



Prof Ged Martin

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Nostalgia: It's the only Wingletye in the world – what does it mean?

Times Past | Ged Martin, one-time Havering resident and honorary professor of history at Galway University in Ireland [mailto:news.desk@romfordrecorder.co.uk] Sunday, February 17, 2013 12:00 PM

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»Wingletye Lane is a mile long, and it's unique. You won't find another Wingletye anywhere in the world. Google it and see!



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Wingletye Lane is around a mile long.
Picture courtesy of Google Maps.

But where was Wingletye and what did the name mean?

The "tye" is the easy part. It was widely used in Essex to indicate a small piece of common land, a broad roadside green. Where was Wingle Tye?

Nowadays Wingletye Lane runs north from Hornchurch through Emerson Park to the Southend Arterial Road.

But until the 1920s, it bent round to the west, heading for Squirrels Heath Road, and was half a mile longer.



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The Tye was located between Prospect Road and the Campion School.

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Strange

It's not there any more because the Arterial Road was driven straight through it 90 years ago.

The "orphaned" western section of the old Wingletye Lane became Redden Court Road. A 19th century map marks "Wingletye Hill" just to the north, confirming the location. But what does the strange name mean?

Names of towns and villages, like Romford and Hornchurch, were frequently recorded, and were copied from official documents.

But more local names were written down only rarely, and clerks usually had to rely on yokels for the pronunciation.

In 1641, just as Charles I and Parliament were shaping up for England's Civil War, a "yeoman" called James Hammond who lived at Doddinghurst, near Brentwood, struck a deal with a group of Hornchurch men over a small farm at Hadley Green.

Hadley Green is now Ardleigh Green. Hammond had inherited the property from his brother-in-law, William Payne, a Romford innholder, who had probably bought it as an investment.

The sale document gives us a glimpse of rural Ardleigh Green – an orchard, and fields called Littlecroft, Uppershephards and Lowershephards.

The next property was called Rydden Court. The boundaries refer to a highway from Hadley Green to Wyndlety.

Fragment

This was probably the track winding through the fields, later straightened out to become Cecil Avenue.

A strange fragment of it survives. Opposite the north end of Cecil Avenue, a short alley links the Arterial Road to Coombe Road. So Wingletye was once Windle Tye. This was probably the local place mentioned in 1524 as Windall.

Guessing the meaning of a place name on just two examples is risky, but it's likely that the second syllable preserves a lost Anglo-Saxon word, "health".

A "health" was a nook or out of the way place. Because its meaning was forgotten centuries ago, people tried to make sense of it by changing it to "-hall" (as in Coggeshall and Rivenhall, near Witham) or "-ale". Willingale, near Ongar, the quaint village with two ancient churches in one churchyard, is still locally called "Winnigle".

Havering's Windle Tye was probably "the windy nook". The Arterial Road hereabouts today can still seem like a wind tunnel.

The old Wingletye Lane turned east-west over the crest of the Ingrebourne Valley, and the winter wind whistled in from Siberia!

Havering's other Tye, which became Corbets Tey, developed into a small village, but it seems no peasants lived at Havering's Windy Nook.

"Wingle" sounds like kiddie-speak. Perhaps some little boy made a fairyland word out of Windle".

Decades later, as the oldest inhabitant, he became the expert on naming the place.

Havering can be proud of its unique and ancient road name.

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