



History Nugget for May 2026 - Origins of Road Names

It can be surprisingly difficult to find out why a particular road was named. Surprising because, in spite of documentation such as planning applications going back to the 19th century, it was rare to note why a road got its name, but rather common just to say what it was to be named.

Let's start with a difficult one. "Taffy's How" off of Love Lane. The narrowness of the street is part of its history. Eric Montague, in his Mitcham Histories books, tells us that the origin of the name is unknown, but a field off of Love Lane of that name was listed in 1827 by Edwin Chart. The "how" part of the name may be Anglo-Saxon for a narrow strip of land, and the "Taffy" may have been its owner, a Welshman who may have been called David, or Daffyd.

There are council minutes for the naming of Raleigh Gardens, which was built in 1922 by Higgs & Hill. They made three road name suggestions to the then Mitcham Urban District Council. These were Mitcham House Gardens, because a building called Mitcham House was there before, Fair Green Gardens and Mitcham Fair Gardens. The council suggested instead Raleigh House, as Sir Walter Raleigh had owned land in Mitcham, but the builder then suggested Raleigh Gardens.

Cricket Green, as a name of two roads, is a more recent incarnation. An 1866 map shows the even numbered road as The Causeway. Before the obelisk was refurbished, there was a wall with a road name sign that declared that Cricket Green was formerly Lower Green East.



Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage
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The change of name was requested by the wife of the Mitcham MP, Sir Malcolm Robertson, in 1944. The reason given was to avoid confusion with Lower Green West.

Speaking of Lower Green West, Preshaw Crescent is a bit of a mystery. It isn't mentioned by Montague, nor does it appear in the council minutes. So, how is the name Preshaw connected to Mitcham? To find out, we have to look further afield. There is a Preshaw House, located in the manor of the same name, about halfway between Winchester and Hambledon. In 1898, a man named William Ernest Bush bought the title of Lord of the Manor of Preshaw. William had taken over his father's chemical company, W.J. Bush, in 1889. That very same year, he was granted the title "Baron de Bush" by the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

What does this have to do with Mitcham? In 1886, the firm of W.J. Bush bought the famous Potter & Moore lavender distillery in Mitcham. The copper stills and manufacturing equipment were subsequently moved to Bush's newly built works in Batsworth Road, just off Church Road.

William, Baron de Bush, married an American opera singer, and alongside their baby daughter, the family became true celebrities of their era. Tragically, his life was cut short by a railway accident in 1899.

The final piece of the puzzle came to light in 2016. When Number 6 Preshaw Crescent came up for auction, a copy of the title deeds showed that the land had originally been sold in 1897 by a Reverend F. Wilson to a Mr. Arthur John Bush. In the 1891 census, Arthur was listed as a manufacturing chemist living at Holmdale, Baron Grove. Earlier records confirm his father was William John Bush, meaning Arthur was the brother of Baron de Bush.

It seems highly likely, then, that the name Preshaw Crescent came directly from the owner of the land, serving as a lasting homage to his late brother's time as Lord of the Manor of Preshaw.

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