

Belsize

There may be a misconception about the origins of Belsize Road and Belsize Park in London. They probably have their origins in the name of Bellasis but perhaps not the Bellasis family. There is a book written by Marcus Clark, entitled Term of His Natural Life that relates to this. It may be found in the library of the University of Adelaide and at their website:

<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/clarke/marcus/c59f/part2.html>.

The short of it is that Marmaduke Wade of the Wotton Wade family was Lord of the Admiralty. He lived at Belsize, near Hampstead, and was raised to the peerage in 1667 by the title of Baron Bellasis and Wotton. There was a rivalry between this family and the Devines that led to a feud in 1827. A Devine turned out to be a son of Lord Bellasis. Unfortunately, the latter was assaulted at night on Hampstead Heath and the young Devine was also making his way across the heath. He stopped to comfort the dying man even though they had quarrelled. As he did so, he was discovered by a band of men who lynched him. His father died from the blow to his head and, although the son did not commit the crime, it appeared otherwise and he was deported to Australia. His father, having died, he became the Lord Bellasis, about whom a television series was made in Adelaide.

It may be that Belsize was already named after a Bellasis before the Wades lived there. Perhaps further research will reveal the precise origins.

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3.12.2008