangular parcel of land known as “Park Gate Bushes” which ran east towards what is today Four Oaks Gate and south towards “Dead Oak Crook” along Wall-side.

7 - RACING GATE

The Racing Gate is named after the race course that ran adjacent to the park within the grounds of Four Oaks Hall. The original Hall was constructed in 1677 and stood within 60 acres of land adjacent to

the park. In 1756 the estate obtained, by Act of Parliament, 48 acres of parkland and in 1827 purchased an additional 57 acres. In 1881 the race course opened and held the Grand National Hunt Steeple chase. The course ran alongside the park, following the line of the historic wall, with a grandstand located in the vicinity of Clarry Drive. The failure of the race course allowed in 1891 the purchase of the estate for residential development. Four Oaks Hall was demolished in 1898.

8 - MIDLAND GATE

Midland Gate is so named after its use as the main point of access into the park from Sutton Park Station. In 1866 the Midland Railway Company purchased a parcel of land from Sutton Corporation in order to site a station on the edge of the park and in 1871 began construction of the railway. The line connected Water Orton to Walsall. During WWII the station was used as the main sorting office for the American postal service. The last passenger service ran in 1962.

9 - CROSS POOL GATE

Cross Pool Gate is named after the pond that sat in the grounds of the Royal Promenade Gardens. The remains of this pond are still visible today alongside Clifton Road. The ornamental gardens were laid out in 1868 by Mr Joe Cole of Perry Barr. The gardens covered nearly 30 acres of land alongside Park Road; under what is today the youth centre and astro-turf pitches. The gardens included a refreshment room and latterly overnight accommodation. In 1878 a Crystal Palace was constructed within the gardens.

10 - PALACE GATE

Palace Gate is named after the Crystal Palace that once stood beneath what is today the astro-turf pitches. Built in 1878 the palace

itself comprised two adjoining buildings. The first, a large red brick building in the style of the town hall, contained a hotel whilst the second, an impressive steel framed glass construction that included a dome that rose to 90ft, contained the winter gardens. Over the years the Crystal Palace and its grounds featured, a zoo; complete with leopards wolves bears and lions, an aquarium, a fun fair, a 15" gauge railway, an ice rink and a number of other attractions and entertainments. The Crystal Palace was demolished in 1962.

11 - WYNDLEY GATE

Wyndley Gate was for hundreds of years the main entrance into the park from Sutton. A sunken road or "Holloway" is still visible running north-east from the gate, through Holly Hurst, towards Keepers Well. After the well the original route is marked by the metalled road that runs towards Streetly Gate. Today Wyndley Lane marks the original route out of the park, across Clifton Road, and up towards Driffold. The name Driffold comes from the practice of moving livestock into an enclosure or "fold" at the end of a grazing period. The movement or "drift" was carried out to separate livestock, to protect grazing within deer parks, to remove animals from surrounding commons and to impound any animals grazing without the appropriate permissions or rights.

12 - SALTBOX GATE

Saltbox Gate is named after a distinctive building that once overlooked the western edge of what was then Perry Barr common; on land that is today occupied by the Sundridge Children's Centre. The 1779 Plan and Measurement Map of Sutton Park shows the common stretching west from the Chester Road towards what is today the Queslett Road. The 1824 Enclosure Map shows the former common under the ownership of Perry Barr Common Farm located beneath the houses that sit today where George Frederick Road meets the northern corner of the covered reservoir on Rough Road.

A saltbox is a building with an asymmetrical gabled roof resembling the boxes in which table salt was once kept.

13 - BLUE BRICK GATE

Bluebrick Gate is named after a farm that still stands today alongside the Aldridge Road. The 1824 Enclosure Map shows Blue Brick Farm sitting within land that had previously been part of Great Barr Common within the historic manor of Great Barr. At that time the farm sat opposite Hundred Acre wood which stretched east towards the Chester Road and contained an ammunition factory beneath what is today Compton Drive. Today the farm is known as Blue House farm.

14 - BRANDY GATE

The Brandy Gate appears on the 1779 Plan and Measurement Map of Sutton Park making it one of the oldest gate names still in use. The name itself suggests a connection between park staff in days past and the Royal Oak Inn which survives today as the Parson and Clerk. The 1884 Ordnance Survey Map shows a track running in a straight line from the gate towards Rowton's Well. The waters from this well were considered to have restorative properties and the well itself was often used for bathing. Until the 1930's the well supplied water to the Birmingham Eye Hospital on Church Street.

15 - ROYAL OAK GATE

Royal Oak Gate was so named following the visit of Queen Elizabeth II on the 3rd August 1957 to the World Scout Jubilee Jamboree. Passing through this gate her majesty travelled through the park. Lord Donegal's Ride, leading from the gate towards the Jamboree Stone, was resurfaced with red brick pieces for the royal visit.

16 - ROSE GATE

Rose Gate is named after Rose cottage that once sat within the modern boundary of the park to the east of the Chester Road roundabout. The cottage was demolished following an accident which saw a large goods lorry crash into it. The modern gate marks the location of the entrance gate to the cottage.

17 - THORNY GATE

Thorny Gate is named after an area of land adjacent to the park that was once part of Barr Common and known as Thorny Hill. The 1884 Ordnance Survey Map shows the common no longer in existence having been replaced by an extensive field network with areas of woodland. Thornhill Wood, covering 15 acres of land, sat adjacent to the park between the Chester Road and Thornhill Road; in the vicinity of what is today Tintern Close and Linforth Drive. Remnants of Thornhill Wood have been preserved within the grounds belonging to the garden centre. A large house, Thornhill, once sat at the junction of Thornhill Road and what is today Oakmount Road.

18 - FIVE HUNDRED GATE

Five hundred gate marks a point that sits 500 feet above sea level. Prior to the middle of the 21st century this gate opened onto farmland carved from what had been Barr Common. The 1779 Plan and Measurement Map shows in the vicinity of the gate several areas marked as Stretley. The word Stretley is derived from the Latin “Strata” meaning “paved or laid road” and is first recorded in its Anglo-Saxon form as “straet” in AD957; by 1879 this had become Streetly.

19 - BEACON GATE

Beacon gate marks the start of a track that once ran across Barr Common towards Barr Beacon. Today Manor Road and Bridle Lane

follow the original route of the track towards the Beacon and would have once passed along the northern edge of Hundred Acre Wood.

20 - LINKS GATE

Links gate is the entrance used by Sutton Coldfield Golf Club to access their current course. The golf club was established in 1889 and originally played on 9 holes in the vicinity of Town Gate. In 1890 a course was laid out close to Streetly gate and the clubhouse built a few years later. The course has changed over the years and at one time included parts of the Arena Field. This however ceased when a number of fairways were laid out to the west along the course of the roman road.

21 - NEWICK GATE

Newick Gate marks the boundary between the park and what was once Newick Woods. Newick Woods covered a large area north of Hardwick Road and in addition a parcel of land on which Streetly Methodist Church is currently located. The large Sessile Oak Trees in the grounds of the Church date from this period and would have been the dominant native timber tree.



Sign Board at the Milking Gate