



**HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

**ST. ANN'S HILL**

St. Ann's Hill is over 240 feet high and commands wide views over the Thames basin. It is made up of a mixture of sand and gravel known as the Bagshot Beds.

This was an attractive area for occupation in Prehistoric times, and St. Ann's Hill has produced evidence of occupation from the Mesolithic, 12,000 - 3,000 B.C. or Middle Stone Age.

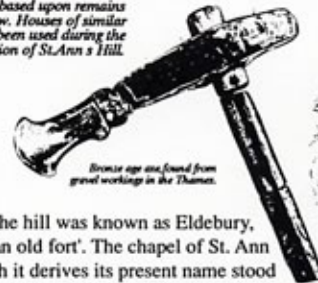


*An Iron Age settlement as reconstructed by Alan Sorrell. This drawing is based upon remains excavated at Heathrow. Houses of similar construction would have been used during the Iron Age occupation of St. Ann's Hill.*

In the Bronze Age a hillfort was constructed with a bank and ditch enclosing an area of about 625 hectares, within which stood a series of wooden buildings. The south east part of the hill was also occupied in the early Middle Iron Age.



*Gateway to Fox's House*



*Bronze axe one found from gravel workings in the Thames.*



*The Nun's Well*

By 1321, the hill was known as Eldebury, meaning 'an old fort'. The chapel of St. Ann from which it derives its present name stood in the north east corner of the fort, and was described as 'newly built' in 1334. In 1383 the Bishop of Winchester granted permission to the Abbot of Chertsey to perform divine worship there. The association with St. Ann continued when in 1440 Henry VI granted a licence for a fair to be held annually on Mount Eldebury on St. Ann's Day (July 26th). This was the origin of the 'Black Cherry Fair'.

The 'Nun's Well' on the N.W. side of the hill also attracted visitors, as its waters was said to be effective in curing eye disorders.



Little more is known of the hill's history until the late 18th century, by which time it was private property belonging to St. Ann's Hill House. The owner was Elizabeth Armistead, mistress of the Whig M.P. Charles James Fox, whom she married in 1795. He died 1806, Mrs. Fox lived there for a further 36 years. The property then passed to Lord Holland, whose widow made a number of improvements, a guide was written in 1879 making it clear the public were allowed access providing they did not harm the plants and wildlife.

The public could sit in a new summer house and buy light refreshments from the keeper's cottage.

On a clear day, it was possible to see Crystal Palace, the dome of St. Paul's, and parts of Kent and Sussex. 'The Dingle' was originally a sand pit, which in the 19th century provided sand to local foundries for use in making moulds for cast iron.



*The Golden Grove*

In 1927 the then owner, the newspaper proprietor Sir William Berry, presented St. Ann's Hill to the Chertsey Urban District Council to be made into a 'Public Recreation Ground'. It was officially opened to the public by Neville Chamberlain in 1928.



*St Ann's Hill 1820 from Egham Hill*