

The birth of Anerley

By Alan Pottinger

In October 1827 William Sanderson, a Scottish silk merchant based in London, attended an auction where he bought some land on Penge Common. He wanted to build a house for his wife and daughters away from the unhealthy London smog. The house was erected next to a curve in the picturesque canal roughly where Sivyer's Transport is located today. He named the house Annerly, which, in Scots dialect, means "only or lonely" as it was the only building on Penge Common.

When the canal was sold to be converted to railway its route couldn't follow the curve, so the developer needed to buy land to make a straight line from Penge West to Norwood Junction. William Sanderson happily agreed to sell some of his land provided a railway station was built near his house. The railway station was named Anerley Bridge, later becoming simply Anerley.



Image: The only known photo of the Sanderson family outside Anerley Lodge

The town grew rapidly around the house and, when William Sanderson died in 1871, his daughters sold Anerley Lodge (as it was called by then), which was demolished to build Minden Road and 137 to 173 Anerley Road, and the remains of the canal were filled. In less than 45 years Anerley had grown from a single home in the heart of the tranquil Penge Common to a bustling suburb full of commerce and tourists to the Crystal Palace.

2027 will see the bicentenary of the foundation of Anerley – we should have a cèilidh to celebrate!