

A Brief History of Lady Bay

Pat Rodriguez and others

The following was taken from two articles posted on Facebook by Pat Rodriguez, who grew up in Lady Bay and now lives on Jersey. Your trusty editor combined them into one and added a number of the interesting comments (in quotes and italics) made by others on those Facebook posts. Thanks to all who contributed, but especially to Pat, not only for such interesting articles but for stimulating such interesting responses.

Why is it called Lady Bay?

There are several theories as to the origin of the name Lady Bay. The earliest goes back to AD 910 when Aethelflaeda, the Lady of the Mercians, ordered a 'Burgh' or fortress to be built on the south side of the Trent. 'Lady Bay' may have been a corruption of 'The Lady's Burgh'.

Another possibility refers to a chapel which stood on Trent Bridge in the 13th century, dedicated to St Mary, which might have given the name 'Lady's Bay' to a bend in the river.

Yet again in 1815, a historian of Nottingham advanced the theory that a plot of land, now known as the Hook, was the pasture of 'My Lady's Bay Mare' or simply a mare called 'Lady Bay'.

A History of Lady Bay

Lady Bay is an area adjacent to West Bridgford. To the inhabitants it is known as 'the island', being bounded on one side by the river Trent and on the other by the Grantham Canal.

Until 1891, Lady Bay wasn't Lady Bay at all. In fact, it was just a farm but then the land was split into plots, where different developers were allowed to build single or pairs of houses. The Alpha Villas on Lady Bay road were the first 2 homes built and were completed in 1892. Then by 1895 there were 30 households in Lady Bay.

Most of the homes built in this era are Edwardian style with many original features, however homes were built continually over many style eras. There is a lot of stained glass and porch tiles in the Victorian, Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles around Lady Bay. Unfortunately, quite a few of these beautiful homes were knocked down during the blitz in WW2 meaning there are also some more modern homes.

However, the formation of Lady Bay and West Bridgford goes back much further. Actually, the Saxons settled the area in the 10th century, about 50 years before the Norman invasion of Britain. Then the original arches for Lady Bay bridge (which is on the outskirts of Lady Bay which crosses the River Trent) were found during the building of the new bridge and it was found that they dated back as far as the 15th century.

Another link with history can be found in the fact that a little Saxon church once stood on a site at Adbolton, not half a mile from Lady Bay and bore the name All Hallows, the name adopted in 1942 by the parish church of Lady Bay.

Up to the late 1920s, Lady Bay was little more than half its present size, with the area near the canal being fields and rough ground, and it is interesting to walk through the roads

between Trent Boulevard and the canal and see the demarcation line where the 'old' houses built in the late 1800s and early 1900s give way to the newer ones constructed in the later 1900s.

There have been times when the inhabitants of Lady Bay would have wished the river and canal were further away from their homes. In 1947 the Trent, carrying extra water down from thawing snow in the Derbyshire hills, flooded the fields to an alarming depth on one side, and the canal rose on the other, so that it only required the flood level to rise another couple of inches for the houses in Lady Bay to have been waterlogged.

(Editor's note – thankfully there has been extensive flood defence work done since then.)

World War 2

During WW2, the Blitz meant that around 800 trained volunteers were needed in the West Bridgford, Lady Bay area. It also called for air raid shelters. As well as quite a few in West Bridgford, the council built one in Lady Bay on the corner of Lady Bay road and Rutland road. The remains can still be seen there.

“Our neighbour (Gertrude Hayes) on Rutland Road, who died in 1996 aged 97, was a Fire Warden during the Second World War and remembered houses destroyed by bombs on Lady Bay Road- I really wish I'd written down everything she told me!”

In 1941 a German Luftwaffe Bomber dropped a line of bombs across Lady Bay causing the need to re-build some homes in 1950-60s. These homes look quite out of place.

Editor's note – someone asked ‘which ones?’ and Pat replied “I can't give you the exact ones but if you walk up these roads, i.e. Lady Bay, Edward Rd etc you will see a mish mash of different buildings. Those are the ones that were bomb damaged or replaced. I was born 1943 in Edward Rd. A bomb dropped in our back garden! Not too much damage. There was a huge bomb crater on the Bowling green in front of the Hall in the park.”

Other comments on the subject:-

“I replaced my roof about 20 years ago and found traces of shrapnel in the slates. I surmise that the houses opposite on Gertrude were bombed”. Another reported that relatives living at 84 Trent Boulevard. were sadly killed in a raid on 9 May 1941.

“we undertook a little bit of research for my daughters WWII project at Lady Bay school and found the following: houses demolished were 19 and 21 Fox Road, numbers 80 to 90 Trent Boulevard and 78 was damaged. The frontage of Mrs. Bee's shop at 117 Trent Boulevard was damaged. 56 and 58 Lady Bay Road were demolished and there was a large crater in the garden of Mr. Rooke at 110 Julian Road. A further bomb landed in the Grantham canal and showered one or two houses in Ropsley Crescent with mud. Love the idea of a “Mrs Bees shop” in Lady Bay.” (Other posts reported that they bought their knitting wool from Mrs Bees – Ed)

“I also like to add 40 & 42 Pierrepont Road near TB shops also badly damaged when a bomb fell between the two houses. I lived in 42 Pierrepont 1985-1994 and the previous owners told me that they'd managed to rebuild both houses keeping the Victorian frontage.”

Other recollections about Lady Bay

This is a sample of the many comments Pat's articles provoked.

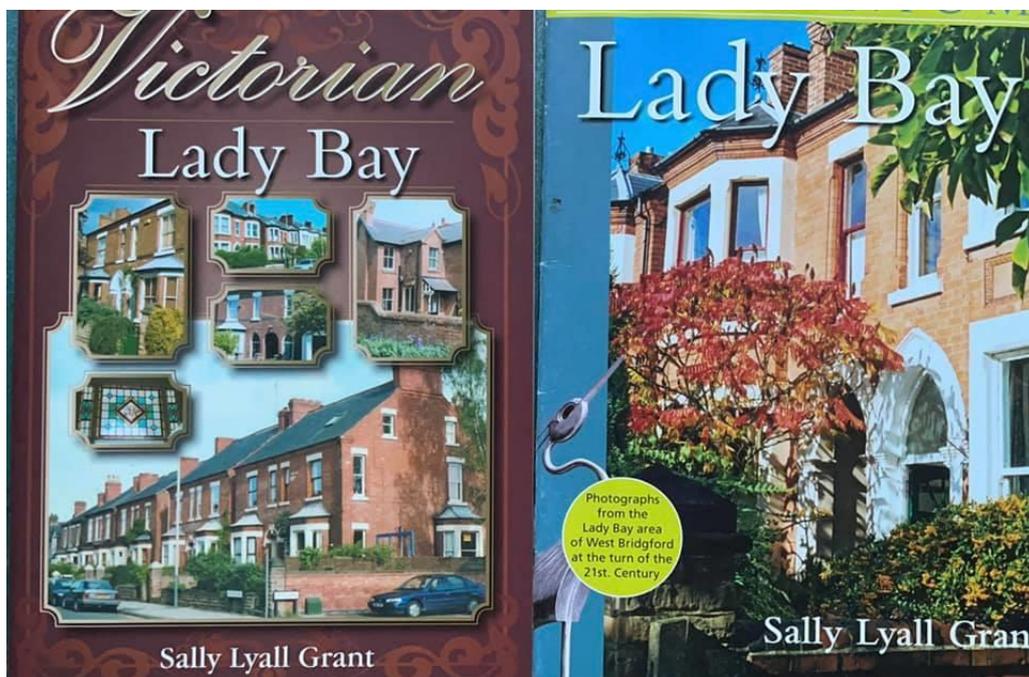
“Our house (in Julian Road) was built in 1897 as a show house for one of the founders of Pope and Parr Stained Glass. All the windows were to act like a catalogue for local people to choose for their

own homes. We didn't know until we moved in and wondered why we had biblical stories, tropical birds and lighthouses in every room!"

"The house we had on Trent Boulevard was a lovely big 5-bedroom house. Next door to the pub. When we moved (in) all the rooms had servants' bells and the main bell display was in the back dining room."

"Gertrude road houses, where I was brought up, opposite the Poppy were built in the 1920's and Rutland road where I have lived for the last 50 years in 1930s. One of the Tew family who were residents of the Manor House which is now The Lady Bay Pub lives down Adbolton lane. Somewhere I have a photo of one of the fancy dress parade taken at the Manor House the Vicar was the Revd Lee. I remember the bridges across the canal the one at bottom of Gertrude road was a footbridge and there was also an air aid shelter there then what was called the 'Meccano' bridge, which could lift up, was across from Rutland stores then of course the hump backed bridge was at the end of Trent boulevard. Lady bay school was divided into infant and junior schools and just after the war with the baby boom there were several classes held in the school hall."

"Please don't forget the two wonderful pieces of research Sally Grant published in booklets one on Lady Bay & the other on Victorian Houses in Lady Bay."



Although now a suburban, rather than a rural area, this is nevertheless a compact community, catering for the young with clinics, playgroups and junior schools, right through to clubs for the senior citizens. The local shops provide most needs, whilst spiritual welfare is taken care of in the churches.

Landmarks of Lady Bay

A lot of important buildings like the Methodist church and the Primary school have a history.

- Lady Bay Primary School

It was built in 1899 as an infant school as young families needed somewhere to school their children. A Junior school was then added in 1912 and the school was renamed from Trent

Boulevard Infants to Lady Bay primary school. The people of Lady Bay now had a complete education for their children. *Editor's note – someone disagreed with the timing - "The Lady Bay schools did not become a Primary School until well into the 80s or possibly later. My Mum was Deputy Head of the Infant School until she retired in 1985. They were still 2 separate schools then."*

- All Hallows Church

It was built in 1901-8 to replace an Iron church. It was known as Lady Bay Mission Church until 1942. Then in 1950 it was consecrated and Lady Bay parish was created. I would say it is now the main church in Lady Bay.

- Methodist Church

It was built in 1901 and cost £2,300 which is now worth around £25,547. It was built for 300 worshipers however it now isn't used as a church and, for example, was a cycle cafe in 2017.

- Lady Bay Pub

In the 1950s Lady Bay's first public house was opened. Before this, the residents had to go up to Trent Bridge for their liquid refreshment, and there were stories of those who, not wishing to go so far, would surreptitiously go to the off licence on Trent Boulevard with all manner of bags, including violin cases, to conceal their purchases from prying neighbours.

This (the Lady Bay Pub) was a later development that was created by transforming some homes opposite the school in 1960. *But then Pat added - "The information states that Lady Bay Pub was built in the 60s transforming some homes to build it! I was living next door to where the pub is now and it was only 1 manor house that was there before the pub."*

"(the owners) were builders by the name of Tew. There was a red brick wall in the front of the house. From my bedroom window I could look right over into the grounds. They used to have garden parties there in the late forties."

Editor's Note. Other comments engaged in healthy debate on whether this was in fact a Manor house or just a large villa. However, its name was not disputed, Holm Royd, and someone even produced a photo:-



- The Hook

Although not in the original article, Pat added this about The Hook/Trent Fields.

There wasn't such a place called the Hook. It was all called Trent Fields which was what it was. Just fields with lots of cows and nettles and long grass. You had to be careful where you walked. Us kids would walk across there to get the ferry over to Colwick Park. The ferry went from right opposite Colwick Pleasure Park. It was a rowing boat with a ferryman. He charged a penny to take you over. Then he would bring you back later. I think there are apartments where the Colwick park used to be.

Editor's note – lots of comments supported the naming as 'Trent Fields'. However, we do have [a map dated 1835](#) that shows 'The Hook' marked on the fields.

- Shops and businesses

It is understood that at one time a large part of Lady Bay was orchard, and one can still see several small brick buildings which it is said were used by night watchmen guarding the fruit in the autumn before it was sent to market.

"I recall the house we moved to from Trent Boulevard was built on an orchard (about eight fruit trees in the garden) and above the front door the date was 1897. It was a lovely detached house and still is although we left a long time ago but still stayed in L B. The garden also had a lovely brick little house at the bottom of the garden along with a fireplace as children we spent hours playing there and, during the war, we had a table shelter in there although I cannot recall ever using it but I can remember the night L B was bombed. Thanks for the memories."

"There was a large orchard I believe. I was told that some of the brick buildings in some gardens were where the workers lived. Wishing Well Day Nursery (Oakfields Road/Rutland Road) was also part of Boots. And I've seen a picture of the swing bridge that went over the canal near Rutland Stores." (There is such a photo on the main [Lady Bay History page](#) – Ed).

"Ibuprofen was invented by Stuart Adams in the Boots building in Lady Bay"

One large house on the corner of Holme Road and Julian Road was at one time owned by a Mr Watts, whose shop 'The Lustre Mantle Co.' at the bottom of Hound's Gate was well known for the sign which appeared every year at the end of June - 'The Longest Day Has Passed Away, Prepare For The Longest Night'. Mr Watts built a factory linked to the house by an overhead bridge. Every week a railway delivery cart drawn by a horse would rumble down Holme Road carrying rolls of raw paper, which when processed would appear again as 'Miss Muffet Toilet Rolls'.



“Remember the forge down Julian Rd. We did have a butcher & baker (unfortunately no candlestick maker!) on TB. They sold fish/rabbits caught from Holme Pierrepont.

“Mr Jameson had the grocer’s corner of Melbourne and the Boulevard, Mr Atkins on corner of Gertrude was the baker. Beedhams butcher corner of Pierrepont, next to them was a cobblers. Next to the paper shop opposite was a men’s hairdressers. Post office corner of Lady Bay, there was a Chemist on corner of Melbourne and a cake shop opposite. I have forgotten the name of the sweet shop at the very top of the Boulevard by the bridge but the shop keeper was a tall burley man but very nice. There was another paper shop on the corner of Rutland.”

Sporting Clubs in Lady Bay from 1938

Lady Bay Bowls club. - It was quite successful and was active until fairly recently (2019).

Lady Bay Lawn Tennis Club - There is still a very good Tennis club that runs several clubs.

Lady Bay Football Club - President- Mr A. G. Bramely - Unfortunately there is no longer a football club but there are many in the area.

Residents of my Road (Lady Bay Road)

While researching the history of Lady Bay I found the residents of my road. My house number is not on this list (from 1938) but my guess is that the houses were renumbered as more homes were added.

At Number 2: Shaw, Arther

At Number 4: Challen, George

At Number 6: Kirk, Henry

At Number 8: Smith, Phillip

As you can tell, not many people lived in Lady Bay in this time but times have changed.

National Water Sports Centre

Although it is not in Lady Bay, it is only a 5-10 minute drive from the centre and can be walked to along the River Trent via the Hook. It was the first of its kind and still is keeping up with technology by constantly updating their resources. It was opened July 27th 1973 by the Prime Minister. The area was formally worked for gravel and it cost £1,250,00 to build.

Although it may not be that interesting, there is quite a bit of history in Lady Bay considering it was only built 126 years ago.

Some of the information above is taken from The Nottinghamshire Village Book, written by members of the Nottinghamshire Federation of Women's Institutes and published by Countryside Books. Click on the link [Countryside Books](#) to view Countryside's range of other local titles.