

## Nottingham Fire Hydrants by Graham Woodward

The fire hydrants shown below are a bit of a mystery. No-one seems to know anything about them or when they were installed. They are scattered across the older parts of the city. There are two different styles of hydrant - one with a water outlet at the top facing upwards, and another with the outlet at right angles to the main pipe. The 'top-outlet' type is the most common. The 'side-outlet' models bear the name GD Hughes, cast into the pipe. This relates to George Douglas Hughes who opened a foundry in Nottingham in the mid 1860s.

Hughes was born in Nottingham in 1823 and in 1853 he joined Messrs. W. Benson & Son engineers in Nottingham. He later opened his own company, the Queen's Foundry and Engineering Works, on London Road, Nottingham. In the 1860s his firm supplied safety valves, boilers and steam-powered machinery to many firms in Nottingham. He also supplied pumping engines for Newark and Ilkeston. He later worked with Thomas Hawksley, the engineer for the Nottingham water company, until 1879 when Nottingham Corporation took control of the Nottingham Waterworks Company under the Nottingham Improvement Act.

The hydrants seem to be unique to Nottingham. Several have recently been removed, but 13 still remain.



Fishpond Drive, Park Estate



Forest Road West, Hyson Green



Denman Street, Radford



Mapperley Park Drive, Mapperley



Main Street, Bulwell



St Ann's Well Road, St Ann's





Nottingham Road, Basford



St Chads Road, Sneinton



The Wells Road, St Ann's



Vernon Road, Highbury Vale



Windmill Lane, Sneinton



Woodborough Road, St Ann's



The design is similar to small French cannon confiscated during the Napoleonic wars and used as bollards at English ports (left). Later, bollards were cast to the same design as the cannon. The rings around the hydrants are reminiscent of those on each cannon that held the barrel in place in the wooden stocks. Perhaps the hydrants were cast using the same moulds as the bollards.

The one in Holles Crescent, The Park, (right) is of a completely different design and the only one of its type.

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