



House Names in the Mill Hill Park Area

Mill Hill Road

The Mill Hill Tavern

Now “Mill Hill Court” a development of flats and houses. The name, “Mill Hill Tavern” was used since at least 1868, although the “Tavern” part was often dropped in the years leading up to its closure in 2013. We used to have three pubs in our area, all in Mill Hill Road, of which only the Talbot Inn (see below) now survives. The third, disappeared many years ago, as we shall see (see even further, below).



2013

61 Gunnersbury
Lane, Acton,
London,
W3 8ED



2018

Vine Villa

A brick by the front door bears the date 1860. Perhaps a grapevine was planted here?



96 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ

Unknown

Built after numbering
system introduced.



92 and 94

Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ

Wroxton Cottages.

Wroxton is a hamlet near Banbury in Oxfordshire, but I think the name is more likely to remind people of Wroxton Abbey, a Jacobean mansion house and the home of Lord North.

Quite a lot of names, as we'll see, fall into this category of names suggestive of prestige - with references to royalty, aristocracy, stately homes and the like.



88 & 90

Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ

Helston Villa.

Presumably after the ancient town of Helston in Cornwall.

86 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ



Araucaria Villas

“Araucaria” refers to the 'monkey puzzle tree'. This pair of houses is set further back from the road than all the others and my guess is that a monkey puzzle tree was planted in the front garden when they were first built.

These distinctive trees were first brought to Britain from their native Chile in 1796 but it was only after they were re-introduced here in Victoria's reign that they became popular. It's thought that all later monkey puzzles in England descend from the specimens imported in 1844, so since these houses were built less than 20 years later, having such a tree in Mill Hill Road would have still been quite a novelty.

I found the name “Araucaria Villas” in 2007, although then the evidence was solely documentary. The present owner of number 84 moved in shortly afterwards. One day, in the street, he asked Ray if he knew the name of his house. Ray suggested it was “Araucaria Villas”. He was relieved when, sometime after that during exterior renovations, an original painted name cartouche with exactly that name was uncovered.

The cartouche has been reinstated.

84 & 82 Mill Hill Rd,
London
W3 8JJ



2018



2019



2006

Avon Villas

“Avon” is the old Celtic word for 'River' which is why we have so many rivers with this name. Perhaps there's also a suggestion of Stratford on Avon and the Bard of Avon in this name.



78 & 80

Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ

Woodbine Villa

The name is still faintly legible in the fanlight. Woodbine is an old-fashioned name for honeysuckle. Perhaps the first residents planted some round the front door?

76 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ



Swiss Cottage

The children's classic, 'Swiss Family Robinson', was written in 1812 and helped popularise all things Swiss in the 19th century. The famous Swiss Cottage in Finchley Road, a pub in the manner of a large Swiss chalet, was built in 1840. This “Swiss Cottage” doesn't look particularly Swiss though - unless you use a lot of imagination!

74 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ



Savernake Cottage

Savernake is the name of a privately-owned forest in Wiltshire which was famous in the 1850s for its deer park.

72 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ



Claremont Villas

Claremont, near Esher in Surrey, was one of the royal homes from 1816 to 1922. This pair of houses were among the very first to be occupied and already had people living in them by early 1861.



68 & 70 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ

Pembridge Villa

Pembridge is another 'prestige' name, being that of a castle and distinguished old family in Herefordshire.



66 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ

Bermuda House

I can't shed any particular light on the name; Bermuda is often referred to as our oldest colony. Bermuda House operated as a laundry.

Laundry premises usually had an entrance for horse-drawn vehicles - useful for carting the dirty laundry in and the clean laundry out - and various outbuildings for washing and drying behind the house.



62a Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JH &
64 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JJ

John Humby's glass houses stood on this site in the Victorian era (he lived across the road at a house on the site of number 49 Mill Hill Road).

These 14 houses were built around the turn of the last century, well after the introduction of numbers, but they were given 'ornamental' names in the fanlight glass over each doorway, some of which survive as follows:



38 – 62 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JH

Grasmere

Grasmere is a beauty spot in the Lake District.

Quite a few names, particularly in the later Victorian and Edwardian eras, seem to be of places with romantic, wild or picturesque associations, often in Scotland or the north of England (more examples are coming).

62 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3
8JH



Hazeldene.

A name found all over the country, in various spellings; but it's not clear whether it had any particular connotations 100 years ago.

'Dene' means a deep valley, so might suggest a rural retreat. We'll see a number of such evocative names, which may not necessarily refer to a specific place.

60a Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH

St Elmo

St Elmo is another name for St Erasmus, patron saint of Mariners, mostly known for a natural phenomenon called “St Elmo's Fire” whereby a light appears in a ship's mast after an electrical storm, due to the discharge of energy. So perhaps it is a slightly exotic, romantic name?

60 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH



Rothsay

Rothsay is a Scottish town and castle but also a royal name - the Prince of Wales is known as the Duke of Rothsay when north of the border. This applied to Victoria's son, Edward, Prince of Wales, just as it does to Prince Charles today.

58 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3
8JH

Holmwood

Holmwood is the name of a grand villa built in 1858 near Glasgow, now owned by the Scottish National Trust.

56 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH



Dun-Edin

Dun-Edin is the old Gaelic name for Edinburgh, and also a city in New Zealand. This name always makes me think of the well-known parody of cosy house names - Dunroamin!

54 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3
8JH

Cressingham

Cressingham is a place in Norfolk, once known for Cressingham Priory; or this might be a reference to Hugh de Cressingham, the notorious treasurer of Scotland in the 13th century.

52 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH



The glass has been replaced, and the name is missing.

50 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH

The glass has
been replaced,
and the name
is missing.

48 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH



Elsham.

This probably
alludes to
Elsham Hall in
Lincolnshire,
the home of Sir
Francis
Edmund
George Astley-
Corbett,
baronet,
around the
time these
houses were
built. Another
'prestige'
name.

46 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH

Coniston

Another famous beauty spot in the Lake District.

44 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH



The glass has been replaced, and the name is missing.

42 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH

The glass has been replaced, and the name is missing.

40 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH



Viola Place

The glass has been replaced. “Viola Place” is on a modern sign, so probably this is a modern name, rather than one contemporaneous with the others mentioned here.

38 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JH

1 – 4 Leicester Terrace

“Leicester Terrace 1862” is carved on a stone tablet in what would have been the centre of the Terrace, had not number 4 been demolished. An entrance to West London College is there now, but this site is soon to be redeveloped to become a school and housing development.



30, 32 & 34 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JH



In 1909, several houses in Mill Hill Road were demolished to create Crown Street. They included the detached **Warwick House** and a pair of semi-detached houses called **Torrington Villas**. Torrington is a picturesque market town in north Devon.



The “Pocket Garden”;
the beginning of Crown Street;
and a patch of grass

Richmond Terrace

There are several “Richmonds” after which this terrace might have been named, including the well-known ones near London and in Yorkshire. Richmond Terrace originally consisted of seven properties in all, five small houses with a shop and living accommodation at either end: number 2 was a post office and newsagent's; number 14 was a greengrocer's.

2 to 14 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JA





Acton from Mill Hill Rd.

3523 The "Wyndham" Series

Postcard, c1900-1910, collotype, showing the edge of Richmond Terrace on the left, the orchard, which grew beyond it, Mill Hill Grove running up to the High Street and the houses on the right which stood where Sycamore Lodge, the care home now stands. Wyndham was an Acton printing house specialising in postcards.

The Talbot Inn.

Talbot is the name of a breed of dog, a large white hunting dog which is now extinct. This pub has been called the Talbot since at least 1874.



1 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JB

Numbers 3 to 17 have all been demolished and the ground on which they stood is now where **Arlington Tower** stands, but not for long. It too is scheduled for demolition under the Acton Gardens redevelopment scheme. The original buildings included the **Belle Vue Laundry** and a pair called **Alma Villas**. Belle Vue probably alluded to the Italianate terrace of large houses of that name in the Uxbridge Road, still there, opposite the Red Lion & Pineapple. Alma was the name of a famous battle in the Crimean War in 1854, so would have been fresh in the memory when these houses were built about 10 years later.

3 to 17 Mill Hill Rd,



Prospect Terrace

These are tall houses and, as they are built on high ground, “Prospect” perhaps alludes to the view they had from the upper windows.



19 to 35 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JE

Seymour House

On the corner with Langley Drive, the name, Seymour House, may have been an example of Victorian humour, since you can obviously 'see more' from the corner!



19 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JE

Buck House

I think this was
an example of
modern,
possibly
Australian
humour!

25 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JE





Aden House

Aden was formerly a British-held port, in what is now Yemen.

31 Mill Hill Rd,
London W3 8JE

Woodland Villas

Probably a reference to **The Woodlands**, a large house on the south side of Uxbridge Road, now long demolished, though its ice house survives in **Woodlands Park** off Crown Street.



37 & 39 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JE

Sudbury Villa

Now named Sudbury House. Sudbury Villa was one of the earliest houses to be occupied in Mill Hill Road, lived in by John Cox from spring 1861 who stayed there for many years. Cox was a “proprietor of houses” – a builder – and a tax collector. Census returns show he was born in Sudbury, surprisingly not the nearby Sudbury in Middlesex nor the famous one in Suffolk but a small village in Derbyshire with the same name.

This is an example of a name which had personal significance to the first owner - we'll see a few more of these.

41 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JE



Rose Villa

Rose Villa (on the left) was the home of the architect Edward Monson (1847-1935) for a short time around 1870.

According to *The Directory of British Architects 1834 – 1914*, Monson had many connections with Acton. He designed what is now (Jan 2019) the empty, Acton Old Library, and came from a well-known family of architects. His descendants still run the family firm in Bushey, Herts.

43 & 45 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JE



Clifton Villa

Clifton was and is a smart area of Bristol.

Uzzella House - possibly?

There was a house with this name in Mill Hill Road in 1871, probably somewhere around here. 'Uzella' is, I learned, an old name for the part of Cornwall around Lostwithiel.

47 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JE



The Gardeners' Arms

This was a pub which stood on this site built in the early 1860s. It was run by John Humby, generally described as 'florist and beer retailer' who had extensive glass houses for growing his flowers on the opposite side of the road (where numbers 38 to 62 were later built).

The pebble-dashed, semi-detached houses there now date from the early 20th century.

49 & 49a Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JE



Langford, Close

The fairly new
close of
houses called
Langford
Close have
been built on
part of The
Gardeners'
Arms land.



Coln Villas

Five pairs of semi-detached villas, the name is always spelt without an 'e'. The Coln Valley is a noted beauty spot in the Cotswolds. At number 3 (?) Coln Villas, now 65 Mill Hill Road, we had a French painter called Victor Lannoy living for a while in the 1870s.



51 to 69 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF

Spring Terrace?

I had difficulty identifying these two pairs of semi-detached houses and I am not certain these were Spring Terrace.

Probably after a spring of water rather than the season. One of the old field names was Spring Field and there are clearly various springs in the area.



71 to 77 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF

Fern Villa.

The Victorians had a real passion for ferns, collecting them, growing them, drawing them, studying them and using them in all sorts of designs too. There was even a name for it: pteridomania.

79 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF



Burlington Cottage?

This was run as a laundry.
Burlington suggests Lord Burlington who built Chiswick House, basing it on a Palladian Villa in Vicenza in Italy – but that's 'Villa' in a rather different sense to the way that word is being used in the Victorian Acton context! Burlington also hints at Burlington House and Arcade - more suggestions of prestige

81 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF



Mill Hill Lodge

Two 1980s town houses are on this site now, but the original 1870s(?) house was just as tall as these modern buildings and had a bay window.



Mill Hill Rd in 1967, showing Mill Hill Lodge, Lock Villas and Northumberland Cottages

83 & 83a Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF



Lock Villas.

I have no idea why these houses were called this. Lock can be a surname, so perhaps it had some personal significance to the builder or first owner.



85 & 87

Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF

Northumberland Cottages

Northumberland is a county in the north of course - but probably a hint of the Dukes of Northumberland, whose southern home was and still is at Syon House in nearby Isleworth.



89 & 91 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF

Montrose Villa

These two semi-detached houses were internally 'connected' by a doorway and lived in as one house - "Montrose Villa" until 1898. Montrose is a small town in Scotland, but the name was probably more familiar from the novels of Sir Walter Scott, including (1819) "The Legend of Montrose". Montrose was a romantic royalist earl fighting for King Charles in Scotland in the 1640s.

In about 2003, the present owners of 93, Jerome Farrell and Ray Batchelor, had the once forgotten name painted on the fanlight glass by sign-writer, Mr. George Pull, in a style which might have been adopted at the time the houses were built.

These houses share decorative details with 184 & 186 Avenue Road, suggesting they were built at the same time by the same builder. Their back gardens adjoin

93 & 95 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF



1 – 4 Denmark Villas

Two pairs of 3-storey semi-detached houses.

The name Denmark probably honours Alexandra, the Danish princess who in March 1863 - just around the time these houses were being built - married Queen Victoria's eldest son, later Edward VII. The royal wedding sparked off a sudden interest in all things Danish.

We seem to have had a little artists' colony here in the 1870s/1880s.



97 to 103 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF

3 Denmark Villas,

Two notable Victorian engravers lived here in succession: William Ridgway and then Alfred Lucas

99 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF



2 Denmark Villas

101 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF



1 Denmark Villas

This was the home to one of the most successful of Victorian engravers, William Turner Davey. His engraving called *Eastward Ho!*, showing a ship full of soldiers saying goodbye to their wives and mothers before going to India, became one of the key visual images connected with the Indian Mutiny.

103 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF



Centre for Armenian Advice and Information,

According to their website: “The Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA) is the principal focus for the welfare and educational needs of over 20,000 Armenians scattered across London.”

Originally a stableyard.

105a Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF



Park View

These were built after the numbering system was introduced but, along with the terrace of identically styled houses in Gunnersbury Lane between Mill Hill Road and Avenue Road, were known as “Park View”.



105 to 107 Mill Hill Rd, London W3 8JF