

How did Banners Gate get its name?

Zoe Toft, August 2026

Banners Gate is one of twenty five gates into Sutton Park but how did it get its name?

It has previously been suggested that Banners Gate Road (and by implication, the gate) may have been named after a resident of the lodge that is located at the park entrance in question.ⁱ I believe, however, that the gate was instead named after a forgotten miller who lived and worked on the dam at Longmoor Pool.

The name “Banner’s Gate” appears on a 1779 Sutton Park map (Figure 1), before the lodge was built.ⁱⁱ



Figure 1. Excerpt from ‘A Plan and Admeasurement of Sutton Park within the Parish of Sutton Coldfield and Counties of Warwick and Stafford. Taken in the year 1779’. Currently located at Birmingham Archives & Collections (Wolfson Centre) but not yet catalogued (viewed and photographed May 2025 in Sutton Coldfield Library). Image used with permission of the Library of Birmingham.

Advertisements from *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* in the 1770s (Figures 2–5) repeatedly mention “Banner’s Mill”, a mill “in Sutton Park”, near to Westwood Coppice. This mill must be what is generally known as Longmoor Mill (shown as Button Mill on the 1779 map), given its identified location.

G A M E.

THE Sutton and neighbouring Gentlemen, are desired to meet at the Moot-Hall in Sutton-Coldfield, on Wednesday the fourth Day of August Instant, at Two o'Clock in the Afternoon, to consult about the future Preservation of the Game. Dinner at Two o'Clock.—And on Tuesday the tenth Day of August Inst. will be Sold by Auction on the Premises, in six Lots, 38 Acres of Wheat, growing upon Westwood Coppice, near Banner's Mill, in Sutton-Park, at Three o'Clock in the Afternoon, subject to such Conditions as shall be then and there produced.

Figure 2. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Monday 2 August 1773.
Source: British Newspaper Archive
(<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.com/>) .

Attornies at Law, in Birmingham.

TO be SOLD to the best Bidder upon the Premises in two Lots, on Saturday the 12th Day of August next, between the Hours of Three and Five of the Clock in the Afternoon, subject to such Conditions of Sale as shall be then and there produced: Twenty-seven Acres of BARLEY and eleven Acres of OATS, growing upon Westwood Coppice, near Banner's Mill, in Sutton Park, in the County of Warwick.—For Particulars enquire of William Taylor, at Hill, or John Hunnyborne, at Four Oaks, both in the Parish of Sutton-Coldfield aforefaid.

Figure 4. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Monday 31 July 1775.
Source: British Newspaper Archive. The same advert appears in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* on Monday 7 August 1775 .

TO be LET, in Sutton-Park, near Mr. Banner's Mill, Thirty-eight Acres of Turnips.—Enquire of the Warden of Sutton-Coldfield, or John Honeyborne, Keeper.

Figure 3. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Monday 16 January 1775. Source: British Newspaper Archive.

TO be SOLD to the best Bidder, upon the Premises, in Six Lots, on Thursday the Fifth Day of September next, between the Hours of Ten and One of the Clock in the Forenoon, subject to such Conditions of Sale as shall be then and there produced: Thirty-seven Acres of RYE, and One Acre of WHEAT, growing upon Westwood-Coppice, near Banner's Mill, in Sutton Park, in the County of Warwick.—For Particulars, enquire of William Taylor at Hill, or John Honeyborne, at Four-Oaks, both in the Parish of Sutton Coldfield aforefaid.

Figure 5. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Monday 26 August 1776.
Source: British Newspaper Archive. The same advert appears in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* on Monday 2 September 1776.

Close reading of the 'Warden and Society Minutes' and 'Rentals' for this period confirms previous research into Longmoor Mill by Ken Williams and Kerry Osbourne: Richard Reynolds was miller from 1754 until at least 1763, and by 1779 Ben Powell was resident at the mill.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ken Williams states John Sudbury was the miller at Longmoor from 1776–1779, but I have not been able to ascertain the basis on which this claim is made.^{iv} No 'Rentals' are known to survive from this period, and no mention is made in the 'Warden and Society Minutes' for a lease to John Sudbury in the 1770s.^v Even if evidence does come to light confirming Sudbury as the miller at this time, there is still a period of occupancy unaccounted for: 1763–1776.

A short newspaper article from 1771 (Figure 6) mentions "Banner's Gate" in passing, suggesting that Mr Banner may have been resident at Longmoor from at least 1771 (whilst the advertisements in Figures 2–5 indicate he was resident until at least 1776):

UPON a full Meeting of the Society of the Corporation of Sutton-Coldfield, in the County of Warwick, and the neighbouring Gentlemen within that Manor, at the Moot-Hall in Sutton-Coldfield aforesaid, the 30th Day of August last, pursuant to an Advertisement before inserted in this Paper. It was proposed and agreed upon, that the Game within that Part of the Manor called the Park, and the Grounds adjacent, from Banner's-Gate to the Keeper's Lodge at Four Oaks within the said Manor, should be preserved for one Year, from the said 30th Day of August. It is therefore requested, that all Gentlemen will forbear Sporting in that Part of the said Manor.—N. B. All unqualified Persons and Poachers will be prosecuted as the Law directs.

Figure 6. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Monday 2 September 1771: Source: British Newspaper Archive.

Curiously, there is no mention of any lease being assigned to Mr Banner in the 'Warden and Society Minutes' for this period. 'Rentals' do not exist for this period so they, likewise, cannot be used to corroborate my claim that it was Mr Banner who was resident at Longmoor Mill for at least some of this period and that it was he who gave his name to the gate at the south-west corner of the park.

There is, however, one further newspaper article (Figure 7), dated 1782, which suggests that Banner was a name associated with the park, and that his name persisted after any Banner had left the mill at Longmoor:

SUTTON-COLDFIELD, 21st Dec. 1782.
To the PUBLIC.
WHEREAS two Mens Hats were on Thursday last found near to a Pool in Sutton-Park, in the County of Warwick, commonly called Banner's Pool, one of which was very bloody in the Inside, occasioned, as is supposed, from a violent Blow; and near to the same Place were also found, two strong Sticks, weighted with Lead at the lower End; from which Circumstances it is feared some Murder, or other violent Assault has happened.
 The Person or Persons, therefore, who have left the said Hats (if alive) may have them again, by applying to John Hunnyborne, Game-keeper, at Four Oaks, near Sutton-Coldfield aforesaid.

Figure 7: *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Monday 23 December 1782. Source: British Newspaper Archive.

Given that the earlier newspaper articles (Figures 2–5) refer to Banner's Mill being near Westwood Coppice, it is likely that Banner's Pool is referring to what is now called Longmoor Pool. Why the name for the gate persisted, whilst the name of the pool changed several times, is not known.

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- i See Kerry Osbourne, *The Street Names of Sutton Coldfield* (Sadler House: Sutton Coldfield, 2007) p. 14.
- ii It was only in 1854 the Warden and Society (the governing body for Sutton Coldfield) agreed to build the lodge at Banners Gate (see Roger Lea, (2014) 'History spot 339: Banners Gate/Rough Road', <https://sclhrg.org.uk/history-spot/109-articles-321-360/1736-banners-gate-rough-road-339.html>). Banners Gate today, as a location, is written without an apostrophe and when referring to the modern place name I adopt this spelling. Historically, however, Banners Gate was spelt Banner's Gate (with an apostrophe), and when quoting historical sources I use this original spelling.
- iii The 1779 map shows that the fields associated with the mill and the mill pool itself are in possession of Mr Powell. The 1781 'Rental of the Warden and Society of the Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield' (BCU/3/1/8/1) lists Ben Powell as the resident of the mill, although no mention is made of a lease to Mr Powell in the 'Warden and Society Minutes' (BCU/3/1/1/1 and BCU/3/1/1/2). See Ken Williams, (n.d.) 'Longmoor Corn Mill', <https://sclhrg.org.uk/research/original-research/3291-longmoor-corn-mill.html> and Kerry Osbourne, *People and Buildings of Sutton Coldfield Volume Four Sutton Park* (Sadler House: Sutton Coldfield, 2025), p. 55–56.
- iv Ken Williams, 'Longmoor Corn Mill' [self-published booklet, n.d.].
- v John Sudbury is mentioned in the 'Warden and Society Minutes' for 2 November 1754 (BCU/3/1/1/1). The lease for Longmoor Mill is put up as collateral for a loan given by John Sudbury to Richard Reynolds who is struggling to make the mill a going concern. The 1757 Rental lists Richard Reynolds as paying the rent due to the Warden and Society, implying that he is the leaseholder, however, not John Sudbury.