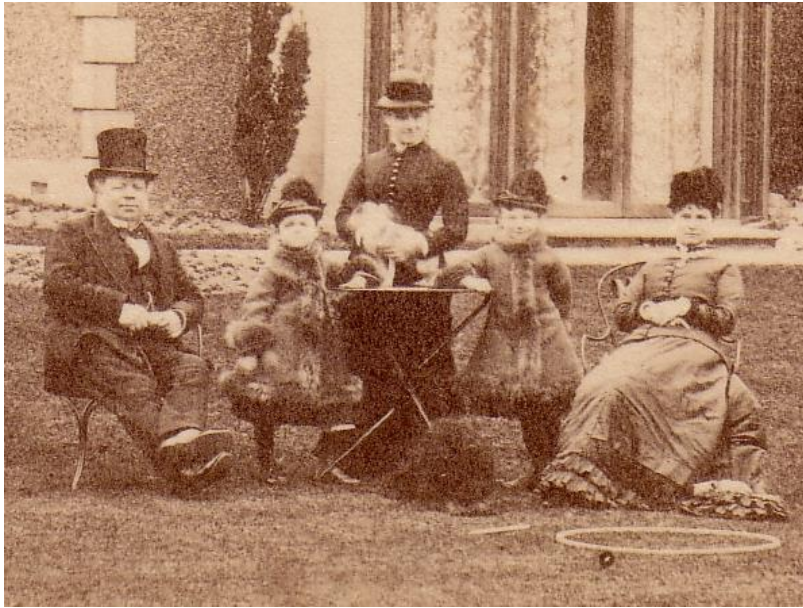


Isaac Bate



Isaac Bate and family 1876

Isaac Bate was born on March 18th 1823 and baptised on March 12th 1826 at Saint Nicolas Church in King's Norton. He was the son of James and Sophia Bate of King's Heath. His father was a gun maker and landlord of the Cross Guns Inn at King's Heath. The running of the pub passed to their three children James, Thomas and Isaac in 1840 and their business seems to have thrived.

Isaac and his brother James moved into larger premises called the Grange. The Bates first rented the Grange in 1858. The rate book for this time shows them occupying the buildings and 32 acres, 2 rods, and 18 perches of land which was then owned by Miss Hamper. The Grange was a large house with grounds situated behind the Cross Guns and its associated brewery, in what is now, Grange Road (the road named after it). The house was built soon after the Alcester turnpike in 1767 and was for many years the home of William Hamper, antiquary. The house no longer remains as it was demolished in the 1890s and the Grange Estate built over it and its grounds.

The Birmingham Weekly Post of Saturday December 24th 1904 had the following article:

“Mr. John Andrews, one of King's Heath's oldest inhabitants – he has lived there for sixty years – well remembers Isaac Bate's breathless audiences in the tap room during the Crimean War. Here it was that Isaac read the latest edition of the newspaper – it cost fourpence then. After reading all the news contained in the “extra special” Isaac would then explain to his eager audience his views on the latest movement, filled in with frequent references to a map which hung on the wall. When Mr. Andrews knew King's Heath first there were but two shops – a butcher's and a grocer's. Now it is almost a township. An event which stirred King's Heath to animated excitement was the race for the Derby about forty years ago. The Messrs. Bate were very fond of horses, and not only bred, but bought, racers. They had a three year old named Cockney Boy, which was thought very highly of, and it was considered to have a great chance in the Epsom Derby. Cockney Boy was trained at King's Heath, and amidst the good wishes of all the inhabitants started on its 120

mile journey in a van by road. To the chagrin of all concerned, Cockney Boy figured prominently in the rear in the race for the blue ribbon.”

The Bates were fast becoming a very influential family in King’s Heath. They owned and ran their own brewery. It is first mentioned separately to the Cross Guns in rate books from the 1860s. By then it was known as Isaac Bate and Company, the King’s Heath Brewery.

The Birmingham News of January 13th 1894 gives the first full description of the brewery as follows:

“A quiet suburban resort like King’s Heath would be the last place where one would expect to find a large and growing business located. The King’s Heath Brewery has, however, since its acquisition by Mr. F. Everitt, made great strides. A few particulars concerning the brewery may be read with interest. It was founded in 1831 by the late James Bate, and was for many years the property of Messrs Isaac Bate and Company. In 1878, however, the brewery and business were taken over by Mr. Frederick Everitt and since 1887 the firm’s title has been F. Everitt and Company.”

In 1859 James and Isaac were listed leasing Malthouse Farm (beside Cocks Moor Leisure Centre). Soon they also had a monopoly on brewing in the centre of King’s Heath when in 1866 they purchased the Hare and Hounds and its associated land outright.

In 1871 Isaac married a woman called Eleanor Curnock and they moved into the Grange. Eleanor was born in King’s Heath and her father was William Curnock, cattle dealer. Eleanor was some 25 years Isaac’s junior.

Isaac was also a very generous benefactor to King’s Heath. He, along with other wealthy men in King’s Heath, such as Joseph Nettlefold at Kingsfield House (where Saint Dunstan’s now stands), gave their money to build King’s Heath Institute in 1878. This building stood on the corner of the Alcester Road and the road that was named after it, Institute Road. This establishment was built to give something back to the inhabitants of King’s Heath and for many years was a focal point for the local community, hosting concerts, dances, lectures, drama and many other social occasions.

Isaac died at the Grange on June 21st 1885 aged 62 years. He left his effects worth £21,294 10s 9d to his widow Eleanor. He was buried in the family vault at Saint Nicolas Church, King’s Norton.

Andy Bishop 2013.