

Pewterers Avenue, Bishops Stortford



If you go down to Bishop's Stortford today, you'll be in for a big surprise. No, not every teddy bear that ever there was, but rather a street called 'Pewterers Avenue'. Well, I never! And then another one called 'Mercers Avenue' - so at least they are in good company!

Why?, I wondered. I cannot now remember what first drew my attention to *Pewterers Avenue*, but my initial attempts at researching the reasons for the name have come up against a lack of records; or records that could not be found after all this time.

However, I thought the responses from three very helpful local authority officers would be of interest, if only to show how helpful people can be even when asked silly questions!

“Thank you for your letter enquiring as to the reasons behind the use of the street names 'PEWTERERS AVENUE' and 'MERCERS AVENUE' in Bishop's Stortford.

These are part of a large housing development on the outskirts of Bishop's Stortford, which was constructed approximately 10 - 12 years ago, and every road on the site is named after an old 'trade', for example we also have 'THE SHEARERS', 'SADDLERS CLOSE', 'MILLINERS WAY' and 'WHEELWRIGHTS CLOSE' among many others. “

My first letter went to the Bishops Stortford Town Council; they forwarded the letter to East Herts District Council. Adele Pooley, Land Charges Manager at East Herts Council, replied:

She went on to write that although the District Council had overall responsibility for the Street Naming and Numbering function, the actual street names themselves were usually suggested by the local Town or Parish Council. That meant that the naming decisions would have been made by Bishop's Stortford Town Council.

Ms Pooley assumed that “like us, they don't have the original records on site to enable them to check back as to why these particular names were chosen”.

So I wrote back to the Town Council. An officer at Bishop's Stortford Town Council, took up the baton and replied that it seemed no one had the records, but that if there were any “they would probably be held at Hertfordshire County Records Office, at Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8EQ.”

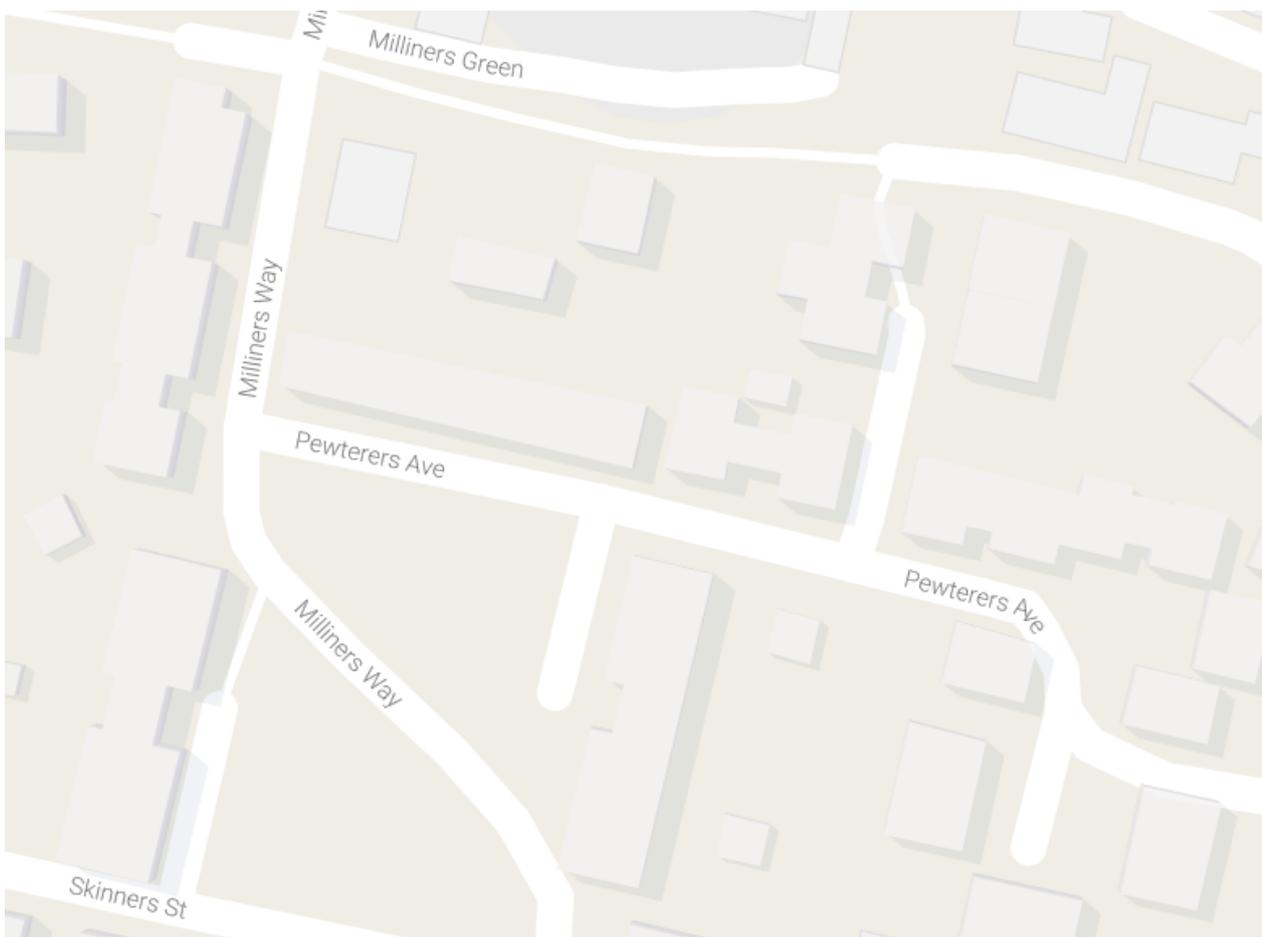
Following that suggestion, I tried the Hertfordshire County Council Records Office. They looked into their records and wrote to say that:

“The 6 inch Ordnance Survey map of Bishops Stortford dated 1983 (sheet TL41 NE) shows only open land on the site of where Pewterers Avenue and the other “trade name” streets were yet to be built. Pewterers Avenue first appears in the East Herts electoral register in 2000. The whole estate may have been built over a few years but it seems likely that they were built in the 1990s.”

and that they did not have any relevant Minutes or other records.

There are a couple of postscripts to this saga, bringing us right up to date. Adele Pooley emailed me later to report that the old Kalamazoo files were currently in the office. “I still don't have any further information as to why those particular names were chosen, but I can at least now verify that the official Street Naming and Numbering case for Pewterers Avenue was completed on 20th April 1998 for numbers 1 - 15 (odds) and numbers 2 - 6 (evens). The remainder of the street was registered on 28th July 1999, comprising house numbers 17 - 57 (odds). It's longer ago than I thought, but then time does fly by, doesn't it!”

Ms Pooley suggested that Councillor Woodward might have some input; and indeed he did when I sent him an early draft of this article.



“Very interesting to read. Thank you. I have lived in Bishop's Stortford since 1982 (and was a regular visitor from 1977). The St Michael's Mead development, (at times referred to rather tongue in cheek as 'the village', perhaps alluding to the relatively high priced houses with 'trade' street names), did not exist then.

“So, the latter development date mentioned in your article seems about right. As previously mentioned, it was named after the wrong parish as its sits in St James the Great and not St Michael's. In terms of local government, part falls into the rural parish of Thorley, but most is in Bishop's Stortford. A good source about roads and the area in general is the Paul Ailey site [www.stortfordhistory](http://www.stortfordhistory.com), (site now run by his son Chris, I think).

“I think BS Town Council had rather less input than the District Officer suggests as the normal process is actually: developer thinks of a name, (often highly non local heritage specific eg 'flowers', 'birds', something to do with 'bishops or ecclesiastical (Crozier Ave for example) or, as in this case 'trades'); then puts these to the District who 'consult' the BS Town Council. Sometimes the Town Council responds, (agreeing or offering an alternative), sometimes it doesn't. Either way, the matter should be in the BSTC Minutes.

“(Definition of suburbia - "where developers cut down all the trees and then name the roads after them e.g. 'Oak St', 'Elm Rd' “)

“One more 'lead' may be the developers themselves and I think that their name is still on the entrance plate to 'the village'. I will try to pop over there and have a look tomorrow and let you know.

Colin Woodward
Twitter: CllrCWoodward”

Note: Councillor Woodward did pop over to have a look, but found no information of relevance. So there we are, my enquiries plough into open land! Not quite a mystery wrapped up in an enigma, but one day, when I get back to Bishops Stortford, I shall try to take my enquiries further, but in the meantime if any reader has any information, or if you were the developer or live in *Pewterers Avenue*, for instance, and are reading this - please let me know.

Alan Williams

Notes:

I am very grateful to all whom I approached over this quest, for their unstinting help.

Pewterers Avenue, Thorley, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 4GR. Pewters 'Avenue' appears to be a *cul de sac*. Very blurred photo of the street sign; and extract from a street map (Google maps)

For more information about Bishops Stortford and Thorley: <http://www.stortfordhistory.co.uk/> - a truly informative site, well worth the visit.

Home

The Pewterer, Volume 8, number 2. May 2017.

Editor: Alan Williams

Published by Alan Williams, 14 Dandridge House, 31 Lamb Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6ED and endorsed by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, Pewterers' Hall, Oat Lane, London EC2V 7DE

Articles: copyright the several authors 2017. Get-up: copyright Alan Williams, 2017.

No reproduction without permission. All enquiries to the Editor.