

FRIENDS OF KINGSBURY WATER PARK

www.FriendsOfKingsburyWaterPark.org.uk

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Mystery behind historic school house revealed

Kingsbury is home to one of the first poor schools to be built in the West Midlands in the seventeenth century. The Teachers House (previously known as Thomas Coton's school), is now a Grade II listed private property that was provisioned for in a will in 1684 by Thomas Coton. This act of good will ensured that for the first time, the poor children of Kingsbury, Neither Whitacre and Marston could be educated for free, with lands allocated to pay for the teachers, the school equipment and the upkeep of the building. This act has ensured that Kingsbury has had a rich history of education for over 330 years (1686 – 2016) with the proud tradition continuing with the current Primary and Secondary schools. Whilst much has been written by the local community about the School, nothing is really known about Thomas Coton? Why did he do such a generous act by having a proper school built in Kingsbury?

This has been a mystery to the current owners for the past 15 years, until a set of remarkable events unfolded over the last few months. The first breakthrough really came when Craig was exploring old maps of the area. To his surprise, he noticed that on an old Ordnance Survey map ((1831- 1835), a Coton Hall was listed just off the A4079.

Keen to learn more, Craig and his son took a walk down to the location on the map, which they walked to through the Water Park, and to their utter amazement, they spotted the original footings of the hall. The floor plan also clearly indicated that the School (Teachers House), Church and Kingsbury Hall would all have been visible from Coton Hall, and was possibly a key factor in having the school built on the hill, so the school could have been seen from the hall. Delighted at this find, Craig wanted to confirm that this was indeed true and enlisted the help of the local historian, Carole Haines, who validated the findings and also provided photo evidence of the hall, prior to it being

demolished. Carole also speculated that another reason wealthy people did benevolent acts in those days was to help gain a speedier entrance into heaven!

Having confirmed the Hall's location, Craig wanted to



understand who owned the land and what they knew of the history. By sheer coincidence, the Environmental Agency had an open day on the 19th of January at the Lea Marston lakes site,

which was where the site was located. This gave Craig the opportunity to discuss the history of schooling at Kingsbury and explore what the Environmental Agency knew of the hall. Mr Corder, Project Manager confirmed that they did own the land and also provided additional pictures of the hall before it had to be knocked down in 1994 for structural reasons. Whilst the Environmental Agency was aware of the hall, it was unaware of the importance of Thomas Coton and his legacy of the education of children in the area.

The happy ending to this story is that the Environmental Agency, given the significance of Thomas Coton's impact on the local area, has agreed to install a plaque in the car park of the Coton Fishery Lake to commemorate Thomas Coton and his wonderful gift to the Kingsbury community. Craig said he was delighted that this little piece of history will now be recorded for all, and is hoping that this article may help unfold even more facts about Thomas Coton and his life.

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Forthcoming Events

2018 Great British Spring Clean on Saturday 3rd March 2018. — Cancelled now March 17th

Bee Event—Sunday, 19th August 2018

Recent Events

Another successful Quiz night in November raised nearly £200 for the Friends' Fund.

The Friends were also in attendance at the Halloween event on Halloween evening.

Unveiling of Plaque for Coton Hall

A SPECIAL plaque to remember one of Kingsbury's most influential residents has been installed in the village after a year-long campaign to honour his memory. Thomas Coton, who founded free education in the village back in the 1600s, has been recognised after Kingsbury resident Craig Stevens set out to create something to remember his impact on education and the village.

A crowd made their way to the Coton Fishery Lake car park in Coton Road to watch as the plaque was unveiled. Mr Stevens said: "I was delighted to finally see the plaque installed."



New Fencing around the Children's Activity Area

Many of you may have noticed the new fencing & gate erected along the path from the Model Boat Pool. This has been erected to stop dogs & the occasional park user from entering the children's activity areas.



Highlights from 2017

The long-awaited bird information board was installed in June.



Placement & official opening of Kingsbury Water Park's new Changing Places Toilet at Broomey Croft.

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For a chance to win an annual car pass, please complete a park survey at
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VBZVPZR>

Next Friends Meeting at The Water Park
Education Centre on Thursday, April 5th,
2018 at 7 pm.

Everybody Welcome

The group's aims are –

1. To be the voice of park users. Promoting, lobbying, fundraising, liaising, and negotiating on behalf of park users.
2. To help manage, protect, and improve the park for the benefit of the flora, fauna, visitors, and park users.
3. To promote, assist, and even instigate, activities within the park for the benefit of park users.

Visit our website at -

www.FriendsOfKingsburyWaterPark.org.uk

Like our FaceBook page -

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-Of-Kingsbury-Water-Park/204482556428537>

Amenities at the Park

- Old Barn Coffee Shop/café
- Information Centre and Gift shop
- Disabled facilities
- Three mobility scooters for hire
- 5.7 km (3½ miles) of permissive bridleway for horse riding. Permit needed.
- Many water activities (e.g. pedalos, sailing, model boating jet biking, power boating and fishing)
- Dogs allowed under control
- 2 children's play areas
- Nature reserve with 4 bird hides
- Echills Wood Railway, 7¼" gauge miniature railway
- Guided walks and events programme
- Ranger led Children's Birthday Parties
- Camp Site managed by The Camping & Caravaning Club (tel. 01827 874101)
- Broomey Croft Children's Farm (tel. 01827 873844)
- The Granary Tea Room at Broomey Croft (next to the Farm entrance)