

What's in a name?

In 2018, the Parish Council wanted a crest to display as a symbol of Gurney Slade and Binegar.

Ours are historic settlements, named in the age of the ancient Britons, before the Romans came. In Brittonic, *slàd* is a lush, green dell. A thousand years later, the Norman *de Gournay* family added its name to make the Gurney Slade we know today.

Ancient Brittonic *Ben na Gra* became Old English *Begenhangra* – hillside (*hangra*) of worship (*begen*). Usually translated as slopes where berries grow, this mistakes *beger* (berries) for *begen*. With so many pre-historic burial sites around us, our ancestors surely named Binegar to honour these places of worship.

For the crest, local people helped the Parish Council choose two, intertwined chevrons to symbolise our two villages. Hill and vale, Binegar and Gurney Slade, joined as one.

Gurney Slade's chevron is gold to symbolise its mineral rock wealth.

Binegar's upturned chevron is white for our sacred local sites.

The background is blue for the Mendip Hills' sky.

For centuries, our parish was *Whitchurch Prebend* with intimate links to Wells Cathedral. The Cathedral's colours are blue, gold and white. Our crest mirrors our historic links.



The many names and another meaning of *Binegar*

In 1065, King Edward the Confessor gave our lands to Giso, Bishop of Wells. Then, they called Binegar *Bezenhangra* and *Begenhangra*. Over the years, the name was spelt as *Benhangra* (1176), *Behenger* (1247), *Benhangra* (1321), *Benacre* (1401), *Benangra* (1429), *Benangger* (1450), *Bynagre* (1490), *Benanger* (1508), *Benynger* (1514), *Benengar* (1526), *Benagre* (1540), *Beniger* (1620), *Benigar* (1720).

Binegar, though, goes back much further than written history. The Romans were here: Bennett's, Turner's Court and Portway Lanes are Roman roads and, at Dalleston, Roman relics tell us someone lived there.

It is likely that the ancient Celtic Britons gave Binegar its name. We have many Celtic names around us, such as, Cranmore (*cran* = tree, *mor* = big), Pen Hill (*pen* = head) not to mention the *River Avon* (*avon* = river).

If Binegar comes from *Ben na Gra*, it could mean we live on the *Hill of Love* or *Love Hill*. I like that! It is more romantic than *wooded slopes growing with berries!*

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