

BENSON'S FIRST BLUE PLAQUE

Bensington History Group applied for a blue plaque to be installed to remember our local meteorologist, William Henry Dines. The project was led by David and Sue Cooper, who also arranged for an interactive meteorological exhibition to be set up in the Parish Hall to coincide with the unveiling.

On Saturday June 9th 2018, Mr Dines' great grandson Steve Poole and former TV weatherman Bill Giles joined representatives from the History Group, Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Scheme and the Royal Meteorological Society to unveil the new plaque honouring his life.

The tribute has been installed at Old Barn Close in Brook Street, near Colne House where Mr Dines lived from 1913 until his death in 1927. It was here that he set up his own observatory, from which he sent daily reports to the Meteorological Office at Kew. Colne House was later demolished and replaced by Observatory Close.

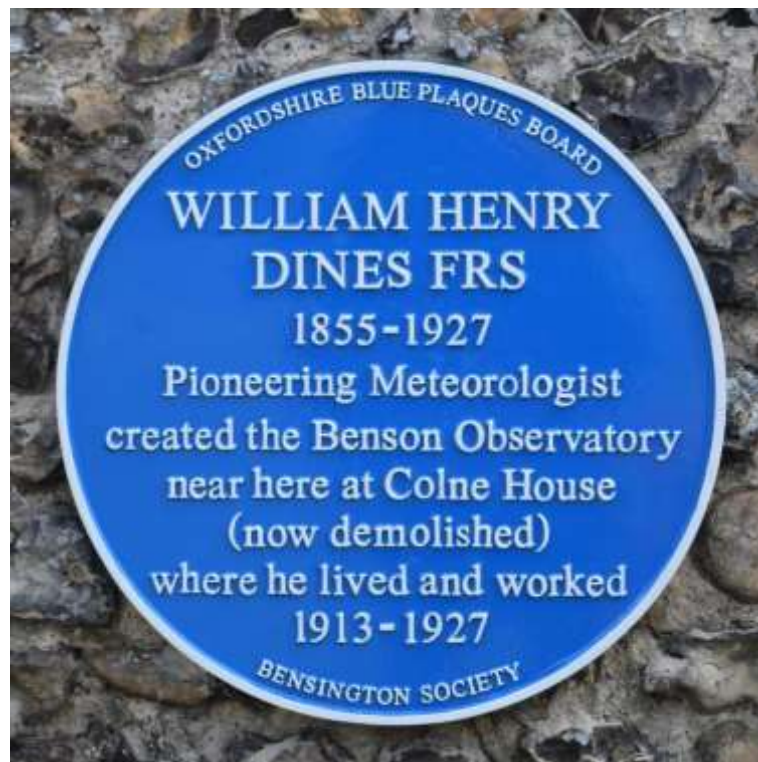


Steve Poole with Sue Cooper

William Henry Dines dedicated his life to ‘experimental meteorology’ after a violent storm destroyed Tay Bridge in Dundee in 1879, killing 75 train passengers who had been travelling over the bridge at the time.

He is credited with helping scientists gain a better understanding of how to measure wind velocity and direction with a much greater accuracy. The instrument he created in 1892, known as a pressure tube anemometer, is still in use today.

Eda Forbes, secretary for the Oxfordshire Blue Plaques scheme said he should be seen as a ‘pioneering’ meteorologist. She added: “W.H. Dines was a key figure in the development of the science and his name is well remembered by meteorologists and local residents.”



His sons Lewen Dines and John Dines both became meteorologists and carried on running the observatory until 1939 when RAF Benson’s weather station was established.

Our Secretary Sue Brown said: “This is the first blue plaque for the village and it seemed fitting given the area’s long-standing links to meteorology.”