

From Diggers to Logistics

PROLOGIS PARK WELLINGBOROUGH WEST

Prologis Park Wellingborough West is constantly evolving; with new occupiers, new logistics buildings and a fitness trim trail. The first logistics buildings were developed on site in early 2017, but this land has a place in the history of Wellingborough.

When we build for the future, we will also remember the past.



Radicalism In Wellingborough

During the English Civil War, a number of radical movements emerged, one of which was The Diggers, who believed that all freedoms depended on freedom from want. The movement's founder, Gerrard Winstanley, believed that

famine, poverty and tyranny could be overcome if the earth became 'a common treasury to all.*' In practical terms, Diggers were encouraged to plant on common land and grow food that would be freely available to everyone according to their need.

SUMMARY

In Wellingborough, poverty was widespread and a group of nine men: Richard Smith, John Avery, Thomas Fardin, Richard Pendred, James Pitman, Roger Tuis, Joseph Hichcock, John Pye and Edward Turner, signed a Declaration, dated 12 March 1649, to form a Diggers commune.

The Wellingborough Diggers started cultivating a field known as Bareshanks, which is now part of the Prologis Park Wellingborough site. But, the local Diggers' movement was short-lived and following the intervention of Thomas Pentlow, Justice of the Peace for Northampton, it was closed down.

Wellingborough Diggers' Festival

Although the Wellingborough Diggers were active for only a brief time, their influence can still be felt at the annual Diggers' Festival. This was set up in 2011 by a group of local people who respected the Digger ethos and wanted to commemorate the nine men acknowledged in the Declaration of 1649.

The Festival has expanded to include Fringe events and in keeping with the original Diggers' ideology, audiences are encouraged to bring non-perishable goods, which are then donated to the local food-bank.

The Diggers at Prologis Park

At Prologis Park we will install an information board as a memorial to the nine Wellingborough Diggers. The information board will be in a landscaped public amenity area as a permanent reminder of the fleeting, but long-remembered efforts of the Diggers to alleviate the poverty of the people of Wellingborough.

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Poet Michael Buchanan



Diggerfest logo



Suffragette Guest Speakers and Diggers Committee



The 'Bounty Heads' at the Diggers' Festival

Photo credit: Robert Palmer