

**YOUR NAME HERE** was the opportunity to nominate someone to become the name of a park in St Helens. We received hundreds of qualifying nominations, an amazing response which draws a portrait of the town. There were a number of themes that emerged: stories of forgotten figures from St Helens; people who have given to their community; nominations for loved family members and tributes to friends; memorials for those who have passed; and people who nominated themselves with very different reasons. Nominations were sometimes funny, often deeply moving, and always sincere. Here we publish a small selection of the names and reasons that people submitted.

# YOUR NAME HERE

In towns and cities across the country, streets, parks and buildings are named after people. Those selected are normally kings or queens, ministers of government, or those who have contributed something of great cultural significance to society. Most of them have long since passed from this world. Rarely is there a chance to name a place after the ordinary people who live there. **YOUR NAME HERE** was such an opportunity.

The justification for naming a place after a person is generally that they are already celebrated. Their name is well known because of their status or what they have done. When naming a park after another kind of person, a person who is not known beyond their immediate social circle and who has led a quiet life, what kinds of criteria can you use to judge? What makes one person worthy of having a park named after them more than another?

It is an extremely difficult task. People will hold a range of opinions and yet more important than any one individual being singled out is the idea that we, as citizens, have the power to take control over our environment and leave our mark on it.

Your Name Here is a Heart of Glass commission by artist Joshua Sofaer, who devised the concept for the competition.

Heart of Glass is a new arts programme making and commissioning work with, about and for St Helens people and places.

[www.heartofglass.org.uk](http://www.heartofglass.org.uk)    [www.joshuasofaer.com](http://www.joshuasofaer.com)



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## ANTONIA CAIN

I am writing to tell you why I nominate my best friend Antonia Cain, to be the name of the newly created park.

Firstly, Antonia is a kind, sweet, playful friend and if you were to fall over or if you are upset, she would always be there to help.

Secondly, she's special to me because she's the only one in our class with strawberry blonde hair and she means the world to me.

Antonia is one of the best roller-skaters in my class because she can do cartwheels and can roll backwards in skates.

Antonia can also be sporty, kind-hearted, and silly like me. We are both equally clumsy. We have been friends since nursery, from day one.

Antonia would love the park to be named after her because we used to go there after school. It would put a smile on her face.

by Natalie Billington



## EBONNY ROYLE MADDEN



My little sister has autism and I would love a park to be named after her.

She is full of life and does not allow her disability to stop her living life. If a park was

named after her I feel this would be a good place for all people who have disabilities to go, giving them a tranquil place to spend their time.

Ebonny has made my life fun and full of laughter and I wouldn't know what to do without her. She shows the innocence of the world in her eyes.

by Sinead Madden

## EMMA GREENHALGH



My Daughter Emma was 12 years old when she died in November 2014 at Alder Hey Hospital from a very rare adult cancer (small cell carcinoma of the ovary). She attended

Rainhill High School, and was loved by everyone that knew her.

A park that has her name would be another great way of people remembering her, and it could be a place I could take my son Daniel (Emma's 6 yr old brother) all the time when it's nice, and we could gather our thoughts and memories of Emma.

by Tony Greenhalgh

## ENID PENNINGTON



Enid has spent the past 71 years of her life dedicated to the arts in St Helens, especially the theatre. She has written, directed and starred in hundreds of plays since the

1940s and has spent a great number of years teaching and coaching future theatrical performers. She has done all this with very little public recognition and few awards.

Even after 71 years of dedication, Enid still writes, teaches and directs theatrical works. She is a very special lady to many of St Helens' actors, singers and theatregoers. We think she deserves to be recognised for her tireless efforts to bring more culture, arts and theatre to this little northern town.

by Jonathan Holden

## GEOFF DUKE



Geoff Duke was a world renowned motorcycle road racing champion, sporting hero, and celebrity.

When I was growing up if you mentioned St Helens to an

outsider the two things it was known for were glassmaking and Geoff Duke.

He was an ex-Cowley pupil, business owner in the town, six times motorcycle road race world champion, holder of Sportsman of the Year, and was made an OBE.

by John Holt

## GEORGE GROVES



George Groves was a pioneer in the film world.

Born, raised and educated in St Helens, he was the son of a barber and went to Nutgrove Primary and

then Cowley Grammar school, before winning a scholarship and making radios for GEC.

In 1923 he moved to New York on an assignment and in his spare time designed a structure consisting of 107 microphones and a timing system, and thus created synchronised sound. It was his amazing technology that ended up being used in the first ever Hollywood sound film: *The Jazz Singer*.

Al Jolson was such a fan that he insisted George alone would record his films, and George eventually won two Oscars for his work on *Sayonara* and *My Fair Lady*, and was nominated for 6 others.

He is barely remembered in his hometown.

by John Quigley

## IVY MELIA

My mother Ivy was born and raised in St Helens. My parents have been foster carers for the local council for over 37 years now. I have lost track of the number of children they have fostered. They deserve some recognition for all the times they have opened their hearts and their home to children in need, even when those children found a permanent home. They continue to foster today.

Some of the children visit and tell us how much being instantly incorporated into a family meant to them, and how much the love shown to them from my parents helped them to become the better people they are today.

by Joanne Hardman

## DANVICK



We would like the park to be called DANVICK after Danielle and Vicky because we are best friends and we have been best friends for many years, even though we always

fall out over little stupid things.

We do everything together, we are more like sisters and we are always there for each other no matter what.

by Danielle Pounceby

## DENNIS ARCHER



I would like to nominate my father, Dennis Archer, who sadly passed away three years ago. He suffered with his health for many years and never once complained, even

after having a defibrillator and pacemaker fitted, having no pulse or blood flow in his legs and struggling with his diabetes.

He went through so many operations and never complained. He also had a disabled son at home with him, and even though he felt ill would always try to do things for him when the carers weren't there. He was truly selfless. He always had time for his family, grandchildren and anyone else who spoke to him. He was a great man.

He was a miner in the St Helens area for many years and often spoke about his experiences. He lived in St Helens for most of his life and was loved by all.

by Jayne McLaughlin

## GRAHAM SMITH EGG AND SAUSAGE ARTIST



Graham Smith was a fabulous St Helens character from the recent past and an artist with some talent but dreams and aspirations beyond his reach.

The image is of a man stood on the corner of Duke Street and Atherton Street on Sunday mornings. Dressed in archetypical artist garb including beret and smock, paint pallet and brush in hand, he is static, posing next to a sandwich board, which reads: 'Graham Smith, Egg and Sausage Artist'. We didn't have the internet, Twitter, or Instagram in the 70s so I suppose it was a reasonable enough way of promoting himself locally.

It will come as no surprise that the focus of Graham's work was, yes, painting eggs and sausages – always uncooked ones I think!

Graham used to display his artwork in the window of the Christian Bookshop on Duke Street, with all works for sale; they could be bought for thousands of pounds or exchanged for food – a dozen eggs and a pound of sausages is what I remember. Apparently he also offered artworks in exchange for kisses and tickles, though it seems he did better in grocery supplies than hard cash or offers of affection. Some of the sausage artworks were a little phallic to say the least, and in the window of the Christian bookshop there was the odd controversy.

Oh how I wish I had traded some Cottom's sausages for one of his paintings and taken the time to meet the Egg and Sausage artist myself.

by Catherine Shea

## HANNAH ROSBOTHAM



Hannah Rosbotham was a 23 year old schoolteacher in Sutton, St Helens who became a household name across the land in the 1880s when she became the only

woman to receive the Albert medal, the highest honour for bravery a civilian can be awarded.

She earned this prized medal for her act of bravery during a ferocious storm, which destroyed the Sutton National Infants' School, trapping the children inside.

Rosbotham rescued five children from the debris despite the threat of the gable wall caving in on all their heads. Her act of valour was recorded for posterity at the time in *The Strand Magazine*, home of the Sherlock Holmes stories, but she has subsequently and shamefully been forgotten in the town.

by Julie Bickerstaffe

## HARRISON LEDSHAM

My best friend Harrison passed away at the age of 12. He fought hard and well and we all love him to bits. He was and still is a young loving boy who deserved more out of life.



We were like brothers; we were always there for each other. Harrison had bone cancer, which then led him to having his leg amputated. We thought he was OK but he got rushed into hospital and later died.

Harrison was the best, most caring, bravest person I've ever known. Harrison has touched the hearts of many people in St Helens. He's won many awards such as the Merseyrail Child of Courage Award. This would be a great memorial for family, friends and the people of St Helens.

by Mackenzie Maddison

## JOSEPH COWIN



I nominate my son Joseph who sadly passed away at the age of 8.

During his 2 year battle he never once moaned or groaned. He just smiled and got on with

his treatment like the hero he is. His young friends have never forgotten him and visit him regularly even though it is ten years on and they were so young.

I would like his name to live on long after I have gone. It would also raise awareness that not only adults get cancer but sadly young children through no fault of their own.

by Andrea Cowin

## JOHN ROBY



John Roby was a brass founder who established his company in Rainhill in the late 1850s where it remained until it closed in the 1970s. The foundry was close to the railway station

and its principal business was making fittings for ships. Roby's cottages, the first industrial cottages in Rainhill, were built alongside.

The Roby Archive at St Helens Library bears witness to the numbers of local men employed at the foundry (many working for 50 to 60 years), to the range of products made, and to the international scope of its trade.

At the Liverpool Exhibition of 1886 a gold medal was awarded and many ships worldwide have sported port lights, windows and bells stamped 'John Roby Ltd Rainhill' - from the first Royal Yacht to Isle of Man Ferries, from the Queen Mary to Ark Royal. Orders were supplied to all the major shipbuilders of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

by Kit Syder

## JIM SPARK

Jim, also known as Elvis, is my Dad. My Dad is an inspiration to all that meet him. He has survived a stroke and raised awareness for the Stroke



Association. Learning to speak again he also started to learn to sing, doing Elvis to raise money.

Many years have passed by with Dad still giving hope to people he meets. Dad was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2014 but this didn't stop him from bringing his smiling inspirational self. As a family, we were devastated. Dad has been having a new trial treatment in the hope the tumour will shrink. Whilst having the treatment Dad went into a diabetic coma, still fighting with a smile on his face. Every day is a blessing to us. My Dad is a legend, a hero and an inspiration to all that know him. Jim Spark: my Dad.

by Amanda Whalley

**ANTONIA CAIN  
DANVICK  
DENNIS ARCHER  
EBONNY ROYLE MADDEN  
EMMA GREENHALGH  
ENID PENNINGTON  
GEOFF DUKE  
GEORGE GROVES  
GRAHAM SMITH  
HANNAH ROSBOTHAM  
HARRISON LEDSHAM  
IVY MELIA  
JIM SPARK  
JOHN ROBY**

**JOSEPH COWIN  
JOSEPH FOSTER  
KATHLEEN DUFFY  
LEO MURPHY  
LILY PARR  
LYNDA GREENALL  
NIGEL THOMAS WEBSTER  
PAMELA PEERS  
PETER CRITCHELY  
RACHAEL DEARDEN  
RACHEL THORPE  
RUTH LOWE  
SHAUN HEATON  
VERA PAGE**



## JOSEPH FOSTER



My Dad:  
Joseph Jonathan Foster  
What else can I say about my Dad,  
That hasn't been said before?  
Joe, with his cap on,  
Always smart as he walked out of our door.  
Having only one eye  
Though you couldn't tell which,  
He worked hard as a nurse  
Without any hitch.  
In his youth he played football  
But was a Saints supporter too,  
Taught my Mum the Tango  
Good dancers, through and through.  
Always interested in people  
And the stars above  
He taught me about the heavens  
and kindness and love.  
by Margaret Foster

## KATHLEEN DUFFY



Sister Kathleen Duffy left her home in rural Ireland at the age of 19 and moved to St Helens to start a nursing career in the former Providence Hospital. St Helens

became her home until she suddenly passed away aged 85 in 2015.

For 66 years she gave her life to this town and never once thought about returning to her homeland. Why? The answer is she became part of the fabric of this town.

Kathleen was a woman who was here to make a difference. Her dedication to the sick and injured in her straightforward manner supported so many.

Retirement didn't stop her in her desire to make a difference. All this was done without wanting praise or reward. She reminds us of what citizenship should mean for St Helens.

Sister Duffy will always be my role model.

by Dominic Redcliffe

## LEO MURPHY



A man who did so much for the youth of St Helens for over 50 years.

He set up the Redgate Boys Band and over the years he trained many youngsters in St Helens to be first class musicians. Many of them gained certificates and degrees in music and went on to form careers of their own in the music world.

Leo was brought up in an orphanage and the nuns there recognised his potential and helped him pursue his musical skills. He subsequently went into the Forces and attained the rank of Captain, once again putting into service his musical ability.

I do not think that Leo has received the recognition that he earned in St Helens. It would be wonderful to acknowledge his name and all those young men that he helped to success through his teaching and love of music.

by Terence Featherstone

## LILY PARR

In 1917, 14 year old Lily Parr of Gerrard's Bridge, a true 'St Ellinser', was a star of women's football with 'a kick like a Division 1 Back'.

She played for 'Dick, Kerr's Ladies' in what was effectively to become the first national women's team. She was the star player and accompanied the team to France, something unimaginable for a girl who thought Billinge Hill a holiday destination and felt homesick working in Preston.

In the early 1920s, the team raised the equivalent of over £500,000 pounds in today's money at Goodison Park in just one of the matches they played to support the returning troops.

The FA's decision in 1921 to forbid women to play on FA grounds, set women's football back 50 years and is the sole reason why Lily Parr is not a household name today.

She deserves real recognition in her hometown.

by Sue Williamson



## LYNDA GREENALL



As she always put everybody else before herself, I would like to nominate my mum.

As she was the oldest of 9 kids, she spent much of her young life looking after her sisters and brothers.

As she was a mother of 3, she spent most of the prime of her life looking after me and my sisters.

As she was a foster carer, she looked after 34 foster children, across 30 years.

As she was a warrior, she battled for 10 years with cancer, still putting everybody else before herself. She battled until after my son was born, holding him just the once.

As winter turned to spring in March 2007, she passed away, at home with no fuss.

As she was an angel, she visited my son and danced (or so he once told us).

by Ian Greenall

## NIGEL THOMAS WEBSTER

Nigel has a heart of gold.

Like myself he has battled with mental unwellness. He invited me to the first Saints game at Langtree leading to season tickets for the past two years.

It's increased my self-confidence. We have been to Amsterdam two years running and to Catalans with Saints. We meet up several times during the week to chill out with mates.

It's recently been proved that friendship is the best therapy for those diagnosed mentally unwell. It's far more effective than medication.

Thanks to Nigel I've got back the life I thought had gone forever. He is great fun and broadminded. He helps me when I feel down and is now my best friend. We're always having a laugh and a joke.

Before I met Nigel I thought friendship beyond me.

by Stuart B. Kenyon



## PAMELA PEERS

Pamela is my mum. I know it is a cliché that people say, "I have the best mum in the world" but I really do!

My mum is a nurse and she recently got the title of 'Queens Nurse'. As well as working extremely hard, my mum also enjoys what she does. As soon as she comes home she talks non-stop about her job, but I love it.

My mum has made me aspire to be a doctor in the future but she supports me in every idea I have!

Unfortunately when I was a baby my Dad had an accident and broke some disks in his spine, yet my mum always has a smile on her face even when she has a lot on her shoulders. My mum works at 2 different general practices and she is also self-employed.

My mum is a real life superhero!  
by Ethan Peers

## PETER CRITCHELY



The town of St Helens has the distinctive honour of hiding in its belly one of the greatest living philosophers.

Born from a family of builders and miners, holder of a PhD in Philosophy from Manchester Metropolitan University, Peter Critchley has produced a gigantic, synthetic and extraordinarily thought-provoking corpus of over 60 books and 200 articles in philosophy, ethics, ecology, art, literature, urbanism, history, political science, psychology and biology, which he published entirely online in free access, in an act of unprecedented intellectual passion and generosity.

To his many readers, Dr. Critchley is simply the new Socrates of 21st century philosophy.  
by H el ene Domon

## RACHAEL LOUISE LYDIA DEARDEN



I am nominating myself for Your Name Here because I am proud of where I come from.

I want to make a statement of myself in St Helens.

My name is very different and a bit of a mouthful.

I want to be able to go on holiday and when people ask where I am from I won't have to say between Manchester and Liverpool. I will be able to point out my park on the map (feeling hopeful).

I am a performance artist who dreams of being famous one day and if I won I would be honoured to say that I have a park named after me. My claim to fame shall we say.

I feel like I deserve this chance as much as anyone else, its just great to have something so unique happening in St Helens which I can get involved in.

by Rachael Dearden

## RUTH LOWE

I am writing to tell you why I have nominated my Grandma for the once in a lifetime opportunity to have a park in St Helens named after her.

Firstly, I feel that choosing my Grandma is a fantastic idea because she does everything for me and my family, and I want to say thank you. My Grandma once took me to the Sankey Canal, which is also known as the hotties. My Mum and my Grandma were telling me all about the history and how it was. My Grandma told me there used to be some tropical fish in there.

Secondly, you should choose my Grandma as the name of the park because my Grandma loves parks. She likes seeing smiles and people enjoying themselves. She is very fun, like the park. She once said to me, "I want to be remembered as a fun and happy person."

My Grandma is a warmhearted person who will always make you laugh or feel better when you're upset, worried, or scared about something. Personally, I've never seen her upset or angry. Once she was in hospital and was still making jokes and laughing.

My awesome, fun Grandma is definitely the one you want. Don't you want the perfect role model for St Helens?

by Milly Doolan

## RACHEL THORPE



I am writing to tell you why my sister Rachel Thorpe should have a park in St Helens named after her.

I think you should name the park after my sister because she is very responsible and looks after her cat. My sister is nice, kind and she thinks about others by considering what others have to do and say. Rachel is a good listener and understands what people say to her. She is also very loving and cares a lot about me and how I feel.

You should name the park after my sister Rachel because she is very talented and can do lots of things. Rachel can juggle, do poise, and can do magic tricks. My sister Rachel is a good teacher because she taught me how to do cups, knit, and how to juggle with scarves. My sister is very flexible because she is double jointed. Rachel is also very good at maths and taught me how to do master maths.

I am sure you will consider my sister because she always smiles and brightens up my day. My amazing sister is very generous because she lets me use her stuff. My sister is very good at sharing because we take turns when we are doing something together. My sister is really funny and can make me laugh. Rachel is always there for me when I need her.

In conclusion, I think you should name the new St Helens park after my sister because she considers others, is very talented, always smiles and whenever I am sad, alone or need somebody she will always be there for me. If you name the park after my sister she will have a smile on her face. So please name the park after my sister and make her smile.

by Layla Thorpe

## SHAUN HEATON



Shaun is my big brother. He passed away 6 February 2015 from pneumonia after an early onset and very rapid progression Alzheimer's diagnosis.

Shaun was born with Down's Syndrome. It never held my brother back. He revelled in life and lived every day as if it was his last. A true advocate for the living, he accomplished so many things in his 49 years. He was part of a special needs dance troop that toured the globe meeting A-list stars such as Arnold Schwarzenegger. Some members of the troop danced at the White House for the President of the USA. Shaun was very involved as a firm supporter for the Thatto Heath Crusaders, officially the mascot running on with the sponge for injuries and assisting the team pep-talk with his clipboard. A truly remarkable man.

by Julie Hill



During the call for nominations a giant neon sign reading Your Name Here was installed on St Helens Town Hall and 100,000 fliers were distributed across the borough. Over 500 people took part in workshops in schools, libraries, community centres, clubs and societies. Your Name Here unearthed all kinds of interesting accounts about residents of the town. The judging panel were delighted and impressed by the wealth of engaging people and inspirational stories. As one member put it, "We need more parks to name!"

Vera Bowes happened to attend an oral history reminiscence workshop in the communal lounge of her sheltered housing. It was at this meeting that she shared her story.

The judges commented:

'We were greatly touched by Vera Bowes' nomination of herself as a child, under her birth name Vera Page. For a project with the title, Your Name Here, it is wonderful to see someone who has tried to imagine what it would mean for them personally to have a park named after them, and

to think of the opportunity as a way of confronting demons of the past. Vera's story of abandonment, despair and hardship may resonate with many of us; it is also uniquely her own. We want the naming of Vera Page Park to stand as a symbol for all of us who need to acknowledge the hurt of the past in order to heal.'

Vera's story is a reminder to recognise all neglected children. It is a tribute to both the young and the old, and the struggles many of us go through in life as we try to make peace with our past.

## VERA PAGE

I am nominating myself as a child.

I can't forget the little girl who thought she wasn't wanted and how it affected my life.

My real Mum died when I was a baby. My Dad didn't want me after he re-married. So my Grandma brought me up with the others, but she died when I was four. After that my Aunt Rose looked after me. I called her Mam, thinking she was my mother. But at 15, she had to tell me the truth, because her husband didn't want to keep me.

I married and had five of my own children, but lost two of them. My husband knocked me about and I suffered a nervous breakdown. The nurses had to teach me to walk and talk again – I'd gone completely.

People tell me to forget the past, but they don't know what those years did to me.

by Vera Bowes

"I can't believe all this is happening. It's like a dream. I keep thinking I'll wake up in a bit. I'm just an ordinary person. Fancy wanting my name for a park in St Helens. I'm proud, so proud."

Vera Bowes



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